



# General Assembly

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## Human Rights Council

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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, non-governmental organizations 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.

[24 August 2013]

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

## Human rights in Palestine and other occupied territories\*

Human rights violation cases against Palestinians in Occupied Territories rise in number each year. On one hand in pursuit of its interests and objectives, Israel targets international organizations with lobbying and its influence, and on the other hand, not only does it not implement international human rights principles and laws, but it acts contrary to them, and is recognized as one of the most certain violators of human rights. This is while they try very hard to draw public opinion and present democratic images of itself.

The deliberating point with regards to Israel's human rights violations is the condemnations that it receives from international organizations, particularly the Human Rights Council. In spite of these condemnations, Israel continues to violate human rights. As a nongovernmental human rights organization, the Organization for Defending Victims of Violence (ODVV) recommends that while condemning the Israel's grave human rights violations, international organizations must bring about ways to investigate these violations and show international legal reaction towards these grave human rights violations committed by Israel. The following are some examples of human rights violations in the Occupied Territories:

- *Violation of the right to life:* According to human rights organizations' reports, in the first six months of 2013, the IDF abducted 1719 Palestinians and shot dead another 16.

The IDF extensively show violent and disastrous reactions towards Palestinian peaceful demonstrations against the construction of the security barrier and settlements building. For example, in the West Bank, between March and April this year, the IDF killed two civilians and injured another five which included a child and an Irish journalist. Also in June 3 Palestinians who were involved in peaceful demonstrations against settlements construction and the security barrier were injured.

- *Gaza blockade:* The daily economic and living conditions of the residents of Gaza following the blockade of the region have greatly been affected by energy threats. Poverty, hygiene and medical problems, family and street fights, mental disorders such as depression, hidden and visible anger, behavioural disorders and etc. are all the results of energy security crisis. The reduction of fuel imports to the Gaza Strip has even caused problems for the people's cooking. Many hospitals and medical centres cannot provide medical treatment due to power shortages, because they only get 20 percent of the electricity that they need, as a result these centres are closed most days of the week and cannot provide medical services to patients. The energy crisis in Gaza has also noticeably affected the water supplies.

- *Palestinian prisoners' conditions:* Up to the end of May there were approximately 4800 Palestinian inmates in Israeli prisons, 236 of which were children.

Some sources put the figures for July at 6800, 169 of which were under administrative detention, and were in prison without being tried or charged with any crimes. Most of these individuals are residents of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, among which of course there are women and children. The PA's Prisoners' Affairs Ministry announced that there are at least 235 children in Israeli prisons, and among them there are 35 children below 16.

350 Palestinians in January, 236 in March, 259 in April, 263 in May and 300 in June were abducted and transferred to Israeli prisons. Currently there are 13 Palestinian prisoners on

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\* NEDA Institute for scientific and political research, an NGO without consultative status, also shares the views expressed in this statement.

unlimited hunger strikes, and Israeli officials ignore their terrible conditions. Israel has been deemed responsible because of large scale abusive behaviour towards prisoners and must be condemned. The death of Arafat Jeradat in February due to nervous shock and excruciating pain, and injuries as a result of torture and failure to treat him, and also the death of Meysareh Abu Hamdieh in April 2013 are clear examples of the violation of the rights of prisoners committed by Israel.

- *Settlements constructions and Jewfication of Jerusalem:* The illegal settlements construction by Israel in the Occupied Territories is another clear violation of human rights committed against the Palestinians. It is in such way that the majority of European countries and international organizations have opposed and criticized it; nevertheless, Israel has not stopped this trend, and even within the framework of its claims regarding welcoming peace talks, Israel simultaneously continues the construction of settlements.

The illegal settlement constructions take place while Israel has dozens of checkpoints in the West Bank and detains and interrogates civilians. For example in July this year, around 51 attacks took place against Palestinian assemblies in the West Bank and during this period 15 civilians among which were 8 children (that included one under 5) and 2 civilians from the Gaza Strip were detained at the checkpoints.

- *Demolition of homes and confiscation of lands:* This is another aspect of Israel's human rights violations committed against Palestinians. In the first three months of 2013, one hundred and fifty-five Palestinian properties were demolished in East Jerusalem and the West Bank making 379 individuals homeless. Nevertheless, the confiscation of Palestinian lands is on the increase. For example in May 2013 final warnings were issued to the residents of Ramoon as part of the confiscation of Palestinian lands by Israel. What is interesting is that the warning meant that no money would be given to the landowners.

- *Violation of children's rights:* Children are an important part of the concerns of human rights organizations in Occupied Territories. The IDF actions in arresting and imprisoning children near the security barrier and other regions is the violation of article 37 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Also by failing to do its duty to create a safe and healthy environment for the children of Gaza Strip and military attacks against their schools, Israel violates article 24 of the same Convention, and endangers the mental health of children. It is estimated that in the last 10 years, Israel has imprisoned 7000 Palestinian children between 12 and 17 or been subjected to interrogation. On this basis in the time period from January 2010 to March 2013 there were 14 instances of the use of children as human shields or forced to spy by the IDF were reported to human rights organizations. According to latest until June 2013, 193 Palestinian children were detained or under investigation, 41 of which were between the ages of 12 and 15. It can be said that there's been a 14.6 percent drop compared to the previous year, nevertheless this figure is still the highest in the last 3 years.

- *Violation of Palestinian women's rights:* Women's conditions in Palestine is one of the most blatant violations of human rights in the Occupied Territories. In a ceremony in commemoration of the International Women's Day on 8 March which was held at the United Nations, two videos were shown on Palestinian women's conditions. The effects of extensive demolition of homes and administrative detentions on Palestinian women's mental and physical conditions were points the video clips had concentrated on. Mental and physical pressures and problems in everyday life were subjects discussed by the women interviewed in the clips.

- *Freedom of expression*: Journalists in the Occupied Territories are subjected to abuse just for speaking the truth. This only means cracking down on the truth, freedom of speech and silencing of the media in preventing journalists from doing their jobs.

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