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Human rights situation in Palestine and other occupied Arab territories

Written statement* submitted by the Organization for Defending Victims of Violence (ODVV), a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[10 February 2010]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

Palestine

We started the year 2010 in circumstances where the Palestinian situation has not only come to a closure but with the addition of new elements into the problem, the situation has become far more complex than before. The elimination of challenges have arisen from conflicting views, interests and beliefs, have turned the solidarity towards finding an amicable end to the problem into an unfulfilled dream for the people and the region. With a glancing look at the subject of Palestine in 2009, as a human and humanitarian rights NGO, the Organization for Defending Victims of Violence (ODVV) believes that four main challenges stick out more clearly:

1. The traditional challenge between the integrated people of Palestine and the Israeli government.
2. The not too old inter-Palestinian challenge between Hamas and Fatah, on how to run Palestine.
3. The new challenge between Palestinian groups and Israel separately in regions under each one's control.
4. Challenges among countries that support Palestinian groups and those that support Israel in view of their conflicts of interest in political balance in the region.

In view of the aforementioned challenges, the ODVV believes the overall situation of the Palestinians in 2009 and the first few months of 2010 can be categorised as below:

- Goldstone's sensational report in condemning Israeli war crimes in the 22 day Gaza conflict, which prepares the basis for the condemnation of Israel in the international community.
- The aid assistance of country's that support Palestine in the form of financial, food, medicine, and construction projects that have been provided for the Palestinian movement have not equally been distributed all across the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.
- Differences between Fatah and Hamas with regards to Hamas' demands for the release of Palestinian prisoners from Israeli jails in exchange for captured Israeli soldier Giliad Shalit, and in view of Israel's refusal to do this, a deadlock has been reached in the talks and increased differences between Fatah and Hamas.
- Lack of possibility to reconstruct the destroyed areas of the Gaza Strip following the 22 day conflict, due to Israel's prevention of construction materials and necessary equipment from entering the Strip.
- Destruction of emergency and aid tunnels in Gaza by the Israelis through the flooding of the Mashraf dam in the Strip and tightening of the blockade by Israel.
- The management of the restraint from escalation of the crisis and resisting in the war policy by Hamas fighters in the Gaza Strip against Israeli settlements and the establishment of relative security on the borders despite pressures applied by extremist Palestinian groups against Hamas to conduct rocket attacks against Israel.
- In spite of the differences between the Palestinian movement and Israel due to failure to evict Palestinian districts of East Jerusalem by Israel.
- Prevention of Israel and Egypt from EU and international human rights organizations from entering the Gaza Strip.

- The construction of 15 kilometres of steel wall by Egypt on the joint border with Gaza Strip to a height of 5 metres above the surface and 10 metres below surface with the support of western governments and with the aim of preventing the entry of weapons into Gaza by tunnels. But the end result is further isolation and full blockade of the people of Gaza and increase in all-sided pressure leverage against them.
- Cooperation of western governments, Britain in particular, in prevention of indictments being issued against Israeli officials by international courts for war crimes.

Now in view of all the abovementioned the question is will there be any possibilities to remove all obstacles and strengthen existing positive capacities in 2010, and will the Palestinian people taste the sweet taste of freedom and independence in their own land?

We in the ODVV hope for this day to come in the not too distant future.
