

General Assembly
Human Rights Council
10th Session

**Item 7:
Human rights situation in Palestine and other occupied Arab territories**

Mr. President,

The NGOs signatories to this statement remain gravely concerned about the situation of Palestinian women and children suffering under continued Israeli occupation. There is no evidence of changes in the policies of the occupying power. Israel pursues its military rule in the Occupied Territories, and imposes unilateral decisions on the Palestinians without respect to human rights and disregarding all UN resolutions, considering itself above the rule of international law and order.

The Israeli occupiers kill and torture Palestinians with impunity. There is hardly a day that we do not hear or read of bulldozing Palestinian's homes, of grabbing land, uprooting olive trees, starving and killing Palestinian – men, women and children.

Israel's recent military assault on Gaza has left more than a thousand Palestinians dead and thousands wounded and maimed and homeless, and has destroyed most of the areas infrastructure. All this on top of a people having suffered for months from a tight blockade imposed by Israel, causing what has been internationally recognized as a humanitarian catastrophe.

The Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, Professor Richard Falk, reported to the 9th Special Session of the Human Rights Council regarding the situation in the Gaza Strip (and I quote): "Beyond the immediate crisis some underlying features should be noted: about 75% of the population lacks access to sanitary water and has no electric power. Such conditions are superimposed on the circumstances of Gazans resulting from the prolonged blockade that had deteriorated the physical and mental health, and the nutritional status, of the population of Gaza as a whole, leaving some 45% of children suffering from acute anaemia. Interference in the supply of medicines and health equipment, and border closures, had made it impossible or many Gazans to receive or continue treatment for life-threatening conditions. It was also reliably concluded that up to 80% of Gaza was living under the poverty line, that unemployment totals approached 75%, and that the health system was near collapse from the effects of the blockade" (unquote).

The daily human rights violations that arise as a result of the continued siege of Gaza have a tremendous impact particularly on children and the sick who need services that are neither available nor accessible. The situation worsens by the day, and if nothing changes there will be a total breakdown of public institutions that will severely undermine national capacity and the Palestinian economy. The United Nations Commissioner for Human Rights, Ms Navy Pillay, called the situation in Gaza as "direct contraventions of

international human rights and humanitarian law.”

In light of these concerns we request the Human Rights Council:

To call on Israel to respect its legal obligations as the occupying power and to implement the UN resolutions pertaining to the resolution of the conflict.

To call on Israel to end its military occupation of the Palestinian territories.

To call on the General Assembly to convene an international Peace Conference to address the Arab Israeli conflict in all its aspects. It should name an mediator who is courageous, impartial, and is determined to bring this long-standing conflict an end in accordance with the relevant UN resolutions, ensuring that women’s voices and perspectives are integrated in the peace negotiations in line with Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, war and peace.

Thank you Mr. President

Signatories:

General Federation of Arab Women (GFAW)

Women International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF)

Delivered by Ms. Wassila Mansouri