

United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

NGO Action News

3 June 2021

Middle East

- On 3 June, [Physicians for Human Rights – Israel \(PHRI\)](#) informed that it had petitioned the Israeli Supreme Court following the decision of Israel to prevent the exit from Gaza of patients with chronic illnesses and other serious diseases, in spite of the fact that the medical treatments they need were unavailable in the Gaza Strip. PHRI stated that this policy was “extremely unreasonable in that it uses the right to health as political-security sanction and exacts a high price from the most vulnerable, especially when the healthcare system in the Gaza Strip is already overloaded after the last war.”
- On 3 June, [Al-Haq](#) informed that it had met with UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation, Pedro Arrojo-Agudo, to brief him on the human rights situation relevant to water and sanitation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT), citing Israel’s control over the OPT’s three main natural water supply sources and the extensive restrictions and exploitation they have been subjected to by Israel’s national water company Mekorot. Al-Haq highlighted that Israeli “water apartheid” constituted a systemic attack on the Palestinian people’s right to water as well as a violation of the broader right of Palestinians to the highest attainable standard of health.
- On 3 June, [Al-Haq](#) issued a press release welcoming the adoption of a historic resolution during the Thirtieth Special Session of the UN Human Rights Council, establishing the first ongoing commission of inquiry to address Israel’s violations against the Palestinian people on both sides of the Green Line, and the underlying root causes of Israel’s systematic and widespread violations.
- On 31 May, [Al Mezan Centre for Human Rights](#) issued the press release “Gaza Patients Blocked from Urgent Medical Care in Israel Authority’s Heightened Closure Measures Following Bombardment” in criticism of Israel’s current policy permitting only patients requiring lifesaving care to exit Gaza for treatment. Al Mezan warned that such a definition excluded patients with cancer and other chronic illnesses if their lives were not in immediate danger. It recalled that Israel’s closure policies – including its uses of crossings as a means of entrapment, arbitrary arrest and attempted coercion – has potentially fatal consequences for those in urgent need of medical exit permits and constituted an unlawful form of collective punishment.
- On 27 May, [Adalah – The Legal Centre for Arab Minority Rights in Israel](#) issued a response to the UN Human Rights Council’s decision to establish an ongoing commission of inquiry into human rights violations in the OPT and Israel. It stated that the decision marks the first

time that the Human Rights Council has given a mandate to a commission of inquiry to examine the root causes of Israeli violations, following the killing of civilian population in Gaza and the attack on worshippers in the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound and the imminent forced displacement and dispossession of Palestinian refugee families in the Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood of East Jerusalem.

- On 26 May, [a group of Israeli organisations – Physicians for Human Rights- Israel, HaMoked, Adalah and Gisha](#) – sent an urgent joint letter to Israel’s Minister of Defence, the Coordinator Activities in the Territories and the Attorney General to demand that patients, especially in severe condition, be allowed immediately to travel from the Gaza Strip to Israel and the West Bank via Erez Crossing. The organisations protested the fact that even after the ceasefire Israel continued to prevent entry of patients needing vital medical treatment unavailable in Gaza. The NGOs stressed that, as a result of the recent fighting, the medical system in Gaza was struggling to function under extreme conditions, compounding a large number of casualties and massive damage to vital infrastructure.
- On 26 May, [Gisha – Legal Centre for Freedom of Movement](#) issued a press release to condemn Israel’s continued chokehold on Gaza through severe restrictions on access to and from the Strip. Gisha stated that Israel’s conduct not only stood in further violation of its legal and moral obligations towards Palestinians living under its control, but also impeded reconstruction efforts. It called on Israel to immediately open the crossings, remove restrictions on access to the sea, and allow movement of people and goods to meet the needs of Gaza residents.

Europe

- On 25 May, [Amnesty International](#) issued the press release “Scrap Plans to Forcibly Evict Palestinian Families in Silwan” ahead of an appeal hearing at the Jerusalem District Court on 26 May over the forced eviction of two Palestinian families in the Batn al-Hawa area of Silwan in occupied East Jerusalem. Amnesty International’s Deputy Director for the Middle East and North Africa stated that by continuing to pursue this court case, Israel was perpetuating the same systematic human rights violations against Palestinians that were at the root of the latest violence. He called on the international community to stop Israel from continuing with its policies of forcible transfer and dispossession and for a concerted effort to address the systematic oppression and dispossession of Palestinians which are among the root causes of these repeated cycles of violence and civilian bloodshed.

North America

- On 3 June, [Americans for Peace Now](#) shared the recording of the webinar “Jerusalem Crisis: What’s Happening, What’s Being Done, What’s Needed” held on 12 May, and featuring Alliance for Middle East Peace’s Regional Director Huda Abuarquob, Israeli Attorney Daniel Seidemann and Co-Director of Peace Now Hagit Ofra.

- On 27 May, the [Foundation for the Middle East Peace \(FMPEP\)](#) held the webinar “Poll Release: The US debate on Israel-Palestine is Changing” with Rania Batrice, Peter Beinart, Lara Friedman and James Zogby. The webinar discussed a newfound understanding of the role American foreign policy played in either sustaining or failing to address the root causes of the continuing conflict. The speakers examined issues from the recent conflict and the deepening partisan divide, following a poll conducted among the American public the day the ceasefire was announced.

United Nations

- On 1 June, [UN Special Rapporteur on Minority Issues Fernand de Varennes](#) issued a press release to condemn attacks on Israel’s Palestinian minority by extreme right-wing and vigilante groups, including settlers – at times with the reported backing of security forces – and urged Israel to fully and equally protect all of its citizens without discrimination. The UN expert said the decades-long exclusion and discrimination, including of segregation between Arab and Jewish citizens and lack of equal treatment in terms of rights and privileges had taken a toll on the Palestinian minority. He called on the Government of Israel to firmly condemn all acts of violence, hatred and discrimination against Palestinian citizens of Israel and to ensure its citizens immediately stop these attacks and that everyone was fully and equally protected without any form of discrimination.
- On 31 May, [UNRWA Director for the West Bank Gwyn Lewis](#) delivered a statement at the Thirtieth Special Session of the Human Rights Council on the grave human rights situation in the OPT, including East Jerusalem. She appealed to the international community and Member States to pay attention to the situation in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, the use of live ammunition, and incitement against Palestinian and take immediate action with the Government of Israel to prevent the Sheikh Jarrah and other pending evictions and protect the equal rights of Palestinians, including Palestine refugees. On the escalation in Gaza, she welcomed the ceasefire but said it should not create a false sense of a return to normality. Innovative political solutions were required to comprehensively address the root causes of the conflict.

This newsletter informs about recent and upcoming activities of Civil Society Organizations affiliated with the United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. The Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights of the UN Secretariat provide the information “as is” without warranty of any kind, and do not accept any responsibility or liability for the accuracy, or reliability of the information contained in the websites linked in the newsletter.



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