

IPHRC strongly condemns the inhuman treatment of Palestinian Prisoners and supports their right to be treated in accordance with relevant international standards and laws.

Jeddah, 11th May 2017: The OIC Independent Permanent Human Rights Commission (IPHRC) is following with great concern the inhumane conditions and treatment faced by thousands of Palestinian prisoners in the Israeli jails, and stands in solidarity with over 1500 Palestinian prisoners on hunger strike who are protesting against this unlawful situation in Israeli prisons. IPHRC expressed its strong support for all the demands of Palestinian prisoners, particularly to end solitary confinement, administrative detention, provide health care and to allow family visits.

On 7th May 2017, H.E. Riyad Al Maliki, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Palestine, participated in the ongoing 11th Session of the IPHRC and briefed the Commission members on the severe situation of the Palestinian prisoners in Israeli prisons across the Occupied land. He stressed upon the urgency of resolving the current crisis of hunger strike of the Palestinian prisoners, and highlighted that all demands of the prisoners were legitimate and in accordance with relevant provisions of international law, such as the right to medical care, family visits and fresh air for at least thirty minutes per day. The honorable Minister recalled that the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has also recently urged Israel, the occupying power, to stop the "systematic suspension" of family visits for the hunger strikers.

The IPHRC Working Group on Palestine discussed in detail the ongoing prisoners' crises as well as the prevalent human rights situation in Occupied Palestinian Territory and strongly condemned the apartheid practices of the occupying power Israel. The Commission also condemned the Israeli practices of arbitrary detentions and regretted that due to intensifying Israeli aggressions, the number of Palestinian prisoners are increasing (there are currently about 7,000 detainees in the jails, including women, children, and administrative detainees). Israel, the occupying power also implements solitary confinement against many prisoners, which is a form of psychological torture. IPHRC called for an immediate resolution of the hunger strike, which has entered into a critical stage threatening the lives of the prisoners. It called upon the International community in particular the OIC Member States and relevant international organizations, including ICRC, to launch a strong campaign in support of the Palestinian prisoners, and to exercise all kinds of moral and political pressures on the Israeli occupying authorities to stop its unlawful practices. The Commission stressed that priority must be given to measures on how to protect the lives of these prisoners and to grant them their legitimate rights, as stipulated in the international law, including the provisions of health care, solitary confinements, allowing regular family visits and assuring respect of all rights of prisoners.

The Commission strongly condemned the Israeli settlement activities, including the recent bill by the Occupying Power, which aims at legitimizing the colonial settlement areas in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Al-Quds Al-Shareef, and stressed that these illegitimate measures are null and void by virtue of international law and relevant UN resolutions. In this regard, IPHRC recalled and commended the UN Security Council Resolution 2334 which was adopted in December 2016, stipulating that under the 4th Geneva Convention, Israel must stop its activity and meet its obligations as an occupying power. This signifies that Israel's expansion and construction of settlements in Occupied Palestinian Territory carries no legal basis, and in fact thwarts the two-State solution of peace and security. In March 2017, the UN Human Rights Council also

condemned the illegal Israeli settlements by adopting a resolution and demanding an end to such activities.

The Commission also expressed its strong concern about ongoing Israeli siege on the Gaza Strip, which has worsened in 2017 as citizens are left with merely two-hour electricity supply per day. The severe deterioration in the provision of basic needs indicates that Gaza has entered a dangerous stage of socioeconomic collapse and stands today as the largest prison in the world due to the decade old Israeli siege. Palestinians are denied freedom of movement including supplies of basic necessities such as medicine, fuel and food. Furthermore, the military barricades imposed by Israel on Palestinian citizens to control their movement, denies them access to their farmlands both in Gaza and West Bank and near the illegal Israeli settlements.

IPHRC commended the adoption of UNESCO resolution, as a positive development which affirmed that the entire Al Aqsa Mosque and the Holy Sanctuary is an Islamic Holy site, dedicated for worship and a part and parcel of the world Cultural Heritage Site, the resolution has also stressed that all measures taken by Israel at this regard are considered as measures of an occupying power. However, in total disregard to international law, the Israeli occupation government passed a law on February 2017 that prohibits the call of Azan by loudspeakers in the mosques of the occupied city of Al Quds and the Palestinian towns located inside the Green Line of 1948, and imposed financial sanctions on those who infringe this law. During 2017, Israeli occupation forces also carried out incursions inside the Holy Al-Aqsa Mosque, expelling hundreds of Palestinians and denying the right to perform prayers, among other things. IPHRC reiterated its condemnation of these activities as violation of the Palestinians right to freedom of religion and worship.

The Commission also regretted the withdrawal of the UN ESCWA draft report which exposes the Israeli apartheid practices, and called upon the international community to objectively examine the report and hold the Israeli occupying authorities accountable under international law, and ensure protection to the Palestinian people against these Israeli practices. ‘The international community must assume its responsibility and put an end to the repeated, serious and systematic Israeli violations against people, land and sacred places in Occupied Palestine’, the Commission added.

The Commission reiterated its call on OIC Member States to join the ongoing movement of Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions on products coming from Israeli settlements. It also urged OIC Member States to take lead in providing political, economic, and diplomatic support, at all levels, to the Palestinian people in their struggle to exercise their inalienable right to self-determination for the establishment of their own independent, viable and contiguous state, with Al -Quds Al-Shareef as its capital including their unquestionable right to return to their homes and property, as decided in various UN Resolutions, and guaranteed by International law.

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