



UN Human Rights Council 46th Session
Joint Oral Intervention¹
Item 7 - General Debate
18 March 2021
Delivered by: Elizabeth Rghebi

Civil society calls on OHCHR to provide clear timeline for publication of 2021 update of UN database on businesses involved in Israeli settlements

Madam President,

Due to pervasive impunity, Israel's illegal settlement enterprise continues to expand while Palestinians are forcibly displaced and transferred, with the support of private actors including business enterprises - all in violation of international law. The annual update of the database, as mandated by HRC 31/36, is essential to deter business engagement with Israel's illegal settlement enterprise, which constitutes a grave breach under international humanitarian law and a war crime under the Rome Statute.

Our organizations urge the OHCHR to increase transparency regarding the annual update process for the database and to provide a clear timeline for the publication of the 2021 update. It is important that the annual update is comprehensive by adding all businesses with activities and relationships with Israel's settlement enterprise.

¹ Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies, AL-HAQ, Law in the Service of Man, Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling (WCLAC), The Palestinian Initiative for the Promotion of Global Dialogue and Democracy- MIFTAH, Al Mezan Centre for Human Rights, International Accountability Project, Palestinian Center for Human Rights (PCHR), Human Rights & Democracy Media Center "SHAMS", International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), Norwegian People's Aid, The civic coalition for Palestinian rights, European Legal Support Center, Syrians for Truth and Justice - STJ, Just Peace Advocates/Mouvement Pour Une Paix Juste, Canada, Association Belgo-Palestinienne WB, Bytes For All, Pakistan, La Alianza Global Jus Semper, Niagara Movement for Justice in Palestine-Israel, Ramallah Center for Human Rights Studies (RCHRS, Comhlámh Justice 4 Palestine, Addameer Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association, Samidoun, Palestinian Prisoner Solidarity Network, Community Action Center, Al-Quds University, European Trade Union Network for Justice in Palestine (ETUN), Finnish-Arab Friendship Society, Trócaire, SOMO (Centre for Research on Multinational Corporations), 11.11.11, CNCD-11.11.11, Union syndicale Solidaires, European Coordination of Committees and Associations for Palestine (ECCP), Palestina solidariteit, Le Réseau Syndical International de Solidarité et de Luttés, Alternative Refugee Center, Broederlijk Delen, Association France Palestine Solidarité (AFPS), NOVACT - International Institute for Nonviolent Action, Plateforme des ONG françaises pour la Palestine, Entraide et Fraternité, CIG. CONFEDERACIÓN INTERSINDICAL GALEGA, CIDSE, and Ramallah Center for Human Rights Studies (RCHRS)

While the world is facing the devastating impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, Israel has escalated its illegal demolition of Palestinian homes and properties, hitting a four-year high.² House demolitions form part of an institutionalized Israeli policy facilitating the expansion of settlements and *de facto* annexation. Demolitions have been carried out using equipment provided by companies, among others, JCB and Hyundai.

Between March 2020 and January 2021, Israel has demolished 619 structures, including 262 residential structures, 211 of which were inhabited, resulting in the displacement of 1058 Palestinians, including 524³ children.

At the same time, Israel continues to accelerate the expansion of illegal settlements, housing units, and associated infrastructure including transportation, in which Israeli and multinational companies such as the Basque CAF have evidently been involved.

The Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian Territory occupied since 1967 raised concerns that in the first report of the database “a number of companies with important supply relationships with the settlements and/or the occupation were not included”⁴.

Indeed, businesses continue to play a critical role in sustaining Israel’s illegal settlements and are contributing to and benefiting from Israel’s persistent and systemic violations against the Palestinian people.

We call on Member States to:

1. Support the OHCHR in fulfilling its mandate in its entirety to annually update the UN database and ensure the allocation of the required financial resources.
2. Issue clear guidelines and advisories to private actors and business enterprises - in line with international law - surrounding risks and legal repercussions of involvement in serious violations of international law should they be involved with Israel’s settlement enterprise.
3. Take the necessary measures to ensure that business enterprises listed in the database and located within their territory and/or jurisdiction respect international law.

Thank you.

² See B’Tselem, “In pandemic, of all times: Number of Palestinians Israel has left homeless hits four-year record,” 4 November 2020, available at:

https://www.btselem.org/press_releases/20201104_number_of_palestinians_israel_left_homeless_hits_four_year_record_in_pandemic.

³ Figures provided by Al-Haq’s Monitoring and Documentation Department covering the period from 5 March 2020 until 1 January 2021.

https://www.alhaq.org/cached_uploads/download/2021/01/25/210125-joint-urgent-appeal-on-israels-continued-demolitions-amidst-a-global-pandemic-25-01-2021-1611570818.pdf

⁴ Report A/75/532 of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967 (22 October 2020), <https://undocs.org/A/75/532>