

- 47<sup>th</sup> regular session of the Human Rights Council
- Joint Oral Intervention<sup>1</sup>
- Item 3: Interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression
- 2 July 2021

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**Civil society calls on SR to address silencing of civil society in the context of Israel's apartheid**

Madam president,

Palestinian human rights groups and defenders have endured systematic attacks arbitrated by the Israeli government, ranging from death threats, arbitrary arrests, travel bans, residency revocation, forcible transfers and deportations, harassments and intimidations as well as cyber-attacks and hacking including the systematic smear campaigns that violate the right to freedom of opinion and expression and ultimately aim to silence opposition to Israel's unlawful policies and practices and maintain its apartheid regime.

Indeed, the ongoing orchestrated spread of misinformation by Israel is yet another way in which the Occupying Power puts freedom of expression in serious jeopardy. Intended to maintain apartheid over all Palestinians and to delegitimize the work of human rights groups that advocate for Palestinian rights, these Israeli measures are also fueled by racist hate speech and incitement to racial hatred and violence, and will continue to be utilized as long as Israeli impunity persists.

Thus, we call on the member states of the human rights council to:

1-Urge Israel to cease all practices and policies intended to harass, intimidate and silence human rights groups and defenders.

2- Urge the UN special rapporteur to include Israel's practices against human rights groups in her report since it addresses root causes of the recurrent Israeli

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<sup>1</sup> MIFTAH, Al Haq, Al Mezan Center for Human Rights, Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies (CIHRS), Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling (WCLAC), and International Federation for Human Rights Leagues (FDH)

violations and attacks and the prolonged denial of Palestinian rights, which our organisations qualify as the crime of apartheid.