

**Permanent Observer
Mission of Palestine
to the United Nations
Geneva**



البعثة المراقبة الدائمة
لفلسطين
لدى الأمم المتحدة في جنيف

Palestine Statement

by

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before

The First Session of the Human Rights Council

Geneva, 26 June 2006

Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished delegates ,

The Palestinian people have been subject to gross and systematic violations of their human rights under the Israeli occupation since 1967. The Commission on Human Rights adopted various resolutions continuously condemning these violations and calling for the cessation of Israeli violence and crimes. However, the Palestinian people continue to suffer from the brutal policies and practices by the Israeli occupying power, which is perpetrating such grave breaches of international humanitarian law and human rights law with both political and legal impunity. The Human Rights Council was brought to life with the hope that it will more effectively resolve human rights violations around the world. We believe that the credibility and efficacy of the new Human Rights Council is to be gauged by its ability to offer action-oriented solutions to the human rights violations plaguing the daily lives of the Palestinian people.

The current precarious human rights and humanitarian conditions in the Occupied Palestinian Territory stem from severe collective punishment imposed on the Palestinian people for exercising their democratic right in the January 2006 parliamentary elections. Collective punishment has taken the form of both an economic siege and repeated Israeli military aggressions against the civilian population, including children and women.

The decision to enforce economic sanctions against the Palestinian people contravenes the principles and provisions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenants of Human Rights, particularly the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights. Moreover, Israel continues to withhold Palestinian tax revenues in contravention of the 1994 Paris Protocol. The Palestinian people as a result suffer from unprecedented levels of poverty and unemployment rates. The lack of funds and Israel's closure policy, especially the closure of the commercial crossing points in the Gaza Strip, have led to the acute shortage in food and medical supplies and have also crippled the ability of the Palestinian Authority to provide social services, including health care services and schooling to the Palestinian people, thus depriving them of their most fundamental rights to food, health and education.

The Palestinian people bear the brunt of the starvation policy exercised against them under the barrage of Israeli shells, bombarded by continuous military incursions into their towns and villages and surrounded by the Wall, which ferociously continues to encroach on their land. Despite Israel's redeployment in the Gaza Strip, it continues to be an occupied territory. Israel through its control of Gaza's airspace is escalating its extra-judicial killings, which have caused the death and serious injury of many civilians. Moreover, Israel continues to control the seashore of Gaza. The recent most notorious carnage at the Gaza beach on 9 June, where the ten-year-old Huda witnessed the killing of her entire family by missiles fired in cold blood from an Israeli gunship stationed just offshore, evinces Israel's total disregard for international humanitarian law. In fact, Israel places itself above the law.

We call upon this esteemed Council and the international community to lift the siege imposed on our people in order to avert the further deterioration in the humanitarian conditions in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, and to take effective measures to address the gross Israeli violations of human rights of the Palestinian people. In this connection, we call for dispatching a high-level inquiry mission on the Israeli human rights violations, particularly the killing of Palestinian civilians including children and women, and to provide the Council at its next session with conclusions and recommendations with a view to putting an immediate end thereto.