

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

NGO Action News

8 January 2020

Middle East

- On 6 January, [B'Tselem](#) issued a report denouncing Israel's punitive house demolitions in East Jerusalem and the West Bank and showing how they had spiked in 2019 compared to previous years. According to B'Tselem figures, last year Israel demolished 106 housing units in the West Bank, leaving 349 Palestinians homeless, including 160 minors, as well as 150 non-residential structures. B'Tselem argued that the justices of the Israeli Supreme Court repeatedly dismissed petitions brought by Palestinians against these demolitions, "relying on an unreasonable interpretation of international law and acceptance of the State's arguments [...]".
- On 2 January, [Al-Haq](#)'s General Director Shawan Jabarin published an open letter to denounce a "strategy of convoluted claims and allegations that aim to instil doubt and fear into the minds of [the organisation's] supporters" in reference to the Israeli Ministry of Strategic Affairs' campaign against the NGO. He defended Al Haq's work as based on the rule of law: "We abide by the rule of law [...]. Claims and accusations that aim to replace the rule of law undermine the system as a whole."
- On 1 January, [Gisha – Legal Centre for Freedom of Movement](#) reaffirmed that the rights of Palestinians in Gaza "must not be used as bargaining chips in political barter." Gisha lamented, following a meeting of Israel's security cabinet to discuss measures to be implemented as part of a "settlement" with military factions in the Strip, that Israel continues to use its control over the movement of Palestinians to deepen the separation between Gaza and the West Bank "as part of a conscious policy." The NGO called for Israeli authorities to allow travel and transit of goods from and into the Strip, rather than making minor modifications to sweeping restrictions on movement of people and goods.
- On 27 December, [the International Federation for Human Rights \(FIDH\) and its member organisations in Palestine and Israel, Al-Haq, Al-Mezan Centre for Human Rights, the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights \(PCHR\), B'Tselem and Adalah](#) welcomed the findings of the Chief Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court on 20 December that the opening of an investigation into alleged war crimes in the situation in Palestine was warranted. The organisations further appreciated the Prosecutor's legal analysis that the Court has jurisdiction over the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and Gaza. They underscored the importance of reaching a ruling "as swiftly as possible in the interests of victims and affected communities" and called on all parties to cooperate with the Court in the exercise of its mandate, including in the situation in Palestine.

- On 21 December, [Al-Haq, BADIL Resource Centre for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights, Al Mezan Centre for Human Rights, Addameer- Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association, Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies and others](#) issued a joint statement to welcome the concluding observations of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD). The latter highlighted for the first time, according to the NGOs, Israeli policies and practices of “racial segregation and apartheid over the Palestinian people on both sides of the Green Line.” The remarks were issued following Israel’s review by the Committee at its 100th session on 4-5 December 2019 in Geneva, and reflected the active engagement of Palestinian, regional, and international civil society organisations in the review process.
- On 23 December, [Addameer – Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association](#) stated it had collected “hard evidence on torture and ill-treatment committed against Palestinian detainees at Israeli interrogation centres” since late August 2019. Addameer denounced at the same time the ban, imposed on the organisation by the Israeli Court of First Instance in Jerusalem, preventing it from publishing any of the details of torture.
- On 20 December, [Al Mezan Centre for Human Rights, Al-Haq and the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights \(PCHR\)](#) issued a joint press release to welcome the decision of the Office of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, to finally submit the question of territorial jurisdiction over the situation in Palestine to the Pre-Trial Chamber of the Court.
- On 19 December, [Hamoked - Centre for the Defence of the Individual](#)’s Executive Director Jessica Montell published a letter summing up 2019 activities, including “most noteworthy achievements.” These include the release of young Palestinians denied legal status by Israel and slated for deportation as illegal aliens, the battle against the “quiet deportation” of Palestinians from East Jerusalem resulting in the lowest number of residency revocations in a single year since the Ministry of Interior began its policy in the 1990s, and the granting of Palestinians who live in Jerusalem, pursuant to family unification processes, the same conditions of employment as Israeli citizens.

Europe

- On 24 December, [Lawyers for Palestinian Human Rights \(LPHR\)](#) issued a press release welcoming “a seminal step towards legal accountability and justice for [Palestinian] victims, survivors and their families” in reference to ICC Prosecutor Fatou Bensouda’s decision to open an investigation into the situation in Palestine. LPHR welcomed the Prosecutor’s Request as a “thorough, clear and compelling factual and legal analysis supporting her unequivocal position that the “territory” over which the Court may exercise its jurisdiction under the Rome Statute comprises the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and Gaza.”

North America

- On 9 March, the [Columbia University Centre for Palestine Studies](#) will hold the event “Citizenship as Gesture: The Making of Palestinian Citizenship in Israel” where guest speaker Lana Tatour will draw on new archival findings of the 1948-52 period to trace the making of Israel’s citizenship regime.
- On 27 January, [The Foundation for Middle East Peace, along with Americans for Peace Now, J Street, the New Israel Fund, and the Middle East Institute](#) will organize the event “Demolishing Democracy: How Annexationism is Bulldozing Israeli Institutions”. The discussions will feature Yehuda Shaul, the co-founder of Breaking the Silence, and Debra Shushan, the Director of Government Relations at J Street, and focus on how Israel’s democratic institutions are under growing threat as are their viability and integrity and with them the future of Israeli democracy.

United Nations

- On 31 December, [UN human rights expert Michael Lynk](#) hailed the International Criminal Court’s decision to consider a formal criminal investigation into allegations of war crimes in Palestine as a “momentous step forward in the quest for accountability in the five-decade-long Israeli occupation.” The Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in the Palestinian Territory Occupied since 1967 underlined that accountability has, until now, been largely missing in action, although the international community has adopted hundreds of resolutions through the UN condemning various features of Israel’s entrenched occupation of the Palestinian territory. He stated, “Justice delayed is justice denied. Should the allegations of war crimes then proceed to the formal investigation stage, every effort must be made to advance the work of the Prosecutor’s office in a reasonably speedy manner [...]”
- On 18 December, [UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Process](#) Nickolay Mladenov briefed the Security Council on the Implementation of SCR 2334 (2016). He stated that the month of December marked three years since the adoption of the Resolution and the situation on the ground since 2016 had only deteriorated, as settlements have expanded significantly, demolitions accelerated, and violence and incitement continued. He said that he remained concerned by the persistent lack of progress towards ending the occupation and realizing a negotiated two-State solution. He urged leaders on all sides to summon the necessary political will to take concrete steps in support of ending the occupation and realizing a lasting peace, resulting in two democratic States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace with secure and recognized borders, with Jerusalem as their shared capital.

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.

The Division for Palestinian Rights launched a user survey regarding the UN Information System on the Question of Palestine (UNISPAL). <http://www.un.org/unispal>
Please take a moment to complete the short [survey](#).



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