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CAIRO INSTITUTE
FOR HUMAN RIGHTS STUDIES
Institut du Caire pour les études des droits de l'homme
مركز القاهرة لدراسات حقوق الإنسان

United Nations Human Rights Council: Session 13
Item 7: General Debate 2- Oral Intervention
Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies
22 March, 2010

Thank you Mr. President,

On the 8th of March, 32 human rights organizations from throughout the Arab region, including the Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies, issued a joint statement condemning recent actions by Israel violating the sanctity of Islamic holy sites in Jerusalem. These violations include encroachments on the al-Aqsa Mosque, the denial of Palestinian access to the mosque, and the use of excessive force to repress Palestinian's protesting these violations of the Geneva Conventions. Dozens of Palestinians have been injured during the protests by the use of excessive force by Israeli forces, including beatings, the use of tear gas and rubber bullets.

These violations of Palestinian religious rights come at the same time as a decision by Israel to extend the scope of Jewish settlements within East Jerusalem. Israeli authorities have recently approved the construction of 600 new settlement-housing units on Palestinian territory, in blatant violation of international law. Such actions reveal the hollowness of the Israeli government's expressed desire to join peace negotiations, and endanger the peace and security of all Israeli and Palestinian citizens.

Moreover, these NGOs from throughout the Arab region call on the Arab Group of states within the UN to work to ensure that the HRC and General Assembly of the UN no longer delay a clear decision on if national investigations into war crimes committed during the Gaza offensive meet international standards.

We further call on members of the European Union, to activate Article 2 of the Israeli-European Partnership Agreement and make continued economic cooperation with Israel dependent upon its respect of Palestinian rights, including freedom of religion, and the dismantlement existing settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories.

Thank you Mr. President