

**Al-Haq Oral Statement** - Human Rights Council 28th Session, Item 7 / General Debate

---

Thank you Mr. President, Distinguished Members of the Council,

In 2014, Palestinians saw a devastating year for human rights and justice.

Over 1,500 Palestinian civilians lost their lives in an unprecedented Israeli offensive on the Gaza Strip. In a grave breach of international law, the Israeli Occupying Forces yet again - targeted civilian homes and public infrastructure causing extensive destruction. As an eight-year unlawful closure continues, reconstruction efforts have failed and Palestinians face humanitarian disaster.

On a day-to-day basis, Israel's prolonged and belligerent occupation continually affects Palestinians - whether in the Gaza Strip or the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. We emphasize the psychological, social, and cultural impacts of the occupation that fall unnoticed as part of Israel's policy of aggression. We also emphasize the silent stagnation of the Palestinian economy via Israel's exploitation of Palestinian natural resources, including gas, oil, water, and minerals.

Mr. President,

Israel must not be allowed to choose when and how it cooperates with UN mechanisms. Failure to participate in UN mechanisms that support international justice and accountability cannot be rewarded.

We were particularly alarmed that the EU, with its staunch commitment and support of international law mechanisms, would make a statement that promotes the removal of Item 7 from the Council's agenda. In the past two years, non-participation in agenda item 7 by EU member States of the Council has only seen an escalation in Israel's unlawful policies and further deterioration in Palestinian rights.

Victims not only deserve justice, but they deserve restored hope that the international community upholds and respects the rights of all people equally. As Israel continues to evade accountability, Palestinian rights are again sidelined by this politicized process of non-cooperation.

Finally, we welcome the reports of the Special Rapporteur on the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the High Commissioner for Human Rights and urge all member States of the Council to promote their recommendations.

Thank you