The High Follow-up Committee for Arab Citizens of Israel and Adalah to UN Commission of Inquiry: Israel practices racial segregation against Palestinian citizens of Israel

March 31, 2022

Adalah

<https://www.adalah.org/en/content/view/10597>

**For the first time, an international Commission of Inquiry (COI) will also examine Israel’s human rights violations against Palestinian citizens of the state, and the ‘root causes’ of the conflict. Adalah called on the COI to investigate the Nakba and the ongoing existence of a colonial regime with apartheid characteristics.**

The Chairman of the High Follow-up Committee for Arab Citizens of Israel, Mr. Mohammed Barakeh, and Adalah representatives appeared today, 31 March 2022, before the UN Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT), including East Jerusalem, and in Israel (CoI-OPTI) in Amman, Jordan.

Adalah’s representatives are: Dr. Hassan Jabareen, General Director and Adalah Attorneys Nareman Shehadeh-Zoabi and Adi Mansour.

Adalah and the High Follow-up Committee presented a historical overview to the CoI-OPTI with suggestions to investigate the ‘root causes’ of the conflict, including the Nakba (*The Catastrophe*) and the Palestinian refugees; massive land confiscation from Palestinians; the continuing ban on Palestinian family unification; systemic discrimination in the distribution of state resources, which deepens the gaps between Jewish and Palestinian citizens of Israel; and restrictions on political participation. Adalah highlighted discriminatory laws, such as the Jewish Nation-State Law; the Law of Return; the Absentees’ Property Law, and more.

Adalah presented key human rights violations against Palestinian citizens of Israel during the May 2021 events. These violations included extreme police brutality against demonstrators; the unwillingness of Israel to investigate and prosecute those responsible for injuring and killing, both police and Jewish Israeli citizens; and the police collusion with far-right Jewish Israelis who incited against Palestinian citizens of Israel on social media and came to mixed Arab-Jewish cities and attacked residents. Adalah stressed here that Israel is operating two separate systems of law enforcement, based solely on ethnic and national affiliation resulting in systemic discrimination against Palestinian citizens of Israel.

Adalah also presented inciteful statements by the Israeli political leadership during the May 2021 events, while Mohammed Barakeh emphasized the High Follow-up Committee’s call at that time for international protection for Palestinian citizens of Israel.

Mohammed Barakeh stressed the dangers of the Jewish Nation-State Law, which reinforces Jewish supremacy and racism, especially its first clause which prescribes that all historic Palestine is the historical homeland of the Jewish people. This law constitutes modern-day apartheid, joining decades of Israeli apartheid from the demolition of more than 500 villages and the displacement of the Palestinian people, who, to date, cannot return to their homes. Barakeh also expressed deep concern about Israeli authorities giving out weapons to right-wing settler groups, especially after Israel’s Prime Minister called on citizens, earlier this week, to take up arms and use them against Palestinians in the streets.

The CoI-OPTI was established by a United Nations Human Rights Council (HRC) resolution adopted on 27 May 2021, against the backdrop of the April-May 2021 events in the OPT, including in East Jerusalem, and in Israel. The three commissioners heading the CoI are: Ms. Navi Pillay (South Africa), Mr. Miloon Kothari (India), and Mr. Chris Sodoti (Australia).

The HRC resolution established an “ongoing, independent, international commission of inquiry to investigate, in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, and in Israel, all alleged violations and abuses of international human rights law leading up and since 13 April 2021”.  The COI was mandated to report to the HRC and to the General Assembly.

The COI differs in significant ways from previous UN independent commissions of inquiry. Firstly, its mandate includes the OPT and Israel, for the first time, which enables the COI to **address human rights violations perpetrated against Palestinian citizens of Israel in Israel**. Second, the COI is not time-bound; it is an ongoing COI which will examine all suspicions of Israel’s violations of international and humanitarian law committed leading up to and sine 13 April 2021 onwards. Third, the HRC also gave the COI an extensive mandate to examine all **underlying root causes of recurrent tensions, instability and protraction of conflict, including systematic discrimination and repression based on national, ethnic, racial or religious identityץ**

[CLICK HERE to read the HRC’s resolution](https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G21/114/96/PDF/G2111496.pdf?OpenElement)

Adalah added:

“Adalah welcomes the establishment of the UN Commission of Inquiry, which allows an independent UN body to examine, in-depth, for the very first time, the root causes of the conflict and severe human rights violations committed against Palestinians on both sides of the Green Line. There is ample evidence that Israel pursues racist practices against all Palestinians under its control, practices that are contrary to the norms of international law that have no place in the world. Now that Israel has constitutionally enshrined Jewish supremacy, under the Jewish Nation-State Law, there is a moral obligation to defend the human rights of all Palestinians, including those who hold Israeli citizenship."

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