**NGO Action News**

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**CIVIL SOCIETY AND THE QUESTION OF PALESTINE**

**18 May 2018**

**Middle East**

* On 17 May, [Adalah and Al Mezan Centre for Human Rights](http://www.mezan.org/en/post/22825/Adalah%2C%2BAl%2BMezan%2Bdemand%2Burgent%2BIsraeli%2BSupreme%2BCourt%2Bruling%2Bon%2Bpetition%2Bagainst%2BIsraeli%2Barmy%27s%2Buse%2Bof%2Blive%2Bfire%2Bon%2Bcivilian%2Bprotesters%2Bin%2BGaza) submitted a motion to the Israeli Supreme Court demanding that it issues an immediate final decision on the joint petition submitted earlier by human rights organizations. The petition demands that the Court order the revocation of the rules of engagement permitting soldiers to use live ammunition against protestors along Gaza border fence.
* On 15 May, the Palestinian Human Rights Organizations Council (PHROC) addressed
[a joint letter](http://www.mezan.org/en/post/22824/Joint%2BLetter%2Bof%2BAllegation%2Bto%2Bthe%2BUnited%2BNations%2BSpecial%2BProcedures) to the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the OPT, to the Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, and to the Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association. The letter denounces the continuing violations by Israeli forces during the past seven weeks with their “shoot-to-kill practice” and targeting of peaceful demonstrators.
* On 15 May, 17 human rights organizations including Adalah, B’Tselem, Coalition of Women for Peace, Gisha, Ir Amim, Yesh Din, and Hamoked launched a call to the Israeli government to [“Take its Finger Off the Trigger](https://www.btselem.org/press_releases/20180515_take_the_finger_off_the_trigger)”. The campaign denounces the casualties caused since 30 March and Israel’s failure to reality that had led to the mass protest of
* 50 years of occupation and over 10 years of closure.
* On 13 May,[Hamoked](http://www.hamoked.org/Document.aspx?dID=Updates1988) released a statement to denounce an insufficient reply from the Israeli Ministry of Interior following their petition against the “intolerable overcrowding and inhuman conditions at the Population and Immigration Authority and the Employment Services building in East Jerusalem.”

**Europe**

* On 18 May, [Amnesty International](https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/MDE1584432018ENGLISH.pdf) issued a statement calling for an international commission of inquiry to ensure accountability for Israel’s use of excessive force in response to protests. The statement cautions on the high number of “apparently unlawful killings, including possible willful killings,” which is unprecedented and requires accountability “that we believe Israel is unwilling to deliver.”
* On 15 May, following a Security Council meeting on Gaza and latest developments, EU member states issued [a joint statement](https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/44510/statement-high-representativevice-president-federica-mogherini-violence-gaza-and-latest_en), urging all parties to take immediate steps to de-escalate the situation and to act with utmost restraint to avoid further loss of life.
* On 15 May, the [Palestinian Return Centre](https://prc.org.uk/en/post/3841/meeting-invitation-ongoing-nakba-at-70-palestinians-demand-right-of-return) held a meeting in the Houses of Parliament to commemorate the 70th year of the ongoing Nakba and to discussed recent events unfolding in besieged Gaza strip and the Great Return March movement. The meeting was hosted by several Labour Party MPs.

**United Nations**

* On 18 May[, the Human Rights Council](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=23104&LangID=E) held a special session on the deteriorating human rights situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, including East Jerusalem, and during which Michael Lynk, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the OPT since 1967 delivered remarks on Gaza. He noted that the overwhelming majority of Gaza inhabitants had been committed to non-violence over the past weeks and that the Israel Defense Forces continued to fire lethal ammunition into the crowds, notwithstanding the international community’s calls.
* On 18 May, the [UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCH)](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=23100&LangID=E), Zeid Ra’ad Al Hussein, delivered a statement during the special session of the Human Rights Council He endorsed calls by many states and observers for an international, independent and impartial investigation; and called for the occupation to end, “so the people of Palestine can be liberated, and the people of Israel liberated from it.”
* On 18 May, the [Human Rights Council](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=23108&LangID=E) concluded its special session by adopting a resolution in which it decided to dispatch an independent commission of inquiry to investigate all violations of international humanitarian and human rights law in the context of large-scale civilian protests in the OPT.
* On 17 May, [Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed](https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/dsg/statement/2018-05-17/deputy-secretary-generals-remarks-opening-united-nations-forum), speaking at the UN Forum on the Question of Palestine on behalf of SG Guterres, referred to the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration for Human Rights and called for the principles and standards enshrined in the Declaration to guide the search for a durable solution to the Question of Palestine. A solution should be found on the basis of international law, the legitimate aspirations of Palestinians and Israelis, as well as dialogue for reconciliation and for accountability.
* On 17-18 May, the [UN Forum on the Question of Palestine “70 Year after 1948- Lessons to Achieve a Sustainable Peace](https://www.un.org/unispal/united-nations-forum-on-the-question-of-palestine-united-nations-headquarters-new-york/),” organized by the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (CEIRPP), took place at UNHQ. Four panels of expert speakers convened to discuss the relevance of 1948 events, the ongoing displacement of Palestinians and the future of a two-State solution in light of recent developments. On 16 May, Civil society organizations from Israel and Palestine and CEIRPP members held closed consultations to discuss the participation of civil society in the Committee’s work.
* On 17 May, the [UN humanitarian coordinator for the OPT](https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/humanitarian-coordinator-calls-urgent-support-address-immense), Jamie McGoldrick, called for urgent support to meet the humanitarian needs of victims of violence in Gaza. “The situation in Gaza is devastating and the crisis is far from over,” in reference to ongoing clashed between Palestinians and Israeli forces on the border fence in Gaza.
* On 15 May, the [UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Process](https://unsco.unmissions.org/security-council-briefing-situation-gaza-delivered-un-special-coordinator-nickolay-mladenov), Nickolay Mladenov, delivered a briefing to the Security Council on the situation in Gaza. He called to “step up our efforts in support of a peaceful resolution to the conflict,” and “advance the goal of a just and sustainable peace, culminating ultimately in two states […] of which Gaza is an integral part- living side by side in peace, security and prosperity.”
* On 14 May, the UN Secretary-General, in a [statement attributable to the Spokesperson](https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/statement/2018-05-14/statement-attributable-spokesperson-secretary-general-occupied), expressed his alarm by the sharp escalation of violence in the OPT and the high number of Palestinians killed and injured in the Gaza protests. He called for Israeli forces to exercise maximum restraint in the use of live fire; and Hamas and the leaders of the demonstrations to “prevent all violent actions and provocations.”
* On 14 May, the [UNRWA Spokesperson](https://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/official-statements/unrwa-dismayed-loss-life-and-injuries-gaza), Chris Gunness, released a statement condemning the deaths and injuries in Gaza of civilians, including children. UNRWA also condemned the excessive use of force employed against demonstrators, “who have the right to peaceful assembly and expression.” The Agency supported calls for investigations into the grave incidents.
* [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.