[Home](https://www.un.org/unispal)/NGO Action News – 16 August 2019

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Civil Society and the Question of Palestine

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**16 August 2019**

https://www.un.org/unispal/ngo-action-news-16-august-2019/

**Middle East**

* On 15 August, [Gisha – Legal Centre for Freedom of Movement](https://gisha.org/updates/10328) issued a statement on the denial of entry to Members of the US Representatives Rashida Tlaib and Ilhan Omar to Israel, and by extension to the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT), qualifying the decision as “shameful and unfortunate”.
* On 14 August, [Al-Haq](http://www.alhaq.org/advocacy/targets/united-nations/1448--qq-) said in its submission to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) on the first periodic review of the State of Palestine, that it was  important to examine the broader context of Israel’s prolonged occupation of the Palestinian territory since 1967.  Still, it did not absolve Palestine of its obligation to implement the relevant convention which it had signed without reservations.  The NGO urged the Committee to consider the applicability of international humanitarian law, in particular the law of belligerent occupation, to the situation in the OPT and to consider the conclusions of the 2017 report of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) on “Israeli Practices towards the Palestinian People and the Question of Apartheid”.
* On 11 August, [Hamoked – Centre for the Defence of the Individual](http://www.hamoked.org/Document.aspx?dID=Updates2099) denounced the recent amendment to the Israeli Courts for Administrative Affairs Law, according to which, the authority to hear most petitions of residents of the OPT is transferred from the High Court of Justice (HCJ) to the Jerusalem District Court. These include petitions regarding exit from and entry to the OPT. Hamoked criticized this amendment as “highly problematic and harmful to petitioners from the OPT” as it would reduce the legal protection provided to the Palestinian population and weaken the judicial review of the actions of the military authorities.
* On 7 August, the [Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR), Al-Haq and Al-Mezan Centre for Human Rights](http://mezan.org/en/post/23562/PCHR%2C+Al-Haq+and+Al-Mezan+Organize+Joint+Workshop+Titled%3A+%E2%80%9CShrinking+Freedom+Space+for+Civil+Society%E2%80%9D) organized in Gaza a joint workshop, “Shrinking Freedom Space for Civil Society”. At the event, civil society representatives and human rights experts discussed Israeli policies and measures taken against civil society in Palestine “to shrink their freedom space and undermine their work and credibility.” Speakers emphasized that the “effective role played by Palestinian human rights organizations in [calling for] the prosecution of Israeli leaders in international courts” had made Israel to recently launch smear campaigns to incite against those funding these organizations.
* On 3 August, [Addameer – Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association](http://www.addameer.org/publications/us-legislation-opposition-palestinian-rights) published a factsheet “US Legislation in Opposition to Palestinian Rights”. Addameer explained how the recent laws enacted by the American Government show “the politization of American legislation that opposes Palestinian basic rights” as well as the rights of American citizens, especially their right to freedom of expression, enshrined in the First Amendment.

**North America**

* On 15 August, the [US Campaign for Palestinian Rights](https://uscpr.org/mocrepression) issued a press release to denounce Israel’s reported denial of entry to US Representatives Rashida Tlaib and Ilhan Omar as “appalling and unsurprising”. The US-based solidarity movement called for Members of Congress to condemn Israel’s attempts to make an example of Representatives Tlaib and Omar and to hold Israel accountable for the “exclusionary policies that underlie the Israeli Government’s policies towards Palestinians, Arabs, and Muslims.”
* On 15 August, [Jewish Voice for Peace](https://jewishvoiceforpeace.org/tlaib-and-omar-banned-from-israel/) reacted to the announcement that Representatives Tlaib and Omar would be blocked from entry by Israel by calling on Members of Congress “who just visited Israel under the auspices of AIPAC” to take concrete action to send a message that “this is simply unacceptable.”

**United Nations**

* On 12 August, [UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in the Occupied Palestine Territory Jamie McGoldrick](https://unsco.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/statement_by_un_resident_coordinator_on_the_occasion_of_international_youth_day.pdf) issued a statement on the occasion of International Youth Day. He said, in reference to youth in Palestine, that life under military occupation, high poverty rates and shrinking economic opportunities were all leading to “an alarming sense of hopelessness among young people” but that youth in Palestine had the potential to be the drivers of achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. For this reason, he called for collective attention and investment that is required to transform education in Palestine.
* On 8 August, [UNRWA](https://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/press-releases/over-half-million-girls-and-boys-will-go-back-unrwa-schools-new-scholastic) announced the imminent opening of over 700 schools run by the Agency, in time for the new scholastic year 2019-2020 in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, Gaza, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria, within less than a month. In its press release UNRWA thanked its partners and donors, which enabled the Agency to carry out its largest programme – education for more than half a million Palestine refugee boys and girls.

*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.*