

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



البعثة المراقبة الدائمة
لفلسطين
لدى الأمم المتحدة في جنيف

Palestine comment on Beit Hanoun fact-finding mission by Dr. Mohammad Abu-Koash, Ambassador of Palestine to the UN in Geneva, before the Human Rights Council on Thursday 22 March 2007

Excellency,

We would like to thank Professor Christine Chinkin for her travel and sparing the time to brief this Council on Beit Hanoun fact-finding mission which has not been dispatched. It is indeed unfortunate that Israel kept you distinguished member of the mission and the head of the mission, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, a man of world stature, waiting in Geneva for several days with the hope of obtaining the Israeli access permit without avail. It is ironic that Israel treated both of you despite your status and the fact that you were selected for the mission by the President of the newly established Human Rights Council as if you were under its military occupation regime waiting for a permit . As you know the permit policy is part and parcel of the Israeli military occupation which denies even our pregnant women access to hospitals.

While we thank you both for your approval to carry out the mission, we must add that we were not surprised by the Israeli refusal to grant you access. Certainly it is not in the interest of Israel to receive a fact-finding mission concerning the committed massacre in Beit Hanoun lest the facts are formally documented and brought before this Council for further action with a view to bringing the responsible Israeli war criminals to justice. We wonder whether Israel is a member of an exclusive club of VIP human rights violators who are beyond accountability. The mere fact that Israel has so far blocked two fact-finding missions decided upon by the Council without any effective reaction casts doubts on the whole concept of reform in the field of human rights manifested in the creation of this Council. The Council should not get involved by default in granting most favoured nation status to any country. Human rights should not be subject to concessionary treatment. This Council is not an arena for the powerful and strong to pick and choose on the implementation of its resolutions nor a stage to demonstrate their ability to bring to the forefront issues of their choice which serve to further their interests.

The Palestinian people have been deprived for decades of their humanitarian and human rights. Almost all noble humanitarian and human rights provisions have been systematically violated by Israel, the occupying Power, driven by a culture of impunity. If the Council fails to apply human rights laws and its resolutions across the board without selectivity, I recommend that it changes its title and mandate.