

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

## **NGO Action News**

**10 February 2021**

### **Middle East**

- On 10 February, [Addameer Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association](#) reported that Special Rapporteur Michael Lynk's statement urging Israel to ensure accountability for torture and other cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment had followed the NGO's urgent appeal to the UN Special Procedures to uphold Palestinian prisoner Samer Arbeed's freedom from torture. The NGO also appealed for the Special Procedures to guarantee accountability and effective remedies for as a victim of torture after the Israeli Attorney General closed the investigations against the Israeli Security Agency for the circumstances leading to the prisoner's hospitalization.
- On 9 February, [B'Tselem](#) issued the press release "Repeat Demolitions of Khirbet Humsah are Test Case for International Community" following Israel's demolition of the Palestinian community for the fourth time since November 2020. B'Tselem said these actions, carried out in the midst of a humanitarian crisis caused by the pandemic, were part of Israel's efforts to forcibly transfer the community under the pretext of "military training" and "law enforcement". The NGO lamented that the international community had shirked its duty to obligate Israel to uphold the human rights of the Palestinian population subject to its control.
- On 8 February, [Ir Amim](#) informed that the village of Walaje, south of East Jerusalem, was under acute threat of being forcibly uprooted as 38 homes face demolition. The outline plan created by the residents to formally legalize their homes and allow for further residential development had been rejected by the Israeli district planning committee. The NGO said this case was a prime example of the rampant housing discrimination against Palestinians in Jerusalem but also how the committee overlooks the village's role in preserving the area's traditional and historical agricultural assets.
- On 4 February, the [Palestinian Centre for Human Rights](#) issued a press release on the 21st anniversary of World Cancer Day, stating cancer patients in Gaza suffer immensely due to restrictions on their freedom of movement and travel for treatment under the strict Israeli-imposed closure, the acute shortage of medicine and medical supplies in hospitals, especially radiotherapy, and the Israeli ban on the entry of new medical devices and laboratory equipment needed to conduct tests for patients.
- On 6 February, [Al-Haq](#), [Al Mezan Centre for Human Rights](#), [Al Dameer Association for Human Rights](#) and the [Palestinian Centre for Human Rights](#) issued a joint press release to welcome a "landmark decision" of the pre-trial chamber of the International Criminal Court (ICC) that the Court has full territorial jurisdiction over the Occupied Palestinian Territory

(OPT). The Palestinian NGOs spoke of a critically important step towards ensuring the rule of law and ending impunity, while ensuring the dignity of the Palestinian people who have been denied their right of self-determination. They also called for immediate action to be taken by the ICC Prosecutor to open an investigation against Israel.

### **Europe**

- On 8 February, [Lawyers for Palestinian Human Rights](#) called on the ICC Prosecutor to include alleged serious international crimes committed by Israeli authorities within the context of 2014 hostilities in Gaza within the scope of her imminent investigation. The NGO added that the ICC pre-trial chamber's decision that the Court had jurisdiction over the OPT was a vital step towards meeting the hope and imperative of victims, survivors and their families, and bringing an end to the devastating cycle of systemic impunity.
- On 5 February, [Amnesty International](#) said that the "historic ICC ruling brings new hope to victims of crimes under international law" after the Court had ruled that it has jurisdiction over Rome Statute crimes committed in the OPT. The NGO's Deputy Regional Director for the Middle East and North Africa stated that in the absence of independent and credible domestic investigations, an ICC investigation was the only way for Palestinians and Israelis to access truth, justice and reparations. She called on all governments to offer their full support to the ICC as it takes the next steps towards accountability.

### **North America**

- On 15 February, [the Institute for Palestine Studies](#) will host a book discussion on Mahmoud Mamdani's recent release of "Neither Settler nor Native: The Making and Unmaking of Permanent Minorities". The author will discuss how, through the establishing of Israel and through the "minoritization" of Palestinian Arabs, Jewish settlers followed the North American example, which has both a permanent native underclass and new immigrant identities crystallized as a settler nation.
- On 11 February, the [Foundation for Middle East Peace \(FMEP\)](#) will hold the webinar "The IHRA Definition & the Fight Against Antisemitism Part 5: Opportunities and Struggles for Progressive Jews" with National Coordinator for Canada's Independent Jewish Voices Corey Balsam, writer and filmmaker Rebecca Pierce and professor and scholar of modern European and American Jewry Barry Trachtenberg.
- On 6 February, [Human Rights Watch](#) said in a press release that the ICC judges' decision on confirming the Court's jurisdiction over the situation in Palestine opens a long-awaited path to justice for Israeli and Palestinian victims of serious international crimes. The NGO said that the ICC has a critical role to play as a court of last resort in situations like Palestine where recourse to domestic justice has been foreclosed and Member States should stand ready to protect the ICC's independence in the face of ongoing pressure and hostility to an investigation of Israeli and Palestinian conduct.

## United Nations

- On 23 February, the [UN Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People](#) will hold the Virtual Event on “Delivering Critical Assistance for Palestine Refugees: Challenges and Opportunities in a Complex Context”. The event, which will be livestreamed on UN Web TV, will be organised as a panel briefing with Mr. Philippe Lazzarini, Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), and Ms. Gwyn Lewis, Director of UNRWA Operations West Bank on the current situation of Agency and the Palestine refugees it supports. The event aims to strengthen international support for the rights of Palestinian refugees and mobilize political and financial support to UNRWA, ahead and in support of an international UNRWA conference hosted by Sweden and Jordan in the coming months.
- On 10 February, the newly re-elected Bureau of the [Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People](#) met with Mr. Volkan Bozkir, President of the 75th session of the GA. The Chair requested the support of the PGA to mobilize support of Member States and regional Groups for the CEIRPP advocacy activities in view of a resolution of the Palestinian question. The PGA confirmed the GA was the body entrusted with keeping the Palestinian question alive at the UN and the CEIRPP was the main vector for that support. The meeting highlighted that the efforts of the PGA, the SG, and the SC and concerned parties from the region would lead soon to the reinvigoration of the Quartet, aimed at the holding of an international peace conference, and welcomed the upcoming elections announced by President Abbas. Regarding COVID-19 pandemic response, the meeting noted the need to ensure access to vaccines for the Palestinian population, and the need for continuing financial support for UNRWA.
- On 9 February, [Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in the Palestinian Territory Occupied Since 1967 Michael Lynk](#), endorsed by Special Rapporteur on Torture and Other Cruel, Inhumane or Degrading Treatment or Punishment Nils Melzer, issued a press release stating that the ICC ruling that it has jurisdiction over grave crimes committed in occupied Palestinian territory, including potential war crimes, was a major move towards ending impunity and ensuring justice. He said that the ruling opens the door for credible allegations of Rome Statute crimes to finally be investigated and potentially reach the trial stage at the ICC. The Special Rapporteur noted that a number of authoritative UN reports in recent years have called for accountability and for Israel to meaningfully investigate credible allegations of grave crimes and said none of these calls for justice and accountability have been implemented.

*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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