

Thank you Mr. President.

The Cairo institute for Human Rights Studies and Al-Haq welcome the Secretary General's report on the human rights situation in the occupied Palestinian territory (OPT), including East Jerusalem. We specifically welcome the recommendation made to the Israeli government to conduct independent, impartial, thorough, prompt and effective investigations into all allegations of serious violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law, especially with regards to preventing and addressing human rights violations committed by settlers against Palestinian civilians.

Our organizations remain seriously concerned by the ongoing expansion of illegal Israeli settlements leading to the destruction of Palestinian homes, and to the eviction and displacement of many Palestinians and welcome any initiative aiming at curbing and stopping this expansion.

We particularly welcome the new European Union (EU) guidelines on the eligibility of Israeli entities and their activities in the territories occupied by Israel since June 1967 for grants, prizes and financial instruments funded by the EU from 2014 onwards that bar firms based in illegal settlements from receiving EU subsidies and require Israeli institutions or firms to submit a declaration saying they are not active in illegal settlements when they apply for EU grants or loans.

Given this positive step by the EU, we regret to witness the ongoing efforts made by the EU at the Human Rights Council to cancel agenda item 7, as expressed in many of the EU's statements, latest of which during the general debate under item 7 during the 22nd session of this Council, suggesting that the human rights situation in the OPT could be usefully addressed under agenda item 4. We strongly oppose this view and believe that the chronic, long-term and severe nature of human rights violations taking place in the OPT require the maintenance of agenda item 7. Focus on human rights violations perpetrated by Israel should be maintained, especially as Israel became the first and only state so far to unilaterally sever all participation and collaboration with the Human Rights Council, a body of the United Nations General Assembly.

We therefore urge this Council to keep agenda item 7.

Thank you Mr. President