**NGO Action News**

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**NGO Action News – 24 May 2018**

**CIVIL SOCIETY AND THE QUESTION OF PALESTINE**

**24 May 2018**

**Middle East**

* On 24 May, the Director for Arab Minorities unit in the [Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI)](https://www.acri.org.il/en/2018/05/24/demand-accountability-demand-freedom-of-expression-support-acri/) issued the statement “Demand Accountability. Demand Freedom of Expression. Support ACRI.” The document denounces “the political climate in which the Israeli government is cracking down on civil society and the legitimacy of public action.” It refers to the use of excessive force against Palestinian protestors since 30 March in Gaza; the Israeli politicians’ propaganda against the Great March of Return; and Haifa police and law enforcement agencies’ arrest and detention of protestors.
* On 23 May, the [Palestinian Human Rights Organization Council (PHROC)](http://www.mezan.org/en/post/22873/Joint%2BPress%2BRelease%3A%2BPHROC%2BCondemns%2BIsrael%E2%80%99s%2BOrder%2Bto%2BDeport%2BHuman%2BRights%2BWatch%2BDirector%2C%2BOmar%2BShakir%2C%2Bas%2Ba%2BGrave%2BViolation%2Bof%2BRight%2Bto%2BFreedom%2Bof%2BExpression%2C%2Band%2BSystematic%2BShrinking%2Bof%2BCivil%2BSociety%2BSpace) issued a joint statement to condemn Israel’s order to deport the Israel and Palestine Director for Human Rights Watch, Omar Shakir, as a grave violation of the right to freedom of expression. The statement denounces the order as a “clear attempt by Israel to shrink civil society space” and as threatening to human rights monitoring by respected NGOs.
* On 23 May, [BADIL](http://www.badil.org/en/publication/press-releases/87-2018/4868-pr-en-230518-16.html) issued a press release on their participation to the UN Forum on the Question of Palestine organized under the auspices of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (CEIRP) and closed consultations on 16-19 May in New York. BADIL emphasized the need to incorporate the right to reparations (repatriation, compensation) for the displaced for the effectuality of the exercise of the right to self-determination.
* On 22 May, [Al-Haq](http://www.alhaq.org/advocacy/targets/united-nations/1255-al-haq-attends-28th-special-session-of-the-un-human-rights-council-on-the-situation-in-palestine-calls-for-accountability) shared their report of the 28th Special Session of the UN Human Rights Council on the Situation in Palestine, which they attended. Al-Haq welcomes the adoption of a draft resolution calling for the establishment of a commission of inquiry into Israel’s excessive use of lethal force and calls on the International Criminal Court to urgently open a full investigation and prosecute all allegations of war crimes.
* On 21 May, [Adalah-The Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel](https://www.adalah.org/en/content/view/9514), in collaboration with volunteer lawyers and Human Rights Defenders Fund, provided legal defense to
19 protestors detained by the police for demonstrating in Haifa on 18 May against the events on the Gaza border.
* On 23 May, [38 civil society organizations in Israel](https://www.acri.org.il/en/2018/05/24/demand-accountability-demand-freedom-of-expression-support-acri/) addressed a strong statement to the Israeli Attorney General and the Police Chief, in which they demanded immediate personal intervention to investigate and justify the detention and injury of several protestors in Haifa on 18 May. They also demanded that the Attorney General convey a clear and public message to the police concerning the importance of freedom of protest and expression, and the importance of civil society organizations.

**Europe**

* On 18 May, the UK-based [Palestinian Return Centre (PRC)](https://prc.org.uk/en/post/3854/prc-takes-part-in-unhrc-special-session-over-latest-developments-in-occupied-palestinian-territories) engaged in the emergency session held by the UN Human Rights Council on the situation in Palestine. PRC has recently launched a large-scale correspondence campaign “to expose to the British and international political community” Israeli human rights violations in Gaza, with letters sent to the 42 member-states of the Council and to more than 600 British MPs.

**North America**

* On 22 May, [Human Rights Watch (HRW)](https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/05/22/dont-blame-hamas-gaza-bloodshed) Israel/Palestine Advocacy Director published an article “Don’t blame Hamas for the Gaza bloodshed.” The article denounces Israel’s response to defend its killings in Gaza.

**United Nations**

* On 23 May, the [UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process](https://unsco.unmissions.org/security-council-briefing-situation-middle-east-including-palestinian-question-0), Nickolay Mladenov, briefed the Security Council on the situation in Gaza. Two main updates following the clashes of 15 May were the emergency meeting of Foreign Ministers of the League of Arab States in Cairo followed by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation’s emergency summit in Istanbul; and the Human Rights Council’s call for the establishment of a Commission of Inquiry into the violations in Gaza. The Special Coordinator presented to the Council his plan of actions to improve Gaza’s infrastructure, particularly its electricity, water networks and health system.
* On 22 May, [UNRWA](https://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/press-releases/health-palestine-refugees-70-years-after-original-displacement-%E2%80%9Cnakba%E2%80%9D-no) released its annual health report for 2017, which provides information on the health situation of Palestinian refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, West Bank, Gaza and Syria. The annual report coincides with the 70th anniversary of the mass displacement of Palestinians known as the “Nakba.” This anniversary, according to UNRWA, puts the spotlight on the longest standing protracted refugee crisis.
* On 18 May, [UN human rights experts](http://www.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=23102&LangID=E) issued a statement to call on the Government of Israel to rescind its decision to cancel the work permit of Omar Shakir, the Israel and Palestine Director for Human Rights Watch. The UN experts stated that the unjustified curtailing of the indispensable work of human rights defenders does not dignify the reputation of any government, and runs counter to democratic values.
* [The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People](https://www.un.org/unispal/international-conference-on-the-question-of-jerusalem-in-rabat-morocco-26-28-june-2018/)(CEIRPP) and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) will jointly convene an international conference under the theme “The Question of Jerusalem after 50 years of Occupation and 25 years of the Oslo Accords” in Rabat, Morocco on 26-28 June 2018.

*This newsletter informs about recent and upcoming activities of Civil Society Organizations affiliated with the United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. The Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights of the UN Secretariat provide the information “as is” without warranty of any*kind,*and do not accept any responsibility or liability for the accuracy, or reliability of the information contained in the websites linked in the newsletter.*