

Joint letter

Regional and international civil society organizations from around the world call on UN Member States to address the escalating and institutionalized Israeli attacks against Palestinians on both sides of the Green Line during the 30th HRC Special Session

21 May 2021

Your Excellency,

Israel's repression against Palestinians on both sides of the Green Line escalated in May 2021 in response to widespread Palestinian demonstrations against Israel's imminent threat of eviction and displacement of eight Palestinian families from their homes in the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood in Jerusalem. Notably, this is only the latest example of Israel's institutionalized regime of racial domination and oppression, which the Palestinian people have endured for decades. While the international community has ensured Israel's impunity since 1948, enabling Israel to continue to commit widespread and systematic human rights violations, Palestinians on both sides of the Green Line and refugees and exiles abroad continue to oppose and stand steadfast against 73 years of Israeli settler colonialism and apartheid.

As Israel intensifies its crackdown on Jerusalem and other parts of the West Bank, conducts military strikes against civilians in the Gaza Strip, which have been living under a comprehensive land, air, and sea closure for 14 years, and targets Palestinians inside the Green Line, **the undersigned civil society organizations, from around the world, urge your delegation to engage in the 30th Special Session by the UN Human Rights Council and address all violations of human rights law and international humanitarian law, including the root causes of Israeli violations against Palestinians on both sides of the Green Line.**

Since 13 April 2021, the beginning of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, the Israeli occupying forces (IOF) have systematically targeted and attacked Palestinians in Jerusalem. The attacks escalated when the occupation police targeted worshippers at the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound, with tear gas, sound bombs, and rubber-coated metal bullets, resulting in hundreds of injured Palestinians. The occupation police prevented paramedics from accessing the compound to treat the injured and even directly [targeted](#) emergency responders by firing tear gas and waste water containers on volunteers, paramedics, and ambulances. In other parts of the West Bank, Israel has violently suppressed demonstrations calling for an end to Israeli oppression, including by shooting live ammunition at demonstrators, killing 14 Palestinians between 14 and 18 May 2021¹. According to the Palestinian Ministry of Health, between 7 and 19 May, [5164](#) Palestinians were injured, 578 with live ammunition.

¹ According to Al-Haq's monitoring and documentation unit

These attacks come in the context of increasing Palestinian mobilization against Israel's policies and practices of racial domination and oppression, in response to the imminent eviction of eight Palestinian families, totaling 19 households of around 87 individuals, from the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood in Jerusalem. The forcible transfer of Palestinians from Jerusalem is a war crime and likely amounts to a crime against humanity as it is being perpetrated in a widespread and systematic manner. Principle 6 of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, prohibits arbitrary displacement, including "when it is based on policies of apartheid, 'ethnic cleansing' or similar practices aimed at/or resulting in altering the ethnic, religious or racial composition of the affected population." All of these criteria are applicable to Israeli practices, policies and laws implemented with the intention of maintaining Jewish Israeli domination over the Palestinian people.

The Israeli police have also violently repressed Palestinian demonstrations inside the Green Line. Since 10 May 2021, thousands of Palestinian citizens of Israel came out to protest the evictions of Palestinian refugee families in Sheikh Jarrah, the use of extreme violence and attacks on worshippers and protestors by the police in Al-Aqsa Mosque and elsewhere, and the Israeli military attacks in Gaza. The Palestinian protestors were subjected to police violence and human rights violations, including denial of emergency medical care. High Commissioner Bachelet highlighted "reports of excessive and discriminatory use of force by police against Palestinian citizens of Israel". Since 10 May, the police have arrested [1097](#) Palestinians.

Moreover, [Israeli settlers](#) have intensified attacks against Palestinians living in the West Bank, including Jerusalem, with the support of the IOF. Inside the Green Line, far-right Jewish Israelis organized and coordinated the arrival of armed Israelis to attack Palestinians in al-Lydd, Ramle, Akka, Haifa, and Yafa, among other cities and areas. Moreover, the IOF has allowed [Israeli settlers](#) coming from the West Bank entry into Israel to target Palestinian neighborhoods and villages and provided support and protection as they attacked Palestinian residents and destroyed Palestinian property. In response, the Israeli police has not taken any action against and in some cases cooperated and supported the [mob violence](#). High Commission Bachelet raised concern at "reports that Israeli police failed to intervene where Palestinian citizens of Israel were being violently attacked, and that social media is being used by ultraright-wing groups to rally people to bring 'weapons, knives, clubs, knuckledusters to use against Palestinian citizens of Israel."

In the Gaza Strip, the IOF continues to target civilian structures, in particular homes, wiping out whole families, and inflicting widespread destruction and collective punishment on the entire, trapped population. Since 10 May 2021, human rights organizations documented Israel's use of disproportionate, indiscriminate, and unnecessary military force in violation of international law. Residential blocks are "being targeted pursuant to an apparent policy agreed by Israel's military and political leadership"². The number of residential buildings targeted now stands at 94, including

² <http://mezan.org/en/post/23978>

six towers—three of which were completely destroyed—ultimately destroying 371 residential units. In addition, hundreds of private properties, as well as tens of governmental sites, schools, banks, and mosques have sustained significant damages. Israel's airstrikes have also led to the large-scale destruction of power and water networks, as well as thousands of square meters of vital paved roads.

Israel's extensive and systematic attacks on buildings, and the shelling of residential areas, especially those near the separation fence, force civilians—men, women, and children—to flee their homes in search of safety. Around 41,900 people have moved to 53 UNRWA schools, and the numbers are still increasing.³ Displaced people are experiencing appalling humanitarian conditions, especially when UNRWA schools have not officially been opened as shelters.

As of 2 pm on 17 May, 231 Palestinians, including 65 children and 39 women were killed; 1212 others have been injured in the attacks, including 277 children and 204 women.⁴ According to [Israeli media](#), ten Israelis have been killed following rocket fire from Gaza.

It is again clear that civilians are paying the price of Israel's pervasive impunity. Any firing of rockets or attacks must meet assessments of proportionality and the requirement for a concrete and direct military advantage. Indiscriminate attacks or targeting of civilians not taking a direct part in hostilities constitute a grave violation of international law. In order to protect all civilians, the Human Rights Council should address the root causes of Israel's settler colonialism and apartheid to achieve lasting justice.

We call on your missions to:

- **Engage in the 30th UN Human Rights Council Special Session and address the escalating Israeli attacks against the Palestinian people, including the root causes of Israeli violations against Palestinians on both sides of the Green Line.**
- **Establish a commission of inquiry to:**
 - **Monitor, document and report on all violations of human rights and humanitarian law, including the escalating attacks against Palestinians on both sides of the Green Line since April 2021;**
 - **Include and address the root causes of Israel's institutionalized regime of racial domination and oppression over the Palestinian people in line with the 2019 Concluding Observations on Israel by the [UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination \(CERD\)](#) which highlighted Israeli policies and practices against Palestinians on both sides of the Green Line are in violation of Article 3 of the International Convention on the Elimination of**

³ According to Al Mezan's monitoring and documentation unit

⁴ According to Al Mezan's monitoring and documentation unit, <http://mezan.org/post/32163>

All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) pertaining to racial segregation and apartheid;

- **Identify individuals responsible for serious crimes;**
- **Collect and preserve evidence related to violations to be used for accountability in relevant judicial bodies and transfer evidence to the Office of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court.**

Endorsing organizations

1. Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies
2. International Service for Human Rights
3. Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA)
4. International Women's Rights Action Watch Asia Pacific (IWRAW AP)
5. DefendDefenders (East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project)
6. Centro de Estudios Legales y Sociales (CELS)
7. Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights
8. CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation
9. Southern Africa Human Rights Defenders Network (SAHRDN)
10. Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI)
11. Women League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF)
12. Sexual Rights Initiative
13. International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH)
14. 11.11.11
15. The Center for Reproductive Rights
16. Baytna
17. Bytes For All, Pakistan
18. Ireland-Palestine Solidarity Campaign
19. Human Rights solidarity
20. Association des Universitaires pour le Respect du Droit International en Palestine (AURDIP)
21. European Legal Support Center
22. Just Peace Advocates/Mouvement Pour Une Paix Juste
23. Collectif Judéo Arabe et Citoyen pour la Palestine
24. The Niagara Movement for Justice in Palestine-Israel (NMJPI)
25. ICAHD Finland
26. Association belgo-Palestinienne WB
27. Viva Salud
28. Intal
29. CNCD-11.11.11

30. EuroMed Rights
31. The Palestinian Human Rights Organization (PHRO) - Lebanon
32. Scottish Palestinian Forum
33. Trócaire
34. European Trade Union Network for Justice in Palestine (ETUN)
35. Istituto Internazionale Maria Ausiliatrice (IIMA)
36. UPJB (Union des Progressistes Juifs de Belgique)
37. Akahatá
38. Association France Palestine Solidarité (AFPS)
39. Habitat International Coalition – Housing and Land Rights Network
40. Canadian BDS Coalition
41. ASGI - Association for juridical studies on immigration
42. Network for Immigration, Development and Democracy (IDD)
43. Aegis for Human Rights
44. Geneva Bridge Association
45. Association of Maghreb Workers in France
46. Association for the Promotion of the Right to Difference
47. El Na aura Association, Belgium
48. Coordination for Maghreb Human rights Organizations (CMODH)
49. SAM organization for Rights and Liberties
50. Yemeni Observatory for Human Rights
51. Dameer Foundation for Rights and Freedom
52. INSAF Center for Defending Freedoms and Minorities
53. Abductees' Mothers Association
54. Together We Raise (Social Association)
55. Watch for Human Rights
56. Mwatana for Human Rights
57. Hadramout Foundation For Legal Support and Training
58. Yemeni Observatory of Mines
59. Mwatana for Human Rights
60. Social Peace Promotion and Legal Protection
61. Al-Haq Foundation for Human Rights
62. Al-Rakeezeh Foundation for Relief and Development
63. Growth foundation for development & improvement
64. Namaa Foundation for Development and Improvement
65. Lebanese Center for Human Rights
66. Freedom of Thought and Expression
67. Committee for Justice
68. Belady Center for Rights and Freedoms
69. Egyptian Front for Human Rights

70. Egyptian Human Rights Forum
71. The Freedom Initiative
72. Arabic Network for Human Rights Information
73. Centre for Egyptian Women Legal Assistance
74. Libyan Center for Freedom of the Press
75. February 17 Organization for Environment and Human Rights
76. Shiraa Association to fight AIDS and drugs
77. Thought Pioneers Organization Mattress
78. Mattress Youth Organization
79. Al-Tebyan Association for Human Rights Dirj
80. Al-Massar Organization for Youth and Culture Dirj Branch
81. Mediterranean Organization for Development and Humanitarian Relief
82. International Arabic Organization for Women's Rights
83. Nass for Nass organization to support youth Misurata
84. Defender Center for Human Rights
85. Libyan Crimes Watch
86. Libyan Organization for Legal Aid
87. Human rights solidarity
88. The Tunisian General Labor Union
89. The Committee for the Respect of Liberties and Human Rights in Tunisia
90. The Tunisian Organization Against Torture
91. The Tunisian Association for the Defense of Individual Liberties
92. The Tunisian Association 23-10 for the Support of the Democratic Transition Process
93. The National Observatory for the Defense of the Civic Character of the State
94. The Tunisian Association for the Defense of Minorities
95. Hassan Saadaoui Association for Democracy and Equality
96. The National Union for Tunisian Journalists
97. Vigilance for Democracy and Civic State
98. The Tunisian Forum for Economic and Social Rights
99. Democratic Association of Tunisians in France
100. Association Aswat Nissa
101. Tunisian Federation for Citizenship on both shores
102. Tunisian Union for Citizenship Action
103. Tunisian Center for Press Freedom
104. EuroMaghreb Network: citizenship and culture
105. Vigilance for Democracy in Tunisia (Belgium)
106. Ga3 Kifkif Network
107. Algerian Feminist Journal Foundation
108. Tharwa N'Fadhma N'Soumeur organisation
109. Action for Change and Democracy in Algeria (ACDA)

110. Algerian League for the Defense of Human Rights (LADDH)
111. Autonomous Union of Public Administration Personnel (SNAPAP)
112. General Autonomous Confederation of Workers in Algeria (CGATA)
113. Riposte Internationale
114. Collective of the Families of the Disappeared in Algeria (CFDA)
115. National Committee for the Release of Detainees (CNLD)
116. SHOAA for Human Rights
117. Association for the Defense of Human Rights in Morocco (ASDHOM)
118. Organization for freedoms of Media and Expression
119. Libyan Organization for Independent Media
120. Youth for Tawergha