**Palestinian Return Centre**

June 19, 2017

https://extranet.ohchr.org/sites/hrc/HRCSessions/HRCDocuments/14/NGO/14851\_55\_fd4afcdc\_b35b\_45ef\_9390\_6c24ec83d82c.docx



**Oral Statement Item 7 – 35th Session of Human Rights Council**

**Monday June 19th**

Dear Mr. President and members of the Council,

 The Palestinian Return Centre would like to highlight that

In 2017, it is 100 years since the Balfour Declaration, a colonial document whose consequences were disastrous for the colonised people of Mandate Palestine and their region.

It is 50 years since the Israeli occupation of the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem. Palestinians continue to suffer from Israel’s illegal military occupation, colonial policies and apartheid regime.

The Occupation is entrenching the prolonged exile of Palestinian refugees, and their descendants, forcibly displaced after the wars in 1948 and 1967. Recalling UN resolution 194 Israel continues to intentionally deny Palestinian refugees the right to return to their homeland.

10 years since the illegal blockade of Gaza, a humanitarian catastrophe continues to deteriorate on the ground. In light of the recent electricity cuts that threaten a "total collapse" of basic services in Gaza, Israel and the Palestinian Authority must stop exploiting civilians’ lives for their political gains.

States have a collective duty to take action to ensure accountability, justice and equality. This is of utmost importance if the different actors are concerned about fulfilling their legal duty under international law.