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**Human Rights Council**

**25<sup>th</sup> session, Item 7 - GD**

**International Organisation for the Elimination of all Forms Of Racial Discrimination**

**(EAFORD)**

**Delivered by: Daniela Dönges**

Thank you, Mr President,

This is a joint statement with Geneva International Centre for Justice and Youth Against Settlements

Mr. President, Palestinians have been living under a belligerent occupation for decades now. As the Occupying Power, Israel owes the Palestinian civilians protection as provided under the Geneva Convention, yet so far it has persistently and systematically violated these provisions.

Contrary to the official self-portrayal of democracy, the occupying power has so far continued a systematic policy of apartheid, characterized by dispossession, settler violence, heavy restrictions of movement and deprivation of Palestinian socio-economic rights, which continue to take place while the international community is standing aside and slowly starts to consider some sanctions. Such a delay goes essentially at the expense of the Palestinians, who are losing their faith in the international community and the significance of those uncountable statements and resolutions that have been issued so far.

Although the seriousness of situation is well known, it has taken a new turn with attempts of the occupying power to undermine agenda item 7 on this Council's agenda in a bargaining process that seems to be supported by an entire group of countries who abstain from the discussions on the item in clear contravention of their obligation. We wish to remind this Council that the International community bears a special responsibility in ending the ongoing human rights violations against Palestinians since the adoption of the UN partition plan, and that any weakness in holding Israel accountable for its persistent noncooperation will have long lasting consequences, including encouraging other Countries to boycott this Council in exchange for political rewards.

Mr President, as we celebrate the international year of solidarity with the Palestinian people, Palestinians find themselves in a race against the clock. Their struggle for self-determination and statehood is constantly undermined by the occupying power, which is playing for time in order to expand its settlements and annex a maximum of Palestinian land at an unprecedented haste against all international outcries. We call on this Council to assume its responsibility not to leave them alone in their struggle and take effective action instead of making concessions.

Thank you