



46th SESSION OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

SOUTH AFRICA'S STATEMENT

ITEM 2:

Interactive dialogue on the report of the High Commissioner on ensuring accountability and justice for all violations of international law in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem (HRC res. 43/3)

24 FEBRUARY 2021

GENEVA

(90 seconds)

Check against delivery

Madam President,

South Africa aligns itself to the Africa Group's statement.

While the report depicts equal sides of a conflict, with equal obligations and duties under international law, the relation between Israel, the occupying power, and the State of Palestine, the occupied state, is asymmetric. Moreover, equating Israel's wilful lack of accountability with that of the Government of Palestine further legitimizes Israel's violations and can be misconstrued as an incentive for Israel and its leaders to continue with their violations.

Human rights violations in the occupied territories have unabatedly persisted even during a devastating global pandemic. Israel has escalated its illegal demolition of Palestinian homes and properties, at a four-year high, with the aim to continue altering the demographic reality reminiscent of apartheid spatial development policies.

South Africa notes with concern the conclusion in the report (HRC/46/22) that the period under review (1 November 2019 to 31 October 2020) was characterized by a failure to ensure accountability for allegations of excessive use of force in the OPT, and supports the Secretary-General who emphasized that a lack of accountability has compromised chances for sustainable peace and security, and that tackling impunity must be the highest priority.

South Africa reaffirms its commitment and dedication to the Palestinian people and their existential struggle for their fundamental freedoms and human rights, notably the right to self-determination.

I thank you