Oral / Video Statement
To the 22nd Session of the Human Rights Council

On Israeli Settlements in Occupied Palestinian Territories

Dear Chairperson,

On behalf of the Palestinian national institution for Human Rights (ICHR)* we would like to commend on the report of the UN independent fact-finding mission to investigate the implications of the Israeli settlements on rights of Palestinians in the OPT. ICHR is gravely concerned over the systematic escalation of Israeli settlement building and expansion. Such policies adversely affect Palestinians human rights, freedoms and access to vital services. Furthermore, they impede the ability of the PNA to perform its duties and responsibilities towards its own citizens.

The Israeli settlements and their infrastructure, exemplified in bypass roads, annexation wall, military blocks and other physical barriers, which aim at connecting Israeli settlements with metropolitan Israel, while turning the OPT into isolated “cantons”. It also isolates occupied East Jerusalem, and undermining the right of Palestinians to self-determination and an independent sovereign state.

For settlement purposes, Palestinian land, property, water and other natural resources are expropriated in a discriminatorily manner to serve the interests of settlements’ expansion policies. More aggravating is the rampant environmental damage caused by the industrial and chemical wastes and of settlement establishments causing health hazards to Palestinians. Such acts of violence and vandalism are carried out with impunity as settlers are protected by the complicity of the Israeli occupying forces.

* ICHR has been accredited an “A” status with the International Coordination Committee of NHRI in May 2009.
Dear Chairperson,

Settlements constitute a violation of the basic human rights of the Palestinians and weaken the ability of the Palestinian Authority to ensure security and right to decent life. It also undermines the Palestinian national authority institutions and their ability to ensure protection for the citizens or provide them with the essential services. Such complicated environment in which they are demanded to function weakens citizens’ trust in the Palestinian Authority and its ability to ensure the safety and security of Palestinians in the areas under its control.

ICHRI therefore calls upon the international community to:

1. Take serious measures to implement the recommendations of the UN fact-find report submitted to you today.

2. Exert pressure on Israel to immediately seize and dismantle all its settlements in the 1967 OPT, which are in flagrant violation of international law, and hold Israel accountable for all its colonial acts and war crimes.

3. Exert pressure to ensure settlers are held accountable for their illegal acts of vandalism, and to take serious measures to bring an end to the prevailing culture of impunity.

4. To fulfill its legal obligations according international law, and revitalize immediate UN intervention mechanisms to pressure Israel to respect UN resolutions and its legal obligation under international human rights treaties and conventions.

5. Call on State Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 to fulfill their legal obligations under article (1) of the convention and article (146) by holding those who committed grave breaches of the convention accountable to their acts.

Submitted by:

Randa Siniora / Executive Director

ICHRI