NGO Action News – 18 June 2020

CIVIL SOCIETY AND THEQUESTION OF PALESTINE

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**18 June 2020**

https://www.un.org/unispal/ngo-action-news-18-june-2020/

**Middle East**

* On 17 June, [Adalah – The Legal Centre for Arab Minority Rights in Israel](https://www.adalah.org/en/content/view/10036) echoed a warning from UN human rights experts, during the 16 June UN Human Rights Council meeting in Geneva, that Israel’s annexation of the West Bank will be the “vision of 21st century apartheid.” In its statement, Adalah called on the United Nations and the international community to oppose Israel’s looming annexation of large swaths of the occupied West Bank and to push for the dismantling of all Israeli settlements. Adalah warned that annexation would “normalize Israel’s colonial project and amounts to apartheid via the continued expansion and construction of illegal settlements, displacement and dispossession of Palestinians and demographic manipulation.”
* On 17 June, the [Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies](https://cihrs.org/united-nations-in-response-to-unprecedented-recognition-of-israels-apartheid-regime-states-must-take-concrete-steps-to-end-this-unjust-reality/?lang=en) delivered a joint statement on behalf of 114 Palestinian, regional, and international civil society organizations, “sending a strong message to UN Member States that now is the time to recognize Israel’s establishment and perpetuation of an apartheid regime over the Palestinian people as a whole, including Palestinians on both sides of the Green Line and Palestinian refugees and exiles abroad” during the 43rd Regular Sessions of the UN Human Rights Council under item 9 on racial discrimination and xenophobia. The NGOs called on all UN Member States to follow South Africa’s and Namibia’s lead and to take a “courageous stand against Israeli apartheid […].”
* On 17 June, [Mossawa Centre – The Advocacy Centre for Arab Citizens in Israel](http://www.mossawa.org/eng/) held the webinar “Annexation: What Does it Really Mean? A Look Through the Eyes of the Palestinian Minority in Israel” with Mossawa Centre founder Jafar Farah and former member of the Israeli parliament Hanna Swaid. The discussion was moderated by former legal advisor to the Palestinian negotiating team Diana Buttu.
* On 16 June, [Al Mezan Centre for Human Rights](https://www.mezan.org/en/post/23749/Joint%2BPress%2BRelease%3A%2BRights%2BGroups%2BCall%2Bon%2BUN%2BHuman%2BRights%2BCouncil%2Bto%2BLift%2BIllegal%2BClosure%2Bof%2BGaza%2Bas%2BCollective%2BPunishment) made an oral intervention on behalf of
43 NGOs at the 43rd Regular Session of the UN Human Rights Council under item 7 on “Human Rights Situation in Palestine and Other Occupied Arab Territories”, calling on Israel to lift its illegal closure of Gaza. The NGOs reiterated the warning that Gaza would become uninhabitable during 2020 should Israel fail to lift the illegal closure and called on Member States to “live up to their responsibility to bring Israel’s illegal closure of Gaza to an end and to uphold the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including to self-determination and return.”
* On 14 June, [Gisha – Legal Centre for Freedom of Movement](https://gisha.org/updates/11278) issued the press release “The Rights of Gaza’s Civilian Population must be Protected” urging Israel to identify an immediate solution to meet the urgent needs of the Strip’s residents, especially patients in need of life-saving treatment outside the Strip, and to maintain operations at the Kerem Shalom Crossing with Israel while allowing for uninterrupted supply of goods to and from the Strip. Gisha also called on Israel to prepare, publish and implement an exit strategy from the pandemic lockdown at the Erez Crossing that includes the removal of restrictions on movement of people and goods that preceded the pandemic and meets the needs of Gaza’s residents for health and safety.
* On 13 June, [Al-Haq](http://www.alhaq.org/advocacy/16980.html) called on Ireland, in light of its campaigning for a 2020-2021 term on the UN Security Council, to pass the Control of Economic Activity (Occupied Territories) Bill 2018, first introduced by Senator Frances Black, which, if made law, would prohibit the import and sale of goods and services produced in illegal settlements located in territories under military occupation. Al-Haq underlined that the bill was compatible with EU law and was also necessary for Ireland to pass in order to meet its obligations under international law.
* On 13 June, [Al Mezan Centre for Human Rights, Al-Haq, Al-Dameer Association for Human Rights and the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights](https://www.mezan.org/en/post/23753/International%2BCriminal%2BCourt%3A%2BPalestinian%2BHuman%2BRights%2BOrganisations%2BPublic%2BResponse%2Bto%2Bthe%2BPre-Trial%2BChamber%2BRequest%2Bof%2B26%2BMay%2B2020) issued the report “International Criminal Court: Palestinian Human Rights Organizations Public Response to the Pre-Trial Chamber Request of 26 May 2020” in which they summarized their position on the Court’s jurisdiction, invoking special agreements under the Fourth Geneva Convention and the absence of effect of the Oslo Accords on the Court’s exercise of territorial jurisdiction. The Palestinian NGOs also called the ICC Pre-Trial Chamber to rescind or at least shorten the deadline the 26 May 2020 Order allows for Israel to respond in the present context of its planned annexation of the Palestinian territory in July 2020.
* On 11 June, [Peace Now](https://peacenow.org.il/en/reasons-the-high-court-rejected-the-expropriation-law) issued the press release “High Court Rejects Expropriation Law – Here’s Why” in reference to the cancellation of the “Law for the Regularization of Settlement in Judea and Samaria” by the Israeli Hight Court of Justice, following a 2017 petition of Peace Now, the Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI) and Yesh Din and other petitions by a host of Palestinian NGOs. Peace Now explains how the law violated the rights to equality and property and does not serve a legitimate purpose.
* On 10 June, [HaMoked – Centre for the Defence of the Individual](http://www.hamoked.org/Document.aspx?dID=Updates2173) issued a press release on Israel’s High Court of Justice’s cancellation of the Regularization Law legalizing the expropriation of private lands in the West Bank since the law “does not meet the test of proportionality and is therefore unconstitutional.” HaMoked informed that the Court’s judgement was issued in response to two petitions challenging the law, one filed by Adalah and the other by Yesh Din and ACRI, on behalf of the heads of local council in the West Bank and various human rights organizations, including HaMoked.

**Europe**

* On 16 June, [Amnesty International](https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/MDE1525302020ENGLISH.PDF) delivered an oral statement to the UN Human Rights Council at its 43rd Regular Session in Geneva, underlining the Israeli authorities’ lack of implementation of the recommendations of the UN Independent Commission of Inquiry on Protests in the OPT and urged the Council to ensure that recommendations for accountability and reparations for victims are implemented. Amnesty International also welcomed the publication of the database of companies involved in business activities in illegal Israeli settlements and highlighted the situation of human rights defenders facing continuing attacks by Israel “through restrictive legislation and governmental policies coupled with smear campaigns and raids delegitimizing human rights work.”
* On 11 June, the [European Coordination of Committees and Associations for Palestine](https://www.eccpalestine.org/victory-for-freedom-of-expression-call-to-boycott-recognised-as-a-civil-right/) (ECCP) welcomed the European Court of Human Rights’ unanimous ruling that France’s High Court’s conviction of 11 activists calling for a boycott of Israeli products on sale in supermarkets violated the European Convention on Human Rights’ freedom of expression article. ECCP stated that the European Court’s decision comes at a time of widespread condemnation of Israel’s plans to formally annex large swathes of the OPT.

**North America**

* On 15 June, [Americans for Peace Now](http://wfc2.wiredforchange.com/o/8682/p/dia/action4/common/public/?action_KEY=10962) (APN) launched a campaign urging the public to tell their Member of Congress to join a letter signed by a group of members of the House of Representatives to Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu and his ministers of defence and foreign affairs, stating that the annexation of the West Bank is a gross violation of Palestinians’ right to statehood and jeopardizes Israel’s vital relationship with allied states and the stability of the Palestinian Authority.
* On 15 June, [J Street](https://jstreet.org/press-releases/28-senators-and-8-leading-senate-candidates-now-publicly-oppose-unilateral-west-bank-annexation/#.Xus6p0VKjIU) issued the press release “28 Senators and 9 Leading Senate Candidates Now Publicly Oppose Unilateral West Bank Annexation: Battleground Senate Candidates Part of Overwhelming Opposition to the Move”. J Street shared the 28 senators’ public statements opposing annexation and underlined how these were strong messages adding to the “increasingly overwhelming chorus of American and Israeli political and communal leaders, security officials and foreign policy experts – including over 220 Israeli former generals – who are publicly opposing annexation and sounding the alarm about the potential for disaster.”

**United Nations**

* On 16 June, [UN experts including Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in the Palestinian Territory Occupied Since 1967 Michael Lynk](https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=25960&LangID=E) issued a statement to denounce Israeli planned annexation of parts of the Palestinian West Bank and called on the international community to ensure accountability. The UN experts stated, “[t]he annexation of occupied territory is a serious violation of the Charter of the United Nations and the Geneva Conventions, and contrary to the fundamental rule affirmed many times by the United Nations security Council and General Assembly that the acquisition of territory by war or force is inadmissible […].” The experts called on the international community to oppose violations of human rights and fundamental principles of international law and to give effect to its many resolutions critical of Israel’s conduct of this protracted occupation. They also expressed “great regret about the role of the United States of America in supporting and encouraging Israel’s unlawful plans for the further annexation of occupied territory.”

*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.*