

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

NGO Action News

8 April 2021

Middle East

- On 7 April, [Al Mezan Centre for Human Rights](#) issued a press release on the occasion of World Health Day to demand an end to health inequities for Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. Al Mezan attributed them to “Israel’s discriminatory and exclusionary policies that inter alia effect a situation of chronic lack of essential medical supplies.” The NGO reiterated its calls on the international community to take prompt action to ensure that Israel upholds its legal obligations by promoting and protecting the right to equality and the right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health for the Palestinian population under its control.
- On 7 April, [Al-Haq](#) issued a press release on World Health Day to draw attention to the lives of Palestinians who are systematically targeted by Israel’s unlawful policies and practices, ranging from collective punishment to excessive use of force to arbitrary detention. The NGO said the latter repeatedly impact the physical and mental health of Palestinians in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT), in violation of Israel’s legal obligations to respect, protect, and fulfil the rights of the Palestinian population, including the right to the highest attainable standard of health.
- On 7 April, [Gisha – Legal Centre for Freedom of Movement](#) denounced the surge of Covid-19 in the Gaza Strip after the Palestinian Health Ministry in Gaza reported more than 75,000 confirmed cases to date and 642 deaths, with the number of active cases having increased by more than 100 percent over a seven-day period. Gisha reminded that it had petitioned Israel’s High Court of Justice to demand that Israel take immediate steps to ensure supply of the vaccine of the entire Palestinian population under occupation in the West Bank and Gaza. Gisha also lamented that the total number of vaccines available in Gaza still falls far short of what is needed for its two million residents.
- On 6 April, [B’Tselem, Adalah – The Legal Centre for Arab Minority Rights in Israel, Breaking the Silence, HaMoked – Centre for the Defence of the Individual, Ir Amim and other Israeli organisations](#) issued a statement in solidarity with Amnesty International staff Laith Abu Zeyad, ahead of his second hearing in Jerusalem District Court after Israel had barred him from leaving the West Bank since October 2019. The organisations said that his case was yet another example of “Israel’s persecution of human rights activists, which is aimed at silencing critics of the regime and its policies [...]”

- On 6 April, the [Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies \(CIHRS\)](#) joined 22 human rights organisations around the world in open letter to UN Member States, the Human Rights Council, the UN Secretary-General and UN High Commissioner for Human Rights calling on them to improve the Human Rights Council, elevating it to a major institution of the UN, and thereby enhancing the Council’s contribution to improving human rights situations on the ground. The organisations also called for greater prioritization to be given to funding human rights issues, and ensuring the effectiveness, responsiveness and accessibility of the Council, as well as cooperation with its mechanisms.
- On 6 April, [Peace Now](#) denounced the decision of the Israeli Supreme Court to ask the opinion of the Israeli government on the Sumarin family eviction case in the Palestinian neighbourhood of Silwan in occupied East Jerusalem, because this seemed to signal that these cases are not just a “civil matter” between two private parties debating ownership over a property, but necessitate government involvement.
- On 5 April, [Al-Haq](#) welcomed the rescinding by the United States, on 2 April 2021, of its Executive Order 13928 on ‘Blocking Property of Certain Persons Associated with the International Criminal Court (ICC)’, which had been utilised to place ICC staff under economic sanctions and visa restrictions. Al-Haq called on third States and the international community to fully cooperate with the Office of the Prosecutor, as the ICC investigation into the situation in the OPT proceeds, to ensure the arrest and transfer to the Hague of persons investigated and accused of international crimes in the OPT.

Europe

- On 6 April, [Amnesty International](#) issued the press release “Chilling Repercussions of Travel Ban on Amnesty Campaigner Must Be a Wake-Up Call for All” after a judge at the Jerusalem District Court indicated that a travel ban will be upheld against Laith Abu Zeyad, an Amnesty International campaigner. Amnesty stated that this attack on Abu Zeyad and the organisation is part of an intensifying campaign by the Israeli authorities against the human rights movement, adding that this case is “emblematic of the failure of the international community to effectively challenge Israeli violations” and that this inaction has meant that Israel has been able to continue its systematic violation of Palestinian human rights.

North America

- On 7 April, [Americans for Peace Now \(APN\)](#) issued a press release welcoming US President Biden’s decision to resume aid to the Palestinian people. APN said the decision not only benefits Palestinians but is also good for Israel and for prospects for Israeli-Palestinian peace. APN said this reengagement signals the Biden administration’s intent to seek a negotiated settlement between the Israelis and Palestinians.
- On 7 April, [J Street](#) welcomed recent moves by the Biden administration to restore critical humanitarian, security and refugee assistance to the Palestinian people and to UNRWA, which plays a vital role in providing for the basic needs of millions of Palestinian refugees. J Street said these funding moves are important first steps toward fulfilling commitments

made this US administration, and other urgent and necessary steps include reopening diplomatic missions, fully reversing the previous administration's actions to legitimize Israeli settlements and occupation of Palestinian territory.

- On 7 April, the [Foundation for Middle East Peace \(FMEP\)](#) held the webinar “Medical Apartheid: COVID Vaccinations Under Occupation” with speakers from Physicians for Human Rights – Israel and Al-Shabaka. The webinar discussed Israel’s rejection of any responsibility for providing or even facilitating vaccines for the millions of Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, while the Palestinian government continues to struggle to roll out a vaccination programme of its own.

United Nations

- On 7 April, the [UN Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People](#) held the virtual event “Delivering Critical Assistance for Palestine Refugees: Challenges and Opportunities in a Complex Context”. Guest speakers Mr. Philippe Lazzarini, UNRWA Commissioner-General, and Ms. Gwyn Lewis, Director of UNRWA Operations West Bank, highlighted the achievement to maintain service delivery throughout the Covid-19 pandemic; briefed on the ongoing, critical financial and political situation of the Agency; and reiterated the call to Member States to move to predictable, sustainable funding and programming. Introductory statements were delivered by Assistant-Secretary-General Khaled Khiari, H.E. Mr. Riyad Mansour (State of Palestine) and H.E. Mr. Volkan Bozkır, President of the General Assembly. Representatives of Egypt, Indonesia, Jordan, Sri Lanka, Tunisia and Turkey also delivered interventions. The event was live streamed on UN Web TV and social media platforms (UN Facebook, UN Twitter).
- On 7 April, [UNRWA Commissioner-General Philippe Lazzarini](#) issued a statement on the second World Health Day in the shadow of the Covid-19 pandemic. He said that in line with the theme of this year’s World Health Day “Building a fairer, healthier world”, he joins his voice to call on countries to for implement a fair distribution of lifesaving COVID-19 vaccines, as this pandemic knows no borders and does not differentiate between rich and poor, or refugee and non-refugee. He added he was proud to serve as Commissioner-General of an organisation which has pioneered health standards for the past 70 years in the Middle East, providing universal primary health care for all Palestine refugees, and which continues to innovate for improved health outcomes, already building a fairer and healthier world for the refugees it serves.

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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