

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

NGO Action News

20 May 2021

Middle East

- On 19 May, [Al Mezan Centre for Human Rights](#) issued the press release “Under Heavy Attacks and Tightened Blockade, Gaza Health Services Are at Risk of Collapse”, warning against the recent Israeli attacks that caused severe damages in 22 facilities in different areas of the Gaza Strip, causing injury to medical workers. Al Mezan said that the attacks destroyed main roads and impeded the movement of medical crews and ambulances attending to the injured. It reiterated its concern about the collapse of health services in the Strip, the tightened blockade and the continuous targeting of medical institutions, and called for Israel to be forced to stop the aggression, to respect international law for the patients and injured persons and to ensure the entry of humanitarian and relief supplies to civilians.
- On 19 May, the [Palestinian Centre for Human Rights \(PCHR\)](#) issued a report on the casualties since the beginning of the Israeli offensive in the Gaza Strip, emphasizing that the Israeli strikes were on densely populated residential areas in disregard of international humanitarian law’s principles of proportionality and distinction. PCHR called on the international community, including the high contracting parties to the 1949 Fourth Geneva Convention, to act urgently to end all military hostilities.
- On 19 May, [Al-Haq](#) called on the UN to condemn Israel’s unwarranted targeting of media buildings, notwithstanding their protected status under international humanitarian law, and to pressure Israel to urgently and immediately treat media personnel and media buildings as protected civilians and civilian objects, and respect their humanitarian immunity. Al-Haq also called for the establishment of an independent commission of inquiry under the umbrella of the Human Rights Council to investigate into Israel’s indiscriminate and systematic attacks on Gaza.
- On 18 May, [Al-Haq](#) sent urgent letters to the head of the sub-delegation of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in Gaza and the Commissioner-General of UNRWA regarding the humanitarian situation of 35,000 Palestinian civilians displaced as a result of Israel’s military offensive on the Gaza Strip. Al-Haq warned of the disastrous extent of the ever-increasing displacement of civilians as a result of Israel’s indiscriminate bombardment and the urgent need for immediate humanitarian response on the part of relief agencies. It also called on the ICRC and UNRWA to immediately intervene and coordinate efforts to facilitate the institution and recognition of hospital and safety zones and localities in UNRWA premises.

- On 18 May, the [Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies \(CIHRS\)](#) delivered a joint oral intervention on the 15th anniversary of the responsibility to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. CIHRS and other organisations called on the UN and its Member States to “recognize Israel’s perpetration of apartheid” against the Palestinian people, while underscoring that there should be no selectivity in applying the principle of the responsibility to protect.
- On 17 May, [Defence for Children International – Palestine \(DCIP\)](#) issued the press release “Death Toll Rises to 60 as More Palestinian Children’s Bodies Pulled From Rubble”, stating that DCIP has documented 60 Palestinian children killed in the Gaza Strip since hostilities between Israeli forces and Palestinian armed groups escalated on 10 May. DCIP warned that while Israel relies on the principle of self-defence to justify military offensives on Gaza, Israeli forces are bound by international law rules of proportionality and necessity.
- On 16 May, [Gisha – Legal Centre for Freedom of Movement](#) issued a press release to call on Israel to stop the killing and destruction in Gaza, to open the border crossings and to meet the basic humanitarian needs of residents, which it is obligated to do by law. Gisha warned that violation of the laws of war by the opposing party in a conflict do not justify the violation of Israel’s obligations toward Gaza residents living under its occupation.
- On 15 May, [B’Tselem](#) issued the press release “Killing Blockaded Civilians and Destroying Infrastructure on a Massive Scale: Israel is Committing War Crimes in the Gaza Strip”, warning that the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) has already launched an investigation into Israel’s actions, including alleged war crimes committed during the fighting in 2014, while Israel is now implementing precisely the same policy that the ICC is examining. B’Tselem called on the international community to step in immediately and use its leverage to force Israel to change its policy before it claims even more victims.

Europe

- On 18 May, the [European Coordination of Committees and Associations for Palestine \(ECCP\)](#) issued the press release “Enough Is Enough: Say No to EU Policies and Cooperation with Israel!” to demand that the European Union stops the use of Israeli military drones – used against Palestinians – “against migrants at Europe’s borders.” The group of NGOs demanded that EU border agencies Frontex and EMSA stop contracting Israeli military corporations and using “killer drones” against migrants.
- On 18 May, the [Palestine Return Centre \(PRC\)](#) issued a press statement to call on the international community to intervene immediately to stop the military offensive on Gaza, stop the forcible transfer of over 500 Palestinians in Sheikh Jarrah and to call on the Israeli government to refrain their population from committing “heinous acts of aggression” and to urge Israeli forces to respect Palestinian rights and holy places. PRC said that the international community should amplify its voices and call to place sanctions on Israel especially the sales of arms and weapons.

- On 17 May, [Amnesty International](#) issued a press release stating, “By carrying out these brazen deadly attacks on family homes without warning Israel has demonstrated a callous disregard for lives of Palestinian civilians who are already suffering the collective punishment of Israel’s illegal blockade on Gaza since 2007.” Amnesty warned against the “horrific pattern emerging of Israel launching air strikes in Gaza targeting residential buildings and family homes [...]”

North America

- On 19 May, [Human Rights Watch \(HRW\)](#) issued the position paper “How the UN Can Help End Israeli Apartheid and Persecution”, calling for the appointment of a global UN envoy for the crimes of persecution and apartheid with a mandate to push for the end of these crimes wherever they occur. HRW said that various UN bodies and Committees around the world organize hundreds of meetings, including on Israel and Palestine and that those meetings offer an excellent opportunity to regularly raise these issues and push the international community to acknowledge the reality on the ground as a first step to changing it. The NGO called on Member States to mobilize the UN system to pressure Israeli authorities to end its abuses and to not tolerate depriving millions of Palestinians of their fundamental rights in order to preserve the possibility of “a peace deal that is not coming anytime soon.”
- On 19 May, [Jewish Voice for Peace \(JVP\)](#) published the toolkit “Solidarity with Palestine, May 2021” calling on the public to read, post, and share on social media with hashtags #SaveSheikhJarrah and #GazaUnderAttack in order to amplify Palestinian voices and what’s happening on the ground. JVP also asked to call members of Congress and advocate for the US to stop funding the Israeli military.
- On 19 May, the [US Campaign for Palestinian Rights](#) launched the campaign “Tell Congress: End US Complicity in Israel’s Abuses of Palestinians” prompting the public to send letters to Congress to demand the end of US military funding for Israel, to support sanctions on Israel and elevate the Palestinian call for freedom and safety.
- On 18 May, the [Foundation for Middle East Peace \(FMPEP\)](#) held the podcast “Decolonizing the Narrative” with scholar Nooran Alhamdan about Palestinians in the US, shifts in American politics, where she finds Palestinian leadership, the Nakba, and what gives her hope. The episode also discussed her recent column in the Washington Post, “The Palestinian Nakba: What Happened in 1948 and Why It Still Matters”.

United Nations

- On 18 May, the [UN Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People](#) organized the 2021 UN Forum on the Question of Palestine on “International Parliamentary Support to the Question of Palestine” on 18 May 2021. The virtual event, which was livestreamed on UN Web TV, was organized as a two-panel interactive discussion among parliamentarians from different parts of the world. Speakers included Mr. Alexandre

Boulerice (Member of Parliament, Canada), Mr. Francisco Chauhán (Member of Parliament, Chile), Ms. Julie Elliott (Member of Parliament, UK), Mr. Hubert Julien-Laferrrière (Member of Parliament, France) and Mr. Solomon Lechesa Tsenoli (Member of Parliament, South Africa). UN Under-Secretary-General Rosemary DiCarlo reiterated the UN position on the conflict and efforts in support of a re-engagement of the parties. The interventions focused on the ongoing escalation of violence between Israel and Palestine and the resulting heavy casualties, particularly in the Gaza Strip, and reiterated the need to support the two-State solution and UN resolutions. The Committee Chair and speakers said that the recent escalation was a tragic reminder of the urgency for a viable political path towards ending this conflict once and for all.

- On 16 May, [UN Secretary-General António Guterres](#) addressed the Security Council meeting on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question, calling for the “senseless cycle of bloodshed, terror and destruction” to stop immediately. He called on all parties to respect international humanitarian law and international human rights law and the status quo at the holy sites. He warned that the only way forward was to return to negotiations with the goal of a two-State solution, with two States – Israel, and Palestine, living side by side in peace, security and mutual recognition, with Jerusalem as the capital of both States, based on relevant UN resolutions, international law and prior agreements.
- On 16 May, [Special Coordinator for the Middle East Process Tor Wennesland](#) briefed the Security Council about the situation in the Middle East including the Palestinian question, focusing on the protests in Sheikh Jarrah, East Jerusalem and the military escalation in the Gaza Strip. He called for the hostilities to stop, reiterating the appeal given by the UN Secretary-General for an immediate cessation of hostilities and for his warning that this conflict will increase radicalization and extremism in the whole region. He called on the international community to take immediate action to enable the parties to step back from the brink. He also welcomed the statements from members of the Security Council, the Arab League and others aimed at finding a diplomatic solution to the immediate crisis.

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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