



AL - HAQ

***Oral Submission by Al-Haq to the Committee against Torture  
on the occasion of Israel's fifth periodic review***

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Thank you Mr. Chair, Distinguished members of the Committee,

An urgent matter that we ask you to raise with the Israeli government in the coming days is the holding of 18 Palestinian bodies that had been killed by Israeli forces since October 2015. This includes the body of Maram Saleh and her fetus of 7 months who were killed just last week in East Jerusalem.

The bodies are being held in degrading conditions - they are placed in tight space of 70 degrees Celsius below zero. The Israeli government has refused to carry out autopsies in all of the 18 cases of deceased Palestinians and in over 100 other similar cases over the past months.

With a condition of release being burial after midnight within two hours, the families have also been prohibited from carrying out independent autopsies and burials in line with tradition and religious customs. These acts amount to collective punishment as they target the family members of the deceased and are “purely punitive”.

Such degrading treatment occurs at the backdrop of a wave of violence surging from East Jerusalem in the Occupied Palestinian Territory over the past seven months. During this time, the Israeli occupying power has taken escalated actions that are symptomatic of its historic policy towards East Jerusalem. This includes collective punishment in different forms - including punitive home demolitions and restrictions on movement - to drive Palestinians out of their city.

Since Israel's illegal annexation of East Jerusalem, Palestinians therein have been living in perpetual uncertainty and fear. Any questioning of or resistance to Israeli occupation policies to expand illegal settlements and forcibly displace Palestinians has led to both community-wide and individual repercussions. Such systematic deprivation of rights may amount to the crime against humanity of persecution under international criminal law. We ask, distinguished members, that you raise systematic violations against Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem with the Israeli government in the coming days.

Thank you.