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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, 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.

[3 June 2012]

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

Human rights situation in the West Bank**

In spite of the West Bank being an inseparable part of the Palestinian Occupied Territories is host to 61.8 per cent of the Palestinian population of these territories, and more than 76 per cent of the domestic gross production of the Occupied Territories of '67 is in the region. But sadly due to geographic characteristics, natural resources and political situation we are witness to the most violations of the human and material rights of the people of the region; to an extent where due to the Israeli policies to create new realities in contrast to international law principles and even agreements signed between Israel and Palestinians, Israel is trying to grab as much land as it can (territories occupied since 1967) on the basis of security and expansionism.

The violation of the fundamental rights of the people of the West Bank has become an ordinary every day occurrence and hardly a day goes by that there is no news reported by the mass media of something happening there. But sadly the responsible international bodies do not show any reaction towards the injustices and the adopted unbalanced treatment of Palestinian citizens.

Right now Palestinians in the West Bank are struggling with several problems which include:

- Continuation of the construction of the racist security barrier: the construction process of the barrier which is on the claims of security started in 2002 in the West Bank. Despite the Consultation Vote of the Hague Court which necessitates the removal of the barrier, its construction continued unabated to an extent where East Jerusalem is about to get annexed from the West Bank. 85 per cent of the barrier goes through the West Bank, and not the green line, therefore it will have destructive effects in the various aspects of the living of the civilian population. The extensive confiscation of land, denies farmers access to their lands, and the damage to agriculture is part of the problems. By annexing 12 per cent of the West Bank, the security barrier has confiscated the most water resources and has destroyed the geographic unity of the region, which are huge obstacles in the way of the formation of an independent state.
- Settlements construction: Unfortunately despite the contents of article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention and also the Fourth Hague Convention (1907), which prohibits any changes applied to occupied territories, we are witness to the speedy construction in the West Bank, Jerusalem in particular. According to law organizations, in 2011 the construction work was 19 per cent more than the previous year and Jerusalem was scene to the biggest construction in the past decade. Furthermore the construction of roads and the winding links that have been erected solely for the settlers, must be said that further land is taken from Palestinians.
- Demolition of Palestinian homes: Towards the illegal according to international law constructions, according to a UN report, the demolition operations of Palestinian homes and property in 2011 has increased by 80 per cent compared to the previous year, and 90 per cent of the demolitions have taken place in Area C which is approximately 60 per cent of the West Bank, and 2012 is seen as a catastrophic year due to the huge volume of evictions and demolitions. The inhuman measures and actions of the Israelis in Area C has reached a point where 27 EU foreign ministers

** Neda Research Institute, an NGO without consultative status, also shares the views expressed in this statement.

strongly and criticized the demolition of approximately 60 European financial projects and refrained from authorizing another 110 future European projects and expressed concern, and asked Israel to remove the restrictions enforced on the Palestinians. Because the Palestinians living in this area are continuously expecting to see their homes demolished and they are denied from construction. The opening of 13 thousand case files against Palestinians in Area C on the charges of construction work without getting a permit and against the law by the Israeli Civic Bureau is another reason for this.

- Organized violence problem: At the same time as the construction in the West Bank, Palestinians are faced with daily increasing violence against them, their children and property committed by Jewish settlers. And in the middle of this the Israeli authorities show indifference and neglect despite their commitments particularly in Oslo 2 which necessitates the prevention of terror and violent attacks against each side, and thus paved the way for the settlers to be violent. The actions of the terror group called Pay the Price, such as the cutting down of olive trees and destruction of other Palestinian farm produce are just small examples of the aforementioned claim. According to published reports by the Human Affairs Office of the Occupied Palestinian Territories over 80 residential complexes of Palestinians i.e. over 250 thousand individuals are threatened by settlers' violence, and the level of the violence in 2011 increased by 40 per cent.
- Movement restrictions: Palestinians in the West Bank are restricted in their commuting and movement, and through various obstacles (fixed or mobile checkpoints) the IDF disrupt the daily lives. Approximately 400 obstacles, blocked streets, and the existence of the security barrier has taken away the freedom of movement for the Palestinians and have created many problems including access to medical and education centres.

In spite of these problems and the repeated violation of international law, humanitarian law, and international treaties and agreements signed with the Palestinians, what do human rights and fundamental freedoms mean in the West Bank? Shouldn't the international community break its silence towards these violations, and carry out its main duty to apply pressure on Israel as a state that violates international and humanitarian duties, and force Israel to observe these principles?

While expressing sympathy towards the Palestinians of the West Bank, we call for justice and human rights to be realized for the Palestinians, particularly those in the West Bank, so that perhaps in this way the Palestinian nation will have its rights realized.