



## 45th Regular Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council

### Item 3 – Interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation

#### Joint Oral Intervention <sup>1</sup>

Date: 15 September 2020

Speaker: Ms Shahd Qaddoura

Thank you,

As the world reacts to a global pandemic, those subject to institutionalised oppression, discrimination, and injustice are disproportionately impacted. Millions of Palestinians subject to Israel's unlawful and discriminatory policies and practices, manifested through the settlement enterprise, and apartheid regime, are denied access to safe, clean water and basic preventive hygiene measures.

Israel controls the three main sources of natural water supply in the occupied Palestinian territory. Israel's discriminatory water distribution measures deny about 50,000 Palestinians in Area C access to clean, safe and affordable water, while Israeli settlers, illegally present in the oPt, are provided with, and consume, three to eight times more water than the entire Palestinian population of the West Bank, excluding East Jerusalem.

For 13 years, Israel has maintained its illegal closure of Gaza, imposing unlawful collective punishment over two million Palestinians, undermining all aspects of Palestinian life and resulting in the de-development of the Strip, including its healthcare system. Only 4 percent of Gaza's water is fit for human use and consumption, and sanitation services are limited.

We remind the Council and its Member States of the need to address root causes of violations related to the denial of Palestinian water rights, as highlighted by the Special Rapporteur on the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation. Israel's prolonged occupation and apartheid regime undermine the Palestinian ability to mitigate the impacts of the pandemic. Given the prevailing culture of impunity that Israel unlawfully enjoys, we urge all States to take positive measures to recognise this situation, and to ensure accountability.

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<sup>1</sup> Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies and Al-Haq, Law in the Service of Man