

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

NGO Action News

15 April 2020

Middle East

- On 15 April, [B'Tselem](#) issued the report “Spike in Settler Violence During Pandemic: Palestinians and Homes Repeatedly Attacked” in which the NGO has documented 50 incidents of settler violence towards Palestinians across the West Bank. B'Tselem reported that “Israeli settlers are attacking Palestinian shepherds on pastureland, entering villages, attacking residents and destroying their property” despite the coronavirus crisis.
- On 14 April, [Adalah – The Legal Centre for Arab Minority Rights in Israel](#) reported that following its petition to the Israeli Supreme Court, on 13 April Israel committed to open health clinics and coronavirus testing centres for some 150,000 Palestinians living in East Jerusalem neighborhoods beyond the Separation Wall. The petition was filed jointly with the Civic Coalition for Palestinian Rights in Jerusalem.
- On 14 April, [Al-Haq, Addameer Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association, Jerusalem Legal Aid and Human Rights Centre, Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies and others](#) issued a joint urgent appeal to the UN Special Rapporteurs, including on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, on the need to uphold the rights and dignity of Palestinian workers employed in Israel during the COVID-19 pandemic. The organizations urged the UN Special Rapporteurs to call on Israel to cease impeding prevention and mitigation efforts on the ground, to test all Palestinian workers returning to the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT) and to uphold the right of Palestinian workers to adequate housing, water and sanitation to mitigate the effects of COVID-19.
- On 14 April, the [Palestinian Centre for Human Rights \(PCHR\)](#), jointly with the Palestinian Medical Relief Society (PMRS), organized the online workshop “Gaza Strip and Coronavirus, Reality and Health Challenges”. The workshop, which was attended by representatives of the Palestinian Ministry of Health in Gaza, the WHO, the private health sector and civil society organizations, touched on Israel’s ban on importing medical devices and equipment to the Gaza Strip as well as WHO financial support to Gazan hospitals for COVID-19 testing kits, essential drugs and medical supplies.
- On 13 April, [Defense for Children International Palestine \(DCIP\)](#) launched a petition demanding that Israeli authorities take immediate action to release all Palestinian child detainees in Israeli prisons in view of the rapid spread of COVID-19 and the compromised sanitary conditions in Israeli prisons.

- On 11 April, [BADIL – Resource Centre for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights](#) issued a press release to demand that UNRWA fulfils its responsibility to address the COVID-19 outbreak among Palestine refugees by preparing an emergency plan to deal with the inadequate living conditions and humanitarian consequences of the pandemic among the refugee population, including the interruption of income streams in Lebanon and the Gaza Strip in particular. BADIL also called on UNRWA to establish and equip field clinics to deal with the spread of COVID-19 and on WHO to allocate a special budget for intervention in the camps in coordination with the health sector of the host countries.
- On 9 April, [Al Mezan Centre for Human Rights](#) issued a press release on the need for psychological support for children in Gaza’s quarantine centres. The NGO warned that 13 years of closure and restrictions of movement of goods have kept Gaza in a protracted humanitarian crisis, left families struggling under severe economic and psychological pressure and children vulnerable to domestic violence and abuse, especially amid school closures and the absence of peer socializing.

Europe

- On 15 April, the [Norwegian Refugee Council \(NRC\)](#) issued a press release on Israel’s recent targeting of homes, water, sanitation and hygiene facilities in the occupied West Bank and how these are undermining efforts to curb the COVID-19 pandemic. NRC Secretary-General Jan Egeland stated, “It is Israel’s legal obligation to protect the health and life of Palestinians under occupation” and called on Israeli authorities to cease the unlawful destruction and seizure of property in the West Bank.

North America

- On 17 April, the [Foundation for Middle East Peace \(FMEP\)](#) is organizing the webinar “Surveillance and the Fight Against COVID-19 in Israel and Around the World”. The webinar will host Sharon Abraham-Weiss (Association for Civil Rights in Israel), Marwa Fatafta (Access Now) and Nadim Nashif (7amleh) and will be moderated by Peter Beinart.
- On 15 April, [Human Rights Watch \(HRW\)](#) published the article “COVID-19 Restrictions Offer Window into Palestinian Experience”. HRW denounced the longstanding restrictions imposed by Israel on 2.5 million Palestinians residing in the West Bank, including the need to obtain time-limited permits to enter large parts of the West Bank and areas taken over by settlements or the army, and the ban on movement of 2 million Palestinians living in Gaza outside of “exceptional humanitarian cases”.

United Nations

- On 14 April, the [United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People](#) hosted Mr. Matthias Schmale, Director of UNRWA Operations in the

Gaza Strip, for a virtual discussion on “The COVID-19 Pandemic in Gaza and Ways to Mitigate its Impact on Palestine Refugees”. Mr. Schmale stressed that while COVID-19 in Gaza so far appears to be contained, the potential for a health emergency remains high and significant outside help is needed to prevent it from occurring.

- On 12 April, [United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process Nickolay Mladenov](#) issued a statement on the socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. He called for discussions on how Israel can ensure regular transfers of revenues to the Palestinian Authority in order to guarantee a smooth functioning of Palestinian institutions and service delivery to the Palestinian people. He also called for generous external support and technical assistance to the Palestinian government, targeted directly to the recovery process. He also welcomed the statement of the Chair of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee (AHLC) forum on 3 April, calling for strong international donor support.
- On 11 April, the [United Nations Secretary-General’s Envoys to the Middle East](#) launched a joint appeal to the region to follow the Secretary-General’s call of 23 March for an immediate Global Ceasefire “urging all warring parties to pull back from hostilities, put aside mistrust and animosity and silence their guns.” The Envoys, including the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, called on parties to reach out across conflict lines and cooperate locally, regionally and globally to stop the rapid spread of the Coronavirus, to facilitate humanitarian access and assistance to the internally displaced and refugees, to pay special attention to the plight of the detained, the abducted and the missing, and to work with the UN on urgent international response plans and recovery measures.

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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