

The 30th Session of the UN Human Rights Council

General Debate Item 7

Joint Statement by Union of Arab Jurists & Geneva International Centre for Justice

Delivered by Ms. Eleanor McClelland

Thank you, Mr President. This is a joint statement with Geneva International Centre for Justice.

This week, the Palestinian flag will be raised at UN headquarters reflecting the support of the majority of member states for Palestine. However, through their non-participation in this debate, a number of those same states fail to acknowledge the real deprivation of the rights of Palestinians, and their solidarity remains symbolic and unconvincing.

In this Council, the continuing efforts of certain countries to diminish item 7 carry consequences: They will not disappear Israel's violations but will rather harm their own credibility and that of the Council.

Each day, Palestinians are denied their basic inalienable rights; deprived of housing, food, water, and movement, and increasingly the right to practice their religion.

Levels of violence and tension at al-Aqsa Mosque are rising as police presence intensifies, checkpoints close and hundreds of Palestinians, some as young as 13 are arrested. Israeli authorities deport Palestinians from the city at will and repeatedly prevent men and women from entering the mosque, forcing them to pray in the surrounding streets.

In Gaza, the suffering is unrelenting. Last year, the Israeli assault on Gaza claimed the lives of over 2000 Palestinians and destroyed over 31,000 homes. Today, Israel worsens the man-made humanitarian crisis in Gaza, inflicting collective punishment and failing to ease restrictions. With access to less than 1% of the materials required to rebuild Gaza - the future is bleak. A recent UN report warned that Gaza could be uninhabitable in less than 5 years.

So, as the flag flies this week, Gaza hastens towards the uninhabitable, Israeli settlements continue to be built, and violations against the rights of millions continue to go unpunished. We urge the Council to defend the rights of the Palestinian people in both word and action to finally bring an end to this abuse.

Thank you.