



VIRTUAL MEETING

Closed Consultations with Civil Society Organizations

“Advocating for Accountability in the Occupied Palestinian Territory”

**Convened by the
Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (CEIRPP)**

8 November 2022

CHAIR SUMMARY

The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (CEIRPP) held closed consultations with Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), titled “Advocating for Accountability in the Occupied Palestinian Territory”, on 8 November 2022, as a virtual meeting under the Chatham House Rule. Participants included CSO representatives from Palestine, Israel and the United States, as well as from members and observers of the Committee.

The objective of this event was to foster an exchange between Committee members and civil society representatives on the issue of accountability, which has become central to addressing the end of the Israeli occupation and uphold respect for international law.

The session was chaired by **H.E. Ambassador Cheikh Niang**, Permanent Representative of Senegal and Chair of the Committee. In his introductory remarks, the **Chair** welcomed the participants and stressed how addressing impunity was of paramount importance, recalling that several human rights organizations have been increasingly targeted by Israeli measures aimed at silencing them or drastically reducing the scope of their action.

In their presentations and during the discussion, the participating organizations raised the following issues: (1) how to end Israel’s repression and apartheid against Palestinians; (2) following up on the International Criminal Court proceedings and recent findings of Commission of Inquiry and others; (3) promoting individual and State accountability for Palestinians’ rights violations; (4) investigating the role of the private sector in the Israeli occupation economy.

Speakers addressed the escalation of human rights abuses in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem (OPT) and the Israeli military forces’ actions within the framework of what many organizations called “a system of oppression amounting to apartheid”. Participants highlighted that the international community’s relations with Israel should be informed by the consensus regarding the illegality of the occupation in the OPT over five decades. Safeguarding the two-State solution and the international legal order meant that the UN and its Member States must continue to apply principles uniformly and consistently. Speakers

emphasized that a first step to remediating the situation would be to recognize the existing situation of apartheid, adding that the same standards and commitment to protecting Ukrainian civilian population, for example, should be applied globally and including to the case of Palestinians.

Panelists further highlighted how the situation in Gaza was deteriorating, with the population living a process of de-development where restrictions of movement were at the heart of everyday life and violating innumerable human rights. Describing life in Gaza's extreme situation meant that even going to a hospital was an impossible task. It was stated that the Israeli government's rationale was to prevent the actualization of the two-State solution on the 1967 lines. The only options for NGO action were to ensure that perpetrators be held accountable for their crimes while advocating for accountability and reparations for victims.

It was mentioned that over the previous three years, Palestinians had experienced a rise in violence perpetrated by Israeli military forces and increasingly by settlers. Israeli human rights activists noted that little progress could be achieved within the framework of the Israeli judiciary and demands for Israeli forces to be held accountable for their serious violations remained fruitless.

Participants claimed that only the international community's intervention could stop the violence and human rights abuses; the International Criminal Court remained a mechanism of last resort as victims had no other means to obtain justice. They also underlined Israel's obligations as the occupying Power under international humanitarian law, highlighting the imminent risk of forced displacement of Palestinians, including Bedouin communities present in Massafer Yatta in the southern West Bank, as well as in Khan Al Ahmar.

One speaker exposed the role of the private sector in regard to complicity with Israel's appropriation of Palestinian resources. Companies involved in the "Israeli occupation economy" represented an integral part of the settlement economy, receiving incentives by Israeli authorities. As the settler's economy was intertwined with the Israeli economy, corporate accountability was therefore an essential component to reframe understanding of the context and achieve a just and lasting peace.

During the questions and answers session, one participating CSOs formulated several recommendations to the Committee, including the continuation of its advocacy to expose the abuses committed in the OPT. Participants stressed that additional suggestions for the Committee action could be drawn from the fight against the Apartheid regime in South Africa. Seeking an Advisory Opinion from the International Court of Justice was also mentioned, as a first step. Member States could take further action in the meantime. Furthermore, the international community needed to increase attention towards corporate responsibility as only a general backlash by Member States would have an impact. Among other measures, making public corporate lists available would provide tools for future advocacy against Israeli abuses. Speakers therefore called for an update of the OHCHR database of all enterprises making business in Israeli settlements in the OPT.

Committee members stressed the crucial role of the ongoing partnership with CSOs and mentioned how their inputs and recommendations added value to the work of the Committee.

Ambassador Cheikh Niang closed the event.

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