

**OIC Independent Permanent Human Rights Commission (IPHRC)**  
**Statement**  
**On the Current Situation in Palestine**

The OIC Independent Permanent Human Rights Commission (IPHRC) reviewed during its Sixth Regular Session the situation in Palestine and issued the following statement:

The Commission recalls its statement of 11 August 2014, and is appalled by the tragic loss of lives of innocent civilians, the vast devastation in the Gaza Strip and the ongoing Israeli violations in East Jerusalem and the West Bank.

The Commission reiterates that the continuation of the Israeli Occupation represents a violation of both International Humanitarian Law and International Human Rights Law. It is in fact the root cause of all escalations and ongoing human rights violations of the Palestinian People. The Commission therefore calls for concerted international efforts to pave the way to a peaceful political settlement to end this grave situation and the ongoing injustice against the Palestinian People, hence enabling them to achieve their long awaited legitimate aspiration of exercising their right to self-determination and to establish their own independent, viable and contiguous state, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

The Commission emphasises that indiscriminate and massive killing and displacement of thousands of innocent Palestinian civilians are not merely statistics, and their systematic nature and magnitude cannot be justified on any ground. The lives of all individuals are of equal value, regardless of race, sex or religion, and should be treated as such. The Commission reminds that any destruction by the Occupying Power of real or personal property is prohibited, according to Article 53 of the Fourth Geneva Convention. It also underscores that Palestinian civilians are protected persons under the Convention. Guaranteeing their general welfare is the duty of the Occupying Power, which is also obliged not to subject them to forcible transfers or deportations. Collective punishment is not only prohibited, but also considered a blatant war crime, by the Second and Fourth Geneva Conventions. The international community is called upon to uphold its shared responsibility in

maintain International Law, and is thus urged to ensure that Israel, as the Occupying Power, fully adheres to and meets these obligations.

The Commission deplores the paucity of international action to address such crimes, and implores the international community to thoroughly investigate them. All attempts should be made to prevent impunity. The Commission therefore supports all endeavours in this regard, including through the existing international accountability mechanisms, and calls for convening the Conference of the High Contracting Parties to the Four Geneva Conventions as early as possible. It also calls upon Israel to fully cooperate with the mechanisms established by the Human Rights Council, and urges the newly designated Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian Territories Occupied since 1967 to embark on discharging his mandate without delay.

The Commission is seriously concerned that tens of thousands of Palestinians remain without homes in the aftermath of the latest Israeli incursion on Gaza, and that the health and education sectors are the most affected by the Israeli operations and measures. It underlines in this respect the obligation of Israel, under Articles 50 and 56 of the Fourth Geneva Convention, to ensure the unfettered access of the Palestinian Population to education and health services. It also stress Israel's obligation, as the Occupying Power, to lift the siege imposed on the Gaza Strip, in accordance with International Humanitarian Law, in order to allow for unhindered access of goods and construction material necessary for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of the Gaza Strip.

Meanwhile, the Commission commends the efforts by UNRWA and other United Nations agencies to address the plight of Palestinians, particularly in the Gaza Strip, and encourages the continuation of these efforts. It also underlines that early recovery will not be possible unless the international donor community fulfils the pledges made at the Conference on Palestine and the Reconstruction of Gaza, held in Cairo on 12 October 2014, and unless the Palestinian Government is duly empowered by all parties concerned to shoulder its responsibilities.

The Commission is alarmed at the continued application of a duality of laws by Israel on protected persons under the latter's jurisdiction. It emphasises that all individuals should be treated equally and with equal dignity, and no one should be deprived of his or her liberty without due process. Prolonged and arbitrary arrest or detention of Palestinians, administrative or otherwise, should not be allowed to continue unchecked, in line with Article 9 of ICCPR.

Finally, the Commission reiterates that the illegal and illegitimate rampant settlement activities in and around East Jerusalem, and in the West Bank, constitute immediate threats to the two-state solution. Only a just and comprehensive peace would be a lasting one. The Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions Movement worldwide is a much welcomed effort to bring this issue to the fore.

\*\*\*\*\*

