



Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

Ligue Internationale de Femmes pour la Paix et la Liberté

Liga Internacional de Mujeres por la Paz y la Libertad

Consultative Status with UN ECOSOC, UNCTAD and UNESCO. Special Consultative Relations with FAO, ILD, and UNICEF.

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If the crimes that are committed daily against the Palestinian people happened in any other part of the world, it would give rise to a global scream, swelling the corridors of the United Nations. But in contrast there is silence, and the many and varied acts of barbarity are carried out by Israel opposition is smothered by the American veto, and its blind cohorts.

Introduction

The members of the Human Rights Council are fully apprised of the ongoing illegal human rights abuses by the Israel government of the Palestinian people and its continued refusal to in anyway acknowledge the nature of its action both in the Occupied Territories, East Jerusalem and Gaza. Member states are fully aware they face an ongoing crisis, namely the continuation of Israel's brutal and illegal civil and military occupation of Palestinian lands, and its violent and daily abuse of Palestinian human rights. For more than 50 years Israel has relentlessly pursued policies dedicated to the eradication of the Palestinians through its theft of their land, water resources and natural agricultural riches; through the demolition of residential homes; the denial of residents rights; illegal imprisonment; and, the arrests and deportations of both Palestinians and foreign nationals.

Most recently, the Israeli military released a new order calling for all Palestinian residents of Jerusalem and the West Bank to be forcibly deported back to Gaza.

More damage is done through border closures and checkpoints and the associated humiliation, the extra-judicial killings of men, women and children and the trauma of witnessing such acts as an Israeli soldier in full battle gear crouched on one knee his target a child, whose brains are scattered on a local rubbish heap.

No criticism of Israel, who prides itself on being the only democracy in the Middle East, is tolerated. In his book *Apartheid or Peace*, American ex-president Carter makes no apologies for stating Israel's occupation of the Palestine as akin to 'apartheid.' He himself has attracted the so over familiar rebuke of being anti-Semitic, as have countless others including the distinguished Israeli historian Ilan Pappé for his expose of the forced exodus of Palestinians in 1948, and the esteemed Noam Chomsky, recently denied entry.

Indeed, Israel's practices that victimize the indigenous Palestinian people, constitute a violation of every one of the most fundamental human rights embodied in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: the right to life, to freedom of movement, to civil, political, religious and cultural freedom of expression. Israel's historical policy of institutional

discrimination, its passionate determination to gain hegemony over the region is at the root of its illegal Occupation, and colonization,

Political Context

Our subject is the abuse of Palestinian rights, which will continue to be perpetrated as long as the Occupation remains. Since 1967, Israel's true nature has remained unchanged, unbending, and unapologetic. The status quo has been protected through artificial political sponsorship and limitless American aid. As there are thousands well documented by Human Rights Watch, B'Tselem, Amnesty International and the like, we ourselves have not provided evidential material of abuses either on a national, communal or individual. Instead we will insert evidence as documented in the following report by Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (report in grey text).

Israeli violations of international and humanitarian law has continued in the OPT during the reporting period (20 – 26 May 2010).

Shooting

During the reporting period, IOF killed two Palestinian militants in the Gaza Strip and wounded 12 civilians, including 5 children, one of whom is disabled, in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Additionally, 30 civilians, including 9 children, were injured or shocked when Israeli warplanes bombarded a target in the northern Gaza Strip.

On 22 May 2010, in the Gaza Strip, two Palestinian militants were killed during an exchange of fire with Israeli troops stationed at the border between the Gaza Strip and Israel, to the east of Khan Yunis.

During the reporting period, 5 Palestinian workers, including a child, who were collecting bricks and construction aggregate were wounded by Israeli troops stationed at the border between the Gaza Strip and Israel.

During the reporting period, Israeli warplanes bombarded civilian targets in the Gaza Strip. A number of civilian facilities were destroyed or damaged and 30 Palestinian civilians, including 9 children and 6 women, were injured or shocked.

Israeli gunboats also fired at Palestinian fishing boats in the Gaza Strip. No casualties were reported.

Incursions

During the reporting period, IOF conducted at least 26 military incursions into Palestinian communities in the West Bank. IOF arrested 35 Palestinian civilians, including 11 children.

They also arrested 14 civilians, including 11 international and Israeli human rights defenders, during peaceful demonstrations against the construction of the Annexation Wall and settlement activities.

During the reporting period, IOF ordered the expulsion of Sheikh Mohammed Abu Tair, Member of the Palestinian Legislative Council, from Jerusalem by 19 June 2010.

In the Gaza Strip, IOF conducted two incursions into Palestinian areas, during which they razed a 2-donum area of agricultural land and demolished a house and a bird farm.

Restrictions on Movement

IOF have continued to impose a tightened siege on the OPT and imposed severe restrictions on the movement of Palestinian civilians in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including occupied East Jerusalem.

Gaza Strip

Israel has continuously closed all border crossings to the Gaza Strip for over two and a half years. The illegal Israeli-imposed siege of Gaza, which has steadily tightened since June 2007, has had a disastrous impact on the humanitarian and economic situation in the Gaza Strip.

On Friday, 01 January 2010, IOF decided to close the Nahal Oz crossing permanently and to allow the entry of fuels through Karm Abu Salem (Kerem Shalom) crossing, southeast of Rafah, citing security reasons.

1.5 million people are being denied their basic rights, including freedom of movement, and their rights to appropriate living conditions, work, health and education.

The primary concern of the population of the Gaza Strip is to obtain their basic needs of food, medicines, water and electricity supplies.

Israel has continuously prevented the entry of raw construction materials into the Gaza Strip for over two and a half years.

Israel has not allowed fuel supplies into the Gaza Strip, excluding marginal amounts of cooking gas and industrial fuel for Gaza Power Plant, since 10 December 2008.

The Rafah International Crossing Point has been opened for a limited number of days for a small number of patients who received medical treatment abroad and needed to return home to the Gaza Strip.

Israel has continued to close Beit Hanoun (Erez) crossing for Palestinian civilians wishing to travel to the West Bank and Israeli for medical treatment, trade, or social visits.

Israel has imposed additional restrictions on access of international diplomats, journalists and humanitarian workers to the Gaza Strip. They have prevented representatives of several international humanitarian organizations from entering the Gaza Strip.

Living conditions of the Palestinian civilian population have seriously deteriorated as levels of poverty and unemployment have sharply mounted.

At least 800 Palestinians prisoners from Gaza held in Israeli jails have been deprived of family visitation for more than two years.

IOF have continued to attack Palestinian fishermen along the Gaza Strip coast.

West Bank

IOF have continued to impose severe restrictions on the movement of Palestinian civilians throughout the West Bank, including occupied East Jerusalem. Thousands of Palestinian civilians from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip continue to be denied access to Jerusalem.

IOF have established checkpoints in and around Jerusalem, severely restricting Palestinian access to the city. Civilians are frequently prevented from praying at the al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem.

There are approximately 630 permanent roadblocks, manned and unmanned checkpoints across the West Bank. In addition, there are approximately 60-80 "flying" or temporary checkpoints erected across the West Bank by IOF every week.

When complete, the illegal Annexation Wall will stretch for 724 kilometers around the West Bank, further isolating the entire population. 350 kilometers of the Wall has already been constructed. Approximately 99% of the Wall has been constructed inside the West Bank itself, further confiscating Palestinian land.

At least 65% of the main roads that leads to 18 Palestinian communities in the West Bank are closed or fully controlled by IOF (47 out of 72 roads).

There are around 500 kilometers of restricted roads across the West Bank. In addition, approximately one third of the West Bank, including occupied East Jerusalem, is inaccessible to Palestinians without a permit issued by the IOF. These permits are extremely difficult to obtain.

IOF continue to harass and assault demonstrators who hold peaceful protests against the construction of the Annexation Wall.

IOF continues to harass Palestinian civilians in Jerusalem and throughout the West Bank, including regularly stopping and search Palestinian civilians in the street.

During the reporting period, Israeli troops stationed at military checkpoints in the West Bank arrested 8 Palestinian civilians, including a child and a woman.

Settlement Activities

IOF have continued settlement activities and Israeli settlers living in the OPT in violation of international humanitarian law have continued to attack Palestinian civilians and property.

The nearly half a million Jewish settlers in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, is in breach of international humanitarian law, in this case, Article 49(6) of the 4th Geneva Convention. There is no sign whatsoever that Israel intends to desist, despite continual demands from the international community, to do so. Its destruction of Arab property to make way for these settlements and the roads that service them (and the Wall) is in breach of Article 53 of the 4th Geneva Convention.

On 24 May 2010, IOF issued a military order confiscating large areas of Palestinian agricultural land in Hebron to establish "a secure road for settlers" linking the "Kiryat Arba" settlement and the Ibrahimi Mosque. The road is expected to be at least 1,300 meters long. The order gave those adversely affected one week to appeal against it.

This is the day in day out civil and domestic circumstances of Palestinian existence, diminished to a raw struggle for survival. Since September 9th, 2000 the Palestinian struggle for freedom has been swept up in President George Bush's war against terror. Israel's atrocities committed against Palestinians are sanctioned as legal and justified given its 'security concerns' while the Palestinian resistance is labeled as terrorism. Hence Israel has to-date been able to instigate policies in the Occupied Territories with a free hand, and weapons of war that whirl like a fire ball destroying everything in its wake. Whenever or wherever Israel believes itself threatened, Israel responds with military offensives against towns and villages (Gaza and ?? serving as the most recent examples).

Since the beginning of the Intifada in September 2000, over 7,000 Palestinians have been killed and 31,000 injured. These casualties continue to mount while successive UN Resolutions gather dust.

Statistics however cannot express tragedy that transcends the numbers (not sure about this sentence. The continuous Israeli attacks on Palestinian civilians have risen specifically since early April, and has always been an unbelievable practice. The shooting of infants, and young children, the abuse of them when used as human shield could happen on no other place on earth.

There are some 11,000 Palestinian political prisoners held illegally in Israeli jails. Hundreds of Palestinian civilians, including 10 ministers and 31 members of the Palestine Legislative Council, have been arrested. Currently there are 121 Palestinian women Political prisoners distributed in three prisons; Telmond, Hasharon, and Al Ramalla, among them 22 married women, 18 women with children

On December 27th 2008, Israel began its 3 week Cast Iron Lead invasion of Gaza. At the end of the 3 weeks 1400 residents were dead including 412 children and 110 women. Over 5, 300 private citizens injured. Remnants' of white phosphorus remain buried in the rubble. Little rebuilding has began due to the ongoing siege.

Despite an official withdrawal Israeli remains in tight control of the right of passage be it human or essential goods resulting in the continued suffocation of Gaza. The pre-existing humanitarian crisis in Gaza has now been magnified, with hospitals and social service agencies reporting new casualties resulting from alarming shortages of food, fuel and medicine. As attested by the UN Fact Finding Mission headed by Justice Goldstone, Israel has committed crimes against humanity and crimes wars. The Goldstone report recommends Israel undertake an internal investigation. We wait with bated breath.

This is Gaza: a population of 1.5 million people kept in formaldehyde (not sure about this sentence either). It is a human catastrophe that has many enablers. World leaders have shut their eyes to the crimes witnessed and documented countless times over by human rights groups. World media continuously sidesteps the truth and deliberately ignores

Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

1, rue de Varembe - Case Potale 28 CH-1211 Geneva 20 - Switzerland

Telephone: +41 22 919 7080 Fax: +41 22 919 7081

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international efforts to highlight the humanitarian crisis. Together they are complicit in Israel's dehumanization of a people.

Murder on Dark Waters: 'Operation Sky Winds'

On May 31st 2010 the Israeli navy boarded a flotilla flying American, Greek and Turkish flags, whose cargo was humanitarian aid to besieged Gaza. It is more than curious why all the attacks by the IOF always occur under the cover of darkness. The Zionist attack on the Gaza Freedom Flotilla was carried out in the darkness of the Mediterranean waters protecting the masked raiders, who dangled from helicopters supplied by western powers. The ships of 32 sovereign nations were situated - fifty miles away from any shore. The powerful beams of light from the attacking helicopters and gunboats blinded the aid workers on the Turkish Mavi Marmara Ferry as they tried to defend themselves against the murderers who shot and killed 9 Turkish civilians. The Israeli government responded saying that the passengers on the Turkish boat were linked to Hamas and were armed with weaponry and bladed tools. They gave us no choice' they refused to let us deliver the aid ourselves- they refused us to deliver a letter to Gilad Shalit. In short the peace activists were to blame.(don't understand this bit) As usual the IOF acted in self-defence!

The questions to be asked are 1) was the Israeli boarding in international waters legal? And, if those who survived were alleged terrorists why have they not been held for trial?

Two days ago the Israeli navy boarded the Irish boat "the Rachel Corrie" which again was carrying humanitarian aid. Which was towed to Ashdod and passengers asked to sign a waiver that they had acted illegally.

We maintain that the act was illegal and defiance of international maritime law and an act of Israeli State Terrorism. The attack on the Flotilla occurred in international waters, in violation of maritime law and an act of war

The status of Palestinian internal politics, as is the relationship of the PNA to Israel itself is completely irrelevant in this context. There have been calls for the usual investigation by the UN by the HRC. Israel is unlikely to investigate itself. Instead any investigations will work against the cause as Israel appears to thrive of criticism (not sure about this sentence). It will bleat anti-Semitism and transform all accusations into arrogant rhetoric as has already occurred in relation to the Goldstone report.

The Future

The nature of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is not by any means as complicated or intransigent as world leaders would have one believe. Quite the contrary, the solution rests on one simple issue -that Israel withdraw from the Palestinian territories that it has illegally Occupied since 1967 and controls through the mere use of military force. And, that Israel stands in full compliance with UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338. There is an urgent need for action by the Human Rights Council, and through it, the United Nations. Possible actions could include measures on economic sanctions and a diplomatic boycott against Israel for its breach of international law and non-implementation of UN Resolutions. Failure to do so leaves each and every world citizen morally responsible.

Unless a rights-based approach to the conflict that addresses Israel's discriminatory practices becomes the basis of international community actions, the conflict will continue to deepen, affecting the peace and security of all nations.

