



The Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies
The 31st Session of the UN Human Rights Council
Item 7: General Debate – Oral Intervention
21 March, 2016
Delivered by: Ms. Yara Jalajel

Thank you Mr. President

I speak on behalf of CIHRS and its partners Al Haq, Al-Mezan, Badil, Jerusalem CAC, Addameer¹. Our message is simple: Impunity for violations of international law in the OPT must end.

Nine days ago as we sat in this Council a 10 year old boy, Yassin Abu Khoussa, and his 6 year old sister, Yasmine, were killed in Gaza as they slept in their beds when a missile fired by an Israeli F-16 tore through their home. Thousands of Palestinian children have died. We ask those states who still attempt to shelter Israel from accountability, how will the deaths of Yassin and Yasmine lead to peace? What if they had been your children?

For too long Israel has acted above the law. For too long lives have been shattered on a daily basis by criminal acts that go unpunished. In the last six months almost two hundred Palestinians have been killed in the OPT. A staggering 25 percent of those killed were children like Yasmine and Yassin.

Over the last 10 years, the Council has passed dozens of resolutions endorsing hundreds of recommendations addressed to Israel. Israel's response has been to vilify this Council and refuse to cooperate with its mechanisms. Choosing to shoot the messenger instead of improving the situation.

Meanwhile, Israel's violent repression of the Palestinian people continues under a tightening regime of belligerent occupation, colonialist in character, which has continued for half a century.

A new wave of violence since October 2015 has seen a rapid increase in grave violations carried by Israel's occupying forces: extrajudicial killings, the intensification of collective punishment, arbitrary detention, torture and ill treatment of detainees, including children, and increasing attacks against medical facilities, including hospitals and ambulances.

The HRC can and must do more to end this nightmare, and ensure accountability for these crimes.

First, the HRC should investigate Israel's refusal to abide by and integrate IHL and IHRL standards into the Rules of Engagement of its military forces.

Second, the Council should investigate the failure of the Israeli justice system to hold those responsible for international crimes accountable, and take steps to end this impunity.

Third, the HRC should perform a comprehensive review of Israel's refusal to cooperate with the Council's mechanisms and its lack of implementation of previous recommendations, and seek means to address this failure.

Fourth, the HRC should create a list of businesses that are profiting from settlement activities and take steps to end this illegal practice.

Thank you Mr. President.

¹ Statement on behalf of Al Haq, Al-Mezan Center for Human Rights, Badil, Jerusalem CAC, Addameer