**Palestinian Human Rights Organizations Hold Press Conference to Declare Submission of Forth Substantive Communication to ICC on Israeli Settlement Activity in oPt**

Palestinian Centre for Human Rights

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<https://pchrgaza.org/en/?p=9455>

On Wednesday noon, 20 September 2017, the four Palestinian human rights organizations (Palestinian Center for Human Rights (PCHR), al-Haq Organization, al-Mezan Center for Human Rights, and Addameer Center for Human Rights) held a press conference to declare the submission of a fourth communication to the International Criminal Court (ICC) titled as “Israeli Settlement Activity in the oPt”. The conference was held in PCHR’s Head office in Gaza City and covered by large number of journalists.

Each of Raji Sourani, Director of PCHR, ‘Issam Younis, Director of al-Mezan, and Hala al-Qishawi, Director of Addameer, presented interventions during the conference. The conferenced coincided with Shawan Jabareen, Director of al-Haq, Submitting on behalf of the four partner organizations a communication to the ICC in the Hague, noting that this is the fourth of its kind being submitted by the four Palestinian human rights organizations.

Lawyer Raji Sourani stressed that crime of settlement activity is one of the most serious crimes committed by Israeli forces in decades as it is a complete and ongoing crime and within the ICC jurisdiction par excellence. He added that this crime is beyond settlements and uprooting civilians from their lands as it completely changes Palestinians’ way of life and transfers a population from the Occupying State into the West Bank and Jerusalem. Sourani added that the human rights organizations have enough information and evidence to convict the Israeli leaders and those involved in this crime. Sourani also said that there is only one communication left and will be hopefully submitted by the partner human rights organizations to the ICC on the harvest of their legal work next month.

In his intervention, ‘Issam Younis stressed that submitting this legal communication to the ICC is very important to the road of bringing justice and remedy for civilian victims. He pointed out that the Palestinian human rights organizations will continue to fight via all possible legal means in light of the shutting down the Israeli judiciary doors to Palestinians. Younis explained that there is an Israeli campaign to frighten the human rights organizations and impose restrictions on them in an attempt to fail the legitimacy. However, this will not prevent the human rights organizations from continuing their work to gain justice. Younis added that the crime of settlement activity is the most serious crime and violates of the Fourth Geneva Convention. Moreover, there are actions on the ground to change the demographic status and unprecedented political procedures in the Israeli Keenest to legalize settlements. He said that all of this happens in light of the international community silence that encourages Israel to do so.

During her intervention, Hala al-Qishawi said that it is an important step to resort to the ICC because this is our right as Palestinians and in the same time the human rights’ organizations’ duty. She hoped that the results would be fair enough to bring justice for Palestinian victims. al-Qisahwi added that since its establishment, the Israeli occupation has committed crimes against Palestinians, including imposing the Apartheid and ethnic cleansing, settlement replacement, in addition to murdering civilians.