

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

NGO Action News

8 June 2023

Middle East

- On 6 June, [Peace Now](#) informed that a plan for the “Sha’ar Shomron” industrial zone, south of the West Bank Palestinian city of Qalqiliya, was deposited by the Israeli Higher Planning Committee. The industrial zone is expected to become the largest in the West Bank, with 2 million square meters of land for industrial use. According to Peace Now, the aim of the plan is to create a “settlement continuum” between the settlements in the area. In essence, the Sha’ar Shomron will blur the Green Line, bring Israel’s economy into the West Bank, and support the economy of the settlements, primarily through property tax payments that will benefit the Israeli regional and local councils.
- On 5 June, [Al Mezan](#) published an article to mark World Environment Day, recalling that Gaza lacks a safe, clean, and sustainable environment. Al Mezan detailed how Israeli policies and practices, including a 16-year-old blockade, adversely impact local capacity to protect the environment and ultimately hinder Palestinians’ right to a safe, clean, healthy, and sustainable environment. Al Mezan called on the international community to take immediate action to address the underlying causes of Gaza’s environmental crisis. The organization also stressed that Israel must fulfill its duties as an occupying power, including taking appropriate measures to prevent significant harm to the environment of the OPT that prejudices the health and well-being of the occupied Palestinian population.
- On 4 June, [Physicians for Human Rights](#) published a new report by the Platform of Israeli NGOs for Human Rights titled “State of the Occupation: A Joint Situation Report.” This situation report from 17 human rights organizations present updates on Israeli security forces violence, annexation of Palestinian land, displacement and attacks on civil society organizations.
- On 4 June, [B’Tselem](#) informed that Israel held 1,002 Palestinians in administrative detention in March 2023, breaking a 20-year record. B’Tselem stated that Israel uses administrative detention to arrest political activists and as a quick and easy alternative to criminal proceedings, bypassing the need to prove guilt and hold a trial. Unlike a prison sentence, administrative detention can be extended repeatedly and indefinitely, such that detainees and their families never know when the detention will end and are forced to live in uncertainty for months or even years.
- On 3 June, [Al-Haq](#) published an article to recall that one month before two million Palestinians in the Gaza Strip mark 16 years of Israel’s illegal blockade and closure, they

were subjected to the sixth Israeli military offensive since 2008. The official Israeli-declared goal of the pre-planned military offensive, which started on 9 May 2023, and ended with a ceasefire on 13 May 2023, was to target members of the Islamic Jihad Movement in the Gaza Strip. Al-Haq stated that, in practice, Israel's offensive was characterized by widespread shelling of civilian homes in densely populated residential areas, deliberately targeting entire families, including children.

- On 24 May, [7amleh](#) informed that eleven Members of the United States Congress sent a letter to PayPal CEO Dan Schulman, urging the company to open up services to Palestinians in the OPT. This letter was sent in collaboration with 7amleh, as a part of the bigger PayPal4Palestine Campaign's effort, which was launched in 2016 in collaboration with several organizations. The campaign points out that PayPal currently provides services throughout the state of Israel, and even to Israeli settlers living in the illegal settlements in the West Bank but does not allow Palestinians to access its services in what seemingly appears to be discriminatory business practices. Denying Palestinians access to PayPal's services affects the Palestinians' rights to access livelihood and work opportunities and participate in the development of their economy.

Asia and Europe

- On 5 June, the [European Coordination of Committees and Associations for Palestine](#) (ECCP) published a press release to welcome the final recommendations of the European Union [Committee of Inquiry](#) to investigate the use of Pegasus and equivalent surveillance spyware. The European Parliament Committee was tasked with investigating the violations committed by spyware within the European Union. In the aftermath of the Pegasus scandal, the ECCP has advocated to the Committee, highlighting that spyware technology is dangerous and that the commercial exchange of vulnerabilities gives unstoppable power in the hands of any who buys the technology. ECCP added that Israeli spyware companies sell a product which was tested on Palestinians in the course of the Israeli occupation, apartheid policies and the oppression of civil society organizations. False accusations of terrorism were justified by "evidence" collected by spyware among other means, which turned out to be falsified.

North America

- On 7 June, [Human Rights Watch](#) (HRW) informed that faith groups across North America came together to launch the Apartheid Free Communities Initiative. Convened by the American Friends Service Committee, this coalition brings together over 100 congregations, faith groups, and organizations as an interdenominational campaign working to end the crime of apartheid committed against Palestinians. HRW added that these types of Interdenominational movements are critical to providing a unified voice on human rights issues.

- On 6 June, [Human Rights Watch](#) published an article on the threats of autonomous weapons and surveillance technologies by Israel to deepen systemic discrimination against Palestinians. The author informed that Israeli authorities have developed and used drones, loitering munitions, and remote-controlled gun turrets, like the Smart Shooter recently installed in Hebron and Bethlehem. Incorporating artificial intelligence and emerging technologies into weapons systems raises a host of ethical, humanitarian, and legal concerns for all people, including Palestinians.
- On 5 June, the [Foundation for Middle East Peace](#) (FMEP) published the podcast “Palestinian Rights, the IHRA Definition, & the Battle Around Biden’s Antisemitism Strategy.” FMEP President Lara Friedman spoke with Yousef Munayyer (Arab Center Washington DC) and Emma Saltzberg (Diaspora Alliance), in the context of the newly-release US National Strategy to Counter Antisemitism and its implications for both the fight against antisemitism and the ongoing, related fight against the use of antisemitism accusations to delegitimize criticism of the state of Israel and its policies and objections to the political ideology of Zionism, as well as to attack and to silence critics of Israel and advocates for Palestinian history, identity, and rights.
- On 5 June, Brian Boyd, Co-Director of the [Columbia University Center for Palestine Studies](#), participated in “Return to Shuqba: On societal archeology, cave anthropology and oral heritage,” a workshop held at Birzeit University. Brian is carrying out field work related to his project Building Community Anthropology Across the Jordan Valley, a community-based museological and anthropological research and teaching project focused on the town and surrounding landscape of Shuqba in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The overall aim of the project is to contribute to the creation of sustainable cultural heritage and tourism-related collaborations between local communities, the Palestinian diaspora, and local, regional and international institutions (ranging across academic, governmental and NGOs).

United Nations

- On 2 June, the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East ([UNRWA](#)), Philippe Lazzarini, raised alarm about the [Agency’s deepening funding crisis](#) and warned of imminent risk of collapse during this year’s Pledging Conference convened by the President of the General Assembly. Collectively, Member States pledged US\$812.3 million, of which US\$107.2 million are new contributions for 2023. Lazzarini further stated the need, as the Agency will next year mark its 75th anniversary, for a strategic discussion on a sustainable UNRWA until a political solution is achieved.
- The [World Health Organization](#) (WHO) published an infographic on the attacks on health care in the OPT for the period January-April 2023. WHO informed on 96 incidents against health care facilities, including attacks on vehicles and personnel in the OPT in the first four months of this year, directly affecting 78 health workers.

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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