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**Civil Society and the Question of Palestine**

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**12 October 2018**

<https://www.un.org/unispal/ngo-action-news-12-october-2018/>

**Middle East**

* On 10 October, the [Palestinian Center for Human Rights](https://pchrgaza.org/en/?p=11434) (PCHR) reiterated its call to abolish the death penalty from the Palestinian legislation, describing it as an inhuman punishment incompatible with the values of justice and goals of punishments that aim at rehabilitating the offenders. The PCHR urged the President to issue a decree to suspend the death penalty until the Palestinian Legislative Council convened to amend the Penal Code to abolish it. The call coincided with the World Day against the Death Penalty.
* On 9 October, [BADIL](http://www.badil.org/en/publication/press-releases/87-2018/4901-pr-en-091008-31.html) published a working paper on denial of reparations, as part of its ten-paper series on “Forced Population Transfer: The Case of Palestine”. The paper focused specifically on return, restitution, compensation and guarantees of non-repetition – and its two-fold implication on the Israeli practices of forcible population transfer of the Palestinian people. The paper considered how the denial of reparations to Palestinian refugees and internally displaced persons resulted in situations of vulnerability. It also explored the way in which the denial of reparations and the lack of accountability in that regard perpetuated and embodied Israel in its execution of forcible population transfer policy.
* On 8 October, [16 human rights NGOs](http://www.alhaq.org/advocacy/targets/european-union/1305--qq-) urged the EU and its Member States to actively support the United Nations Database on businesses operating in Israeli settlements and cooperate in bringing companies under EU Member States jurisdiction. The NGOs stressed that conducting business in or with the settlements contributed to the maintenance and expansion of settlements in breach of international law. The United Nations Database was therefore a necessary and proportionate measure to promote greater transparency, accountability and respect by both States and businesses of international law.
* On 5 October, [the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights](https://pchrgaza.org/en/?p=11419) (PCHR) condemned the use of excessive force by Israeli military against peaceful protesters in the Gaza Strip. Three Palestinian civilians, including a child, were reportedly killed and 171 others wounded, including 14 children, 3 journalists and 3 paramedics, with live bullets and direct tear gas canisters. Eight of the injured sustained serious wounds. The PCHR reiterated its calls on the international community to ensure protection of civilians.
* On 3-4 October, Al-Haq, in partnership with [Birzeit University Institute of Law](https://www.birzeit.edu/en/news/international-conference-legal-aspects-occupation-kicks-birzeit), the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights and the International Federation for Human Rights organized the conference “The Threshold from Occupation to Annexation” . The conference aimed to examine whether a threshold existed at which point a belligerent occupation became unlawful annexation. Sessions specifically examined the case of prolonged military occupation that exceeded the legal parameters of occupation as a temporary situation, became illegal, and was instead a form of prohibited annexation and colonialism.
* On 1 October, [Hamoked](http://www.hamoked.org/Prisoners.aspx) stated that Israel’s treatment of Palestinian security prisoners in Israeli prisons violated their rights to equality, dignity, family life, education, and more. Holding prisoners and detainees from the Occupied Territory inside Israel also constituted a blatant violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention.
* On 1 October, the [Palestinian Center for Human Rights](https://pchrgaza.org/en/?p=11402) concluded the sixth training course for young lawyers in Family Law. The course aimed to help young Palestinian lawyers obtain the license to practice law before Sharia courts. The 30-hour training course was attended by 31 lawyers from the central Gaza Strip, Khan Younis and Rafah.

**North America**

* On 28-30 September, the [US Campaign for Palestinian Rights](https://uscpr.org/conference2018/) held a conference in Minneapolis-Saint Paul, to honor the role activists play in a wide range of social and racial justice movements. The conference concluded with a [speech](https://mondoweiss.net/2018/10/practices-apartheid-mccollum/) by U.S. Rep. Betty McCollum (D-MN) denouncing the United States administration for emboldening Israeli to implement cruel actions against Palestinians. “It isn’t a wonder that Benjamin Netanyahu knows he has a green light to advance apartheid inside of Israel or endlessly expand the settlements or for Israeli security forces to force a massacre of scores of unarmed protesters in Gaza with complete impunity,” she said.

**United Nations**

* On 5 October, [UNRWA](https://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/official-statements/unrwa-expresses-its-concern-about-recent-statements-made-mayor) expressed concern about recent statements by the Mayor of Jerusalem, Nir Barkat, threatening to end the Agency’s operations and installations in East-Jerusalem. UNRWA underscored that its humanitarian operations were in conformity with the UN Charter, bilateral and multilateral agreements still in force, and relevant General Assembly resolutions. UNRWA had also continuously maintained operations in the Occupied Palestinian Territory including East Jerusalem since 1967 with the cooperation and based on a formal agreement with the State of Israel, which remained in force.
* On 1 October, [UNRWA](https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/unrwa-temporarily-withdraws-part-its-international-staff-gaza) temporarily withdrew several international staff members from Gaza following a series of security incidents against its personnel including harassment by individuals, including local UNRWA staff, protesting recent measures resulting from UNRWA’s financial crisis. Some of the incidents specifically targeted the UNRWA management in Gaza. UNRWA called on the local authorities in Gaza to respond to its repeated demands to provide effective protection to its employees and facilities.