



General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/HRC/9/NGO/24
29 August 2008

ENGLISH ONLY

HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL
Ninth session
Agenda item 4

**HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATIONS THAT REQUIRE THE COUNCIL'S
ATTENTION**

**Written statement* submitted by BADIL Resource Center for Palestinian Residency
and Refugee Rights, 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.

[25 August 2008]

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

Ongoing Forced Internal Displacement and Dispossession of the Palestinian population in the OPT

1. The Palestinian population in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT) is systematically subjected to ongoing internal forcible displacement and dispossession by the Israeli Occupying Power on the grounds of nationality, ethnicity, race and religion.
2. Forcible internal displacement in the OPT has accelerated in recent years. More than 115,000 people are estimated to have been internally displaced during the last four decades of Israel's occupation in the OPT.¹ In the Gaza Strip Israeli military operations caused the temporary forced displacement of over 50,000 between 2000 and 2004 alone.²
3. The severity and consistency of the forcible internal displacement of Palestinians by the Israeli Occupying Power amounts to a **policy of population transfer for the purpose of acquiring land and altering the demographic composition of the territory under its control.**
4. Areas at Imminent Risk – Palestinians at risk live in occupied eastern Jerusalem, whom against Israel segregates and discriminates **in the guise of development planning** following the illegal annexation of occupied territory.³ At imminent risk are also the Palestinian population, including the Bedouins, in rural areas of the West Bank (Area C), mainly in the closed areas between the Wall and the Green Line, in enclaves east of the Wall, in western Bethlehem, the Jordan Valley and south of Hebron. Also at risk is the center of the town of Hebron (H2) and the buffer zone in the Gaza Strip. The continued forced displacement is a result of, *inter alia*, the following measures:
5. Home Demolition – Israel has demolished over 18,000 houses in the OPT between 1967 and 2006.⁴ In the first quarter of 2008 alone, Israel demolished over 120 Palestinian-owned structures in the Jordan Valley and South Hebron. Sixty-one of the demolished structures were residential and led to the displacement of 435 Palestinians. Between January 2000 and September 2007, more than 1,600 Palestinian buildings were demolished in Area C, whereas over 3,000 houses are at risk of demolition.⁵ In the Gaza Strip, over 4,000 houses were demolished between 2000 and 2004.⁶
6. Land Confiscation and Colonization by the Israeli occupying power – Israel occupies the entire surface of the West Bank (some 5,860 km²) and has confiscated or *de facto*

1 BADIL, [Survey 2006-2007](#).

2 Human Rights Watch, [Razing Rafah: Mass House Demolitions in the Gaza Strip](#), October 2004.

3 The *Outline Plan Jerusalem 2000* (2004, 2006) outlines measures, including spacial segregation, in order to preserve a 70:30 percent ratio of Jewish vs. Palestinian population (the so-called “demographic balance”) in line with previous government decisions. See the UPR submissions of the Civic Coalition to Defend Palestinian Rights in Jerusalem (CCDPRJ) and al-Haq for more detail on Israel's policies and practices in occupied eastern Jerusalem.

4 Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions, “[18,000 Houses Destroyed](#)”, December 2006.

5 UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), “Lack of Permit” Demolitions and Resultant

Displacement in Area C, May 2008.

6 Human Rights Watch, [Razing Rafah: Mass House Demolitions in the Gaza Strip](#), October 2004.

annexed over 3,350 km² for the exclusive benefit of its Jewish population.⁷ The lands confiscated from Palestinians are turned over to the exclusive use of the Jewish settlers and for building and expanding the Jewish-only colonies (settlements) and related infrastructure.

7. Since the Annapolis summit, Israeli tenders and plans announced for construction in the OPT amount to almost 30,000 illegal Jewish-only housing units.⁸ By March 2008, construction was under way in over 100 colonies and 58 “outposts”, including 16 new outposts/settlements. In occupied eastern Jerusalem alone, new plans and tenders have been announced for construction of almost 14,000 illegal housing units since December 2007.⁹
8. Israel's belligerent occupation has become a system of institutionalized racial discrimination employed by the State of Israel, in order to assert control over as much “de-Palestinized” land as possible by forcibly displacing the Palestinian owners and users and subsequently building and expanding Jewish-only colonies.
9. The Closure Regime including the Wall and its Associated Regime – There is also clear evidence of internal displacement as a result of lack of access to essential services because of the ‘closure regime’, which is making the situation of continued presence of Palestinians in their homes and lands, especially those in segregated enclaves, untenable. Freedom of movement is systematically denied through an elaborate regime of Israeli military checkpoints and obstacles (678 as of 12 April 2008), bypass roads and infrastructure dividing the OPT.
10. Major roads in the OPT are reserved exclusively for Jewish settlers who are *inter alia* entitled to enter the “closed zones” between the Wall and the Green Line without permits, whereas **Palestinians require permits to enter and reside in their own homes** if these are located in the closed zones.
11. Violence and Harassment by Jewish Settlers – internal displacement of Palestinians is also a result of the harassment and attacks by the Jewish settlers who prevent Palestinians from accessing their land. In 2006, over 275 incidents of settler violence were recorded, ranging from uprooting trees to seizing land and shooting children. The Israeli authorities have failed to protect Palestinian residents and enforce the law against the settlers.¹⁰
12. **Israel's protracted military occupation cannot be considered an interim measure that maintains law and order in a territory following armed conflict, but rather an oppressive and racist regime of a colonizing power under the guise of occupation.** This regime includes many of the worst features of apartheid, such as: the fragmentation of the OPT to segregated Jewish and Palestinian areas, the construction of the illegal Wall and its associated regime, system of separate roads, closure and permits which

7 BADIL, [Survey 2006-2007](#).

8 Applied Research Institute -Jerusalem (ARIJ), press release, 18 July 2008.

9 Ibid. In March 2008, Peace Now (“The Death of the Settlement Freeze – 4 Months since Annapolis”), had reported tenders for 745 housing units and plans for over 3,600 housing units since December 2007.

10 The temporary success of Jewish settlers to ethnically cleanse the small village of Yanoun, near Nablus, in 2002 is an example of the impunity that these settlers enjoy. See also: BADIL, [Survey 2006-2007](#).

restricts freedom of movement on the grounds of nationality, ethnicity, race and religion.¹¹

13. Moreover, Israel's policy and practice of applying a similar regime of institutionalized racial discrimination against Palestinians in the OPT effectively erases the internationally recognised borders of the State of Israel, amounts to the acquisition of territory by force in the OPT, and renders unfeasible a two-state solution of the protracted conflict.
14. So far, the *ad hoc* and limited international response has failed to prevent or effectively respond to the ongoing forcible internal displacement and dispossession of Palestinian population. Rarely do UN bodies highlight, let alone condemn or protect against the population transfer that is taking place in the OPT despite the manifest displacement that is occurring daily. In a context of siege against the people of the Gaza Strip, ongoing construction of the Wall, house demolition, settlement expansion and settler violence, **Israel's policy of forced displacement and dispossession of Palestinians must be scrutinized and proper action must be taken** in accordance with international law.

We call upon the Human Rights Council to:

1. Initiate a collaborative UN effort to examine the nature of Israel's oppressive and racist regime which includes many of the worst features of apartheid and is the root cause of the ongoing forcible displacement and dispossession of the Palestinian population in the OPT.
2. Call upon Israel to revoke its policies and practices aiming at changing the demographic composition of the Palestinian Territory through the forcible internal displacement of the indigenous Palestinian population, and to ensure just and effective reparation of the displaced Palestinians, including return and restitution of their land and properties.
3. Implement the Collaborative Response to situations of internal displacement to prevent and respond to the needs of the internally displaced Palestinians in the OPT.

11 UN Special Rapporteur, Prof. John Dugard, *Human Rights Situation in Palestine and other Occupied Arab Territories* A/HRC/7/17 (January 2008).