



**CAIRO INSTITUTE
FOR HUMAN RIGHTS STUDIES**
Institut du Caire pour les études des droits de l'homme
مركز القاهرة لدراسات حقوق الإنسان

Human Rights Council: 33rd Session

Item 7: General Debate

Joint Statement by Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies (CIHRS), Al-Haq, Al Mezan Center for Human Rights and BADIL

September 23, 2016

Delivered by: Nada Awad

Mr. President,

This is a joint Statement by Cairo Institute, BADIL, AL MEZAN, AL HAQ along with 4¹ Palestinian organisations. We deliver this statement to urgently remind this Council that Palestinian HRDs pursuing accountability for grave crimes and working to end the prolonged occupation including through the Boycott, Divestment Sanctions movement, have been facing serious attacks, including death threats. Attacks against Palestinian rights organisations and HRDs are not new; however, recently they have escalated in a concerning manner, becoming highly technical and personal.

Israel, the occupying power, has continuously refused to cooperate with different UN mechanisms while violations of international law are mounting in gravity on a daily basis. Israel is relentlessly moving forward with its annexation and fragmentation policy in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, leading to confinement of space for Palestinians, and expansion of settlements. The violations of the human rights of Palestinians are escalating through collective punishment policies, including extrajudicial killings and mass arrests, in addition to the implementation of various practices that lead to the violation of basic civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights.

Since the start of 2015, representatives of leading human rights organisations, particularly the staff based in Europe, engaging with the ICC prosecutor's' office with regards to the preliminary examination of the situation in the OPT, have been subjected to death threats against the individuals and their family, intimidations, and harassment. This modus operandi, being an aggressive campaign by the Israeli government to stifle effective work for Palestinian human rights, also targets HRDs working on BDS. In addition, HRDs and grassroots campaigns in the OPT are facing numerous restrictions, including travel bans and imprisonment. The harassment includes organised defamatory, smear and incitement campaigns against these organisations, including by high officials in the Israeli government.

¹ This is a joint statement by: Addameer, Alhaq, Al Mezan Center for Human Rights, BADIL, BDS National Committee, CAC, Civic Coalition and the Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies.

The courage of Palestinian HRDs to expose the crimes of the occupying power and seek justice for rights violations should not be met with the silence of the international community. The attacks on HRDs should be seriously investigated as possible reprisals against the defenders for their engagement and cooperation with UN human rights mechanisms and other international accountability institutions.

Thank you Mr. President