

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

NGO Action News

21 January 2021

Middle East

- On 21 January, [HaMoked – Centre for the Defence of the Individual](#) filed a petition to Israel's High Court of Justice (HCJ) to demand that Palestinians women aged 50 and up and men aged 55 and up be allowed to enter the Seam Zone in the occupied West Bank, between the Wall and the Green Line, without special permits. The petition was filed after the Israeli military had failed to provide a substantive response to HaMoked's letter on this issue sent in May 2020 arguing that the resultant harm to this group was unreasonable and disproportionate, and concerned their rights of freedom of movement, dignity, property and freedom of occupation.
- On 21 January, [Al-Haq](#) issued a summary on its participation in and organisation of webinars since the start of the pandemic. The webinars highlighted issues such as decolonisation in Palestine, Israel's collective punishment policy, annexation, Covid-19 under occupation, Palestinian digital rights, Palestine and the International Criminal Court, business and human rights.
- On 21 January, [the Palestinian NGOs Network \(PNGO\)](#), [the Palestinian Human Rights Organisations Council \(PHROC\)](#) and [the Palestinian National Institute for NGOs \(PNIN\)](#) issued a press release expressing their concern that since the roll-out of a vaccine against Covid-19 in December 2020, the Israeli authorities have implemented their vaccine policy in a discriminatory, unlawful manner by disregarding their obligations to Palestinian healthcare.
- On 20 January, [Peace Now](#) issued the press release "2,572 Settlement Housing Units in Tenders are Published on the Eve of the Change in Government in Washington", explaining that 75 per cent of the tender units are in settlements that Israel would likely be forced to vacate under a permanent agreement. Peace Now also criticized that Prime Minister Netanyahu sought to pass a cabinet decision to legalize six new outposts and neighbourhoods, as well as allocating resources toward the legalization of many more outposts.
- On 19 January, [Al-Haq and Canadian Lawyers for International Human Rights \(CLAIHR\)](#) informed they filed a joint motion seeking leave to appeal to the Canadian Supreme Court, to appeal the decision in the *Kattenburg v. Canada (Attorney General)*, 2019 FC 1003 case, addressing the labelling of Israeli settlement products from the Occupied Palestinian Territory as "Product of Israel". The motion argues that product labelling of commercial

goods originating from Israeli settlements should give due consideration to international human rights obligations Canada is bound to as per international law.

- On 18 January, [The Association for Civil Rights in Israel \(ACRI\)](#) informed about its appeal to Israel's Ministry of Education for banning specific human rights organizations from speaking at schools in the Haifa district because they refer to Israel as an "apartheid state". ACRI called on the Ministry to give schools the freedom to hold pluralistic and critical discussions on controversial issues and to support educators throughout the process.
- On 17 January, [Al Mezan Centre for Human Rights](#) welcomed the Palestinian President's decree to hold parliamentary and presidential elections later this year. In this regard, the NGO informed it is launching a comprehensive campaign to spread awareness on political participation.
- On 14 January, [Gisha – Legal Centre for Freedom of Movement](#) informed that it had sent a letter to Israel's Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT) calling for immediate action to allow students from Gaza to exit the enclave to reach their academic institutions abroad, against the backdrop of Israel's ongoing prohibition on almost all travel via Erez Crossing.
- On 14 January, the [Palestinian Centre for Human Rights \(PCHR\)](#) concluded its first training course in 2021 on "Human Rights and Mechanisms to Promote Right to Health". These training courses are held for the third consecutive year under the project "Promote, Respect and Fulfill the Right to the Highest Attainable Standard of Health in the Gaza Strip" implemented by PCHR in partnership with the Palestinian Medical Relief Society (PMRS) and funded by the European Union.

Europe

- On 15 January, [Lawyers for Palestinian Human Rights \(LPHR\)](#) published its Demolitions and Displacement Bulletin for the period 20 October – 31 December 2020. Basing on OCHA records, LPHR reported that Israeli authorities demolished or seized 280 Palestinian-owned structures, displacing 237 people, including 130 children, and otherwise affecting the livelihoods or access to services of 2,674 others. LPHR said it was important to be cognisant of the tight nexus between a systematic policy and practice of demolitions, forcible displacement and creation of a coercive environment on the one hand and Israel's relentless pursuance of a settlement/annexation in the West Bank on the other hand.

North America

- On 17 February, the [Columbia University Palestine Studies Centre](#) will hold a conversation on the book "The Arab and Jewish Questions: Geographies of Engagement in Palestine and Beyond" with editors Bashir Bashir, Gil Anidjar, Leila Farsakh and Sherene Seikaly.

- On 21 January, [the Foundation for Middle East Peace \(FMEP\)](#) is holding the webinar “Calling the Thing by its Proper Name: ‘Apartheid’ Between the Jordan River & the Mediterranean Sea” featuring B’Tselem Director Hagai El-Ad, Journalist Nathan Thrall and Adalah – Legal Center for Minority Rights in Israel Lawyer Sawsan Zaher. The webinar is centred around the debate that while many Palestinian analysts and activists have for decades used Black South Africans’ struggles against apartheid as a legal and moral touchstone in their challenges to Israeli policies, defenders of Israel have long rejected this framing as inaccurate and irrelevant to the Israeli context and at times as anti-Israel and even antisemitic.
- On 17 January, [Human Rights Watch \(HRW\)](#) issued the press release “Israel: Provide Vaccines to Occupied Palestinians” stating that while Israel has already vaccinated more than 20 per cent of its citizens, including Jewish settlers in the West Bank, it has not committed to vaccinate Palestinians living in the same occupied territory under its military rule. HRW said Israel’s duties under the Fourth Geneva Convention to ensure medical supplies, including to combat the spread of pandemics, are heightened after more than 50 years of occupation with no end in sight and these responsibilities, alongside its obligations under international human rights law, include providing vaccines in a nondiscriminatory manner to Palestinians living under its control, using as a benchmark what it provides for its own citizens.

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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