



# General Assembly

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## Human Rights Council

### Forty-fourth session

15 June–3 July 2020

Agenda item 7

**Human rights situation in Palestine and other  
occupied Arab territories**

## **Written statement\* submitted by The Palestinian Return Centre Ltd, 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.

[28 May 2020]

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\* Issued as received, in the language(s) of submission only.

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## **Israel's Annexation Plans over the West Bank**

Israel captured the West Bank in the 1967. It has settled nearly 500,000 Jewish settlers in the territory, but never formally claimed it as an Israeli territory due to stiff international opposition. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said that the Israeli government will begin in July extending Israeli sovereignty to include Israeli settlements and the Jordan Valley in the West Bank, which was discussed in the context of United States of America (US) President Donald Trump's Middle East peace plan.

Palestinians expressed their anger at Israel's plans to strengthen its hold on the lands it seized in the 1967 war, which they are seeking to restore in order to establish their state.

Palestinians, with wide international backing, seek the entire West Bank as the heartland of a future independent state. Annexing large chunks of this territory would all but destroy the faint remaining hopes of a two-state solution.

United Nations (UN) Special Rapporteur Michael Lynk's described the repercussions of annexation as creating "a cascade of bad human rights consequences" and insisted that the international community can no longer play its acquiescent role to Israeli violations.

"The looming annexation is a political litmus test for the international community. This annexation will not be reversed through rebukes, nor will the 53-year-old occupation die of old age," he warned.

Eleven European ambassadors to Israel have warned the Israeli government of severe consequences if it moves ahead with plans to annex parts of the West Bank as part of a government coalition deal. The envoys from the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Germany, France, Ireland, the Netherlands, Italy, Spain, Sweden, Belgium, Denmark, Finland and the European Union (EU) issued a formal objection to the Foreign Ministry against the move.

### **Annexation under Trump's plan**

The application of Israeli sovereignty over parts of the West Bank is in line with US President Donald Trump's "vision for peace" between Israel and the Palestinians. U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo announced last year that the United States no longer defines the settlements as necessarily violating international law and that Israel is free to define their legal status and the United States would recognize it. According to the Trump plan, Israel would be annexing around 30 percent of the West Bank. The map accompanying the Trump plan allows Israel to annex all the existing settlements, in addition to the areas surrounding them.

Since 1967, Israel has taken many actions in the West Bank that can be regarded as on ongoing "creeping annexation" or "de facto annexation" – for example, the expansion of settlements and outposts, and their connection to Israel by infrastructures, along with restrictions on and demolition of Palestinian infrastructure in Area C (the 60 percent of the West Bank under Israeli military control). There are about 140 settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. The international community considers the settlements illegal under international law.

The Palestinian Return Centre recommends the following to the Distinguished Members of the Council:

- Take strong measures to bring to an end the Israeli system of domination and colonization of Palestinian territories, which is the root cause of the ongoing Israeli human rights violations.
- Accountability must be pursued for all crimes committed by the Israeli Government, including the annexation of the 30% of the West Bank.
- Confront the Israeli plan to annex parts of the West Bank, stressing that this is a violation of all international covenants and laws.

- Officially declare Israel as an “apartheid system”, with a separate and discriminatory legal system for Palestinians.
  - Recall that Israel was accepted into the United Nations on condition that it accepts the Right of Return of the Palestinian refugees. Admission of Israel to membership in the United Nations (General Assembly Resolution 273 of May 11, 1949) requires Israel to comply with General Assembly Resolution 194 of December 11, 1948.
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