



United Nations Human Rights Council – 45th Session

Joint statement<sup>1</sup>

**Item 9:** General Debate on racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related forms of intolerance

1 October 2020

Speaker: Ms. Nada Awad

Thank you, Madam President.

For decades, Israel has aggressively pursued an illegal policy of population transfer and demographic manipulation while entrenching its apartheid regime over the Palestinian people on both sides of the Green Line and as refugees and exiles abroad denied their right of return.

After years of work by Palestinian civil society on the question of apartheid, our organizations welcome the mounting international recognition that Israel imposes and continues to maintain an apartheid regime over the Palestinian people as a whole.

In an unprecedented move, 47 UN Special Procedures mandates warned on 16 June 2020 that annexation would crystalize “a vision of a 21st century apartheid.”<sup>2</sup> Whether or not further formal annexation of the West Bank moves forward, apartheid is an “already unjust reality”<sup>3</sup> for all Palestinians.

During the 43<sup>rd</sup> Regular Session of the Human Rights Council, 114 civil society organizations from Palestine and around the world urged Member States to reconstitute the UN Special Committee against Apartheid and the UN Centre against Apartheid.<sup>4</sup>

On 12 December 2019, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) recognized the continuity of Israeli policies and practices in violation of article 3 of

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<sup>1</sup>Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies (CIHRS), Al-Haq, Law in the Service of Man, Al Mezan Center For Human Rights, the Women’s Centre for Legal Aid, Counselling (WCLAC), Human Rights and Democracy Media Center "SHAMS", the International Service for Human Rights (ISHR). The Applied Research Institute – Jerusalem (ARIJ), and the Palestinian NGO Network (PNGO).

<sup>2</sup> OHCHR, “Israeli annexation of parts of the Palestinian West Bank would break international law – UN experts call on the international community to ensure accountability,” 16 June 2020, at: <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=25960&LangID=E>.

<sup>3</sup> Idem.

<sup>4</sup> CIHRS, “United Nations: In Response to Unprecedented Recognition of Israel’s Apartheid Regime, States Must Take Concrete Steps to End this Unjust Reality,” 17 June 2020, at: <https://cihrs.org/united-nations-in-response-to-unprecedented-recognition-of-israels-apartheid-regime-states-must-take-concrete-steps-to-end-this-unjust-reality/?lang=en>.

the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD), which pertains to racial segregation and apartheid, as disproportionately impacting Palestinians on both sides of the Green Line.<sup>5</sup>

We call on States to uphold the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including to self-determination and to return, by adopting effective measures to overcome Israel's apartheid regime, end the occupation and lift the closure of Gaza, and uphold international justice and accountability for crimes committed against Palestinians, including the crime of apartheid.

We also call on States to activate universal jurisdiction mechanisms, ensure implementation of the Apartheid Convention, and support a full, thorough, and comprehensive investigation by the International Criminal Court into the Situation in Palestine without further delay.

Recognizing and condemning Israel's apartheid regime at the UN Human Rights Council is a critical step in ending Israeli impunity.

Thank you.

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<sup>5</sup> Al-Haq, "Human rights organizations welcome Concluding Observations of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on racial segregation and apartheid on both sides of the Green Line," 21 December 2019, at: <http://www.alhaq.org/advocacy/16324.html>.