

2020 was a dreadful episode of human rights violations

The International Commission (ICSPR): 2020 is a dark closure to a dark decade in terms of realizing human rights and humanitarian law in the occupied Palestinian territories.

Based on its follow-up of the situation of Palestinian people rights, and its keenness to be the voice of the victims of human rights violations in the occupied Palestinian territories and the diaspora, the International Commission to Support Palestinians' Rights (ICSPR) holds this press conference today in your presence, to clearly and publicly indicates the severe and unprecedented deterioration on the overall human rights situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory during 2020, and confirms as we are beginning a new year, that 2020 was the worst in terms of the grave violations that Palestinians have been subjected to.

Coronavirus crisis and the accompanying emergency measures left an extremely complex and difficult humanitarian situation that has exacerbated the human rights crisis in the Palestinian territories, especially the Gaza Strip, which involves a weak realization of human and peoples' rights guaranteed in international agreements, and in particular depriving the Palestinian people of their rights to return, self-determination, freedom, security, a decent standard of living and human dignity, for political, social and economic reasons, whether at the internal Palestinian level or the external level, and what caused by the Israeli occupation state, especially in light of the continuation of various forms of violations against Palestinian civilians in the occupied Palestinian territories; As well as the continuation of the policy of suffocating siege. Moreover, the Palestinian violations by the government in Ramallah and the executive bodies in the Gaza Strip, represented in the collective punishment imposed on the Palestinian citizen in the Gaza Strip, which led to an unprecedented increase in poverty and unemployment rates.

At the beginning of the year 2020, the US President announced his plan to solve the Palestinian issue, this plan gives the Israeli occupation forces unprecedented legitimacy to annex the occupied Palestinian lands, expand the settlement movement, recognize full sovereignty over united Jerusalem, and establish a reality that precludes the possibility of a Palestinian state and even legitimizes the apartheid regime, in a clear denial of the rights of the Palestinian people, which have been affirmed by successive UN resolutions, whether the Security Council, the General Assembly, international organizations or UN agencies.

First: The International Commission (ICSPR) reminds all that our Palestinian people are still suffering under the Israeli occupation, this suffering is increasing due to the continuation of the policies and restrictions of the occupation state and its administrations alike within the framework of a systematic policy that denies the rights of the Palestinian people, which took many patterns, including:

i. In terms of targeting of Palestinian civilians:

- The occupation authorities still adopt declared policies based on directly targeting Palestinian civilians and demonstrators and their property, especially in the Gaza Strip. 2020 did not witness Israeli military operations in the Gaza Strip compared to 2019, despite the repeated scenes of bombing and the military targeting of some objects, properties and agricultural lands; As well as attacking fishermen and farmers on many occasions. On the other hand, the Israeli occupation forces continued to commit extrajudicial killings, including daily field executions in Jerusalem, the West Bank, in which many Palestinian civilians, residents of Jerusalem and the West Bank, were killed, all of whom were executed in cold blood, without posing any real danger to the Israeli soldiers and military installations, among them was the child “Ali Ayman Nasr Abu Alya” (13 yr), from the village of Mughayir, northeast of Ramallah, in the occupied West Bank.
- During 2020, the Israeli occupation forces carried out 1120 bombing and shooting attacks against Palestinian citizens and their property in the Gaza Strip, resulting in the death of (6) civilians, including (2) children, and (55) others were wounded, among them (15) a child and a woman, and damaged (24) inhabited houses.
- The Israeli occupation forces are still illegally detaining 66 bodies of Palestinian martyrs, in addition to the presence of 254 Palestinians in mass

graves in Israel, some of which have disappeared due to obsolescence and neglect.

ii. In terms of the Israeli siege on the Gaza Strip:

- The Israeli military occupation authorities continue to impose collective sanctions and restrictions on the Gaza Strip for about 15 years in a row, by closing the crossings and preventing the passage of goods and citizens, including denying 8,000 Palestinian patients to travel to receive the necessary treatment in hospitals outside the Gaza Strip. The Israeli siege led to making nearly a third of the Palestinian families in the Gaza Strip suffer from food insecurity, and raising the poverty rate that reached 75%, of whom 34% are below the poverty line, 24.7% of the members of poor families are children, where poor family members (less than 18 years) are about 104,992 individuals, and the unemployment rate in the Gaza Strip has reached more than 52%, the majority of them are young people, especially university graduates, by about 80% of them, and the percentage of food-insecure reached more than 70%. In addition to other crises related to the shortage of safe drinking water, crises in the health and education sector, and other vital sectors, power cuts for about 10 hours a day, which greatly affected various other vital sectors.
- During 2020, the scene of persecution, shooting and arrest of fishermen and farmers in the Gaza Strip exacerbated the rates of deteriorating humanitarian conditions, high rates of poverty and unemployment, and the deterioration of the level of services such as health, housing and education.
- In 2020, the Israeli occupation forces entered the Gaza Strip 55 times, which was accompanied by spraying chemical pesticides from the air towards agricultural lands, causing damage to an area of 3330607 square meters of the citizens' agricultural lands.
- In 2020, according to Al-Mezan Center's documentation, the Israeli siege measures, in particular, the refusal to grant patients permits to access to hospitals, led to the death of 5 citizens, including two children and a woman, as a result of obstructing their access to hospitals to receive treatment, while it refused and delayed issuing permits for (1546) patients who had applied for a travel permit for treatment, which could put some of them on death waiting lists.

iii. In terms of arrests and raids:

- During 2020, raids on villages and cities in the West Bank and occupied Jerusalem increased significantly, which resulted in random arrests of thousands of civilians in the West Bank, and dozens of civilians in the Gaza Strip, most of whom were arrested at the crossings that the occupation turned into detention points. The Israeli occupation forces' continued pursuit of coercive policies against Palestinian detainees, with the aim of undermining their dignity, through the policy of physical and psychological torture in Israeli prisons and detention centers. The number of Palestinian prisoners and detainees in the occupation prisons in 2020 reached nearly 4,500 prisoners, of whom (40) were female prisoners, (170) children, (370) administrative prisoners. In addition, 47 citizens of the Gaza Strip were arrested.
- 2020 is considered a year of abuse and oppression of Palestinian prisoners, where the total number of martyrs of prisoners in Israeli prisons reached 226 martyrs, 700 prisoners remain sick, 300 of them with chronic diseases, in addition to 10 prisoners suffering from cancer - according to human rights institutions; In 2020, 4 prisoners were killed as a result of chronic diseases and intentional medical negligence.
- Prisoners and detainees suffer from the persistence of medical negligence policy, especially with the escalation of medical risks after the spread of the Coronavirus (Covid 19) among them, despite the repeated calls made by human rights organizations related to the necessity of taking all relevant measures to combat the spread of the pandemic.

iv. In terms of the settlement:

- 2020 was the worst in terms of settlement incursions in the cities of the West Bank and occupied Jerusalem, as data indicate an increase in the rate of forcible confiscation of land and property in favor of implementing settlement projects, including the expansion of settlement outposts, which, according to non-governmental and international human rights organizations, confiscated 45% of the total area of the West Bank and occupied Jerusalem, in a described and full-fledged war crime in accordance with the established provisions under the rules of international humanitarian law, foremost of

Gaza- El-Roots old Restaurant Abu Karsh
building - first floor

غزة مقابل مطعم الروتس القديم عمارة أبو كرش - الطابق الأول

Telefax: +970 08 2623435

Website: www.icspr.ps

Email: info@icspr.ps

which is Geneva 1949, which affirmed the inadmissibility of annexing the occupied territories to the occupying state, and this is a grave breach of the signed agreement of principles between the Palestinian and Israeli sides under international sponsorship in 1993 with the support of the United States of America, which recognized Jerusalem as the capital of the occupation state and transferred its embassy to it.

- The Israeli occupation has taken advantage of the classification of lands according to the Oslo Agreement (A, B, C) to tighten control over Palestinian lands, especially in areas classified (C), which are completely subject to the Israeli occupation's control over security, planning and construction, where the Israeli occupation directly exploits 76% of the total the area classified (c), regional councils for settlements control 63% of it, while the area of influence in Israeli settlements in the West Bank (including closed spaces designated for expanding these settlements) is about 542 km², as is the case at the end of 2019, representing about 10% of the West Bank, while the areas confiscated for the purposes of military bases and military training sites represent about 18% of the West Bank, in addition to the annexation and expansion wall, which isolated more than 10% of the area of the West Bank, and more than 219 Palestinian communities have been affected by the establishment of the wall, so that the data indicate that there are about 2,700 isolated installations between the wall and the Green Line, about 5,300 facilities affected by the construction of the wall, in addition to about 35,000 families affected by the wall, not to mention the presence of about 67 thousand Palestinians in isolated buildings between the wall and the Green Line, which deprives Palestinians of access to their lands.
- The Israeli occupation puts all obstacles in place to tighten and restricting the urban expansion of the Palestinians, especially in Jerusalem and the areas classified (C) in the West Bank, which are still under the full control of the Israeli occupation. 2020 witnessed a significant increase in the pace of building and expanding Israeli colonies in the West Bank, as the Israeli occupation approved the construction of about 8,457 new colonial units, in addition to the establishment of 13 new colonial outposts.
- The data of the annual report of the Wall and Settlement Resistance Authority indicate that the total of what was spent on colonial activities during the period between the years 2011-2016 amounted to one billion shekels, while what was spent in the year 2017 amounted to about 1.7 billion shekels, in

return, it amounted to what was spent in 2018 to about 1.4 billion shekels, and data from the Israeli Peace Now organization regarding the establishment of colonial outposts, indicate that this phenomenon began mainly during Netanyahu's term as prime minister in 1996, and stopped in 2005, and it is noticed that in 2012 the Netanyahu government resumed again to establish illegal colonial outposts, so that out of 134 established: two colonial outposts (Migron and Amona) were evacuated, and 29 colonial sites were approved (three as independent colonies and 26 as "neighborhoods" of existing colonies); At least 35 sites are in the process of being validated.

v. In terms of demolishing Palestinian civilian homes:

- In 2020, the Israeli occupation demolished and destroyed hundreds of buildings, and issued orders to stop the construction of hundreds of buildings; The occupation authorities demolish Palestinian homes and put obstacles in the way of issuing building permits to Palestinians, according to the Al-Maqdisi Foundation and the Abdullah Al-Hourani Center, from 2000 to 2019, about 2,130 structures were demolished in East Jerusalem (that part of Jerusalem governorate that was forcibly annexed by Israel in 1967). In addition to destroying about 50 thousand housing completely and more than 100 thousand partially in the Palestinian Territory since 1967.
- It is evident from the data of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs that more than 110 thousand Palestinians have been subjected to internal displacement in various parts of the occupied Palestinian territory during the past decade. The overwhelming majority of them were displaced during the conflict that broke out in 2014 in the Gaza Strip, and 7,400 of them are still displaced. In the West Bank, 900 Palestinians were displaced during 2019 following the demolition or confiscation of their homes, especially in Area C and East Jerusalem, due to its lack of building permits issued by the Israeli authorities, which is impossible for Palestinians to obtain.
- The data indicate an increase in the rate of self-demolition of homes since 2006 and onward, as the occupation authorities forced more than 400 citizens to demolish their homes by their hands. 2010 witnessed the highest rate of self-demolition, which amounted to 70 demolitions, compared to 49 in 2009,

Gaza- El-Roots old Restaurant Abu Karsh
building - first floor

غزة مقابل مطعم الروتس القديم عمارة أبو كرش - الطابق الأول

and 48 in 2019, according to the Al-Maqdisi Foundation and the Abdullah Al-Hourani Center, there are many cases of self-demolition that the residents conceal and do not inform the media, human rights institutions and civil society institutions about them. While the Palestinians constitute 30% of the population in Jerusalem, they pay 40% of the taxes that the occupation municipality collects, and in return, the municipality spends only 8% on the services it provides to them.

vi. In terms of the conditions of Palestinian refugees:

- Palestinian refugees are still suffering a lot, especially in the refugee camps in the Gaza Strip and Lebanon. So far, general poverty rates still reach 73% among refugees in Lebanon, and the youth category is considered the most vulnerable to poverty among refugees, as 74% of adolescents live below the poverty line, while 5% of them live in extreme poverty. As for the suffering of the Palestinians of Syria from poverty, it can be described as the worst, 9.2% of them live in extreme poverty (as 3500 are unable to meet basic food needs), and 89.1% of them are poor in general (35,000 can't meet food and non-food basic needs).
- The unemployment rate among Palestinians in Lebanon is 56%, on the other hand, the unemployment rate among Palestinians of Syria is still alarming, reaching 71.5%, and that the main source of income for the Palestinians of Lebanon is self-employment at 41%, followed by wage work at 37.8%, and UNRWA aid through the social safety net program at 33.5%. 53.4% of workers (Palestinians from Syria) receive their wages daily, while the majority (97.7%) only have verbal agreements with their employers, which allows the termination of employment at any time without prior notice.
- Thus, the prevalence of food insecurity in general (moderate and severe) remains, where 38% of the Palestinians in Lebanon enjoy food security, 38% suffer from moderate food insecurity and 24% suffer from severe food insecurity, and there is an alarming proportion of 27% of children among the Palestinians of Lebanon living in families that are severely food insecure.
- 78% of Palestinian households in Lebanon suffer from damp, 62% of homes suffer from water leakage, 52% suffer from poor ventilation and 55.2% from very poor lighting. This contributed to 81.3% of the Palestinian families in

Lebanon have at least one person suffering from a chronic disease, in addition to 10% suffering from a disability.

vii. In terms of UNRWA:

- The right-wing occupation government, with direct support from the United States of America, has stepped up campaigns targeting "UNRWA", as part of its relentless endeavor to liquidate and undermine the work of this organization, which is considered the last witness to the 1948 Nakba and the tragedies that followed.
- Despite the approval of 169 UN member states, in favor of a decision to extend the mandate of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), until June 2023; However, the financial crisis still exists, this made UNRWA unable to pay the salaries of its workers for the month of December of 2020, as well as taking measures to reduce the volume of services it provides to the refugee community; This coincided with the emergency conditions that accompanied the spread of the Coronavirus, which puts the Palestinian refugees in an unprecedented crisis.

viii. In terms of the water crisis:

- In light of the continued unfair Israeli control of nearly 85% of Palestinian natural resources, especially water, 97% of the water in the Gaza Strip is unfit for human consumption according to the standards of the World Health Organization, and 95% of the Strip's nearly two million residents do not have access to safe drinking water. Also, according to the information of both the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics and the Palestinian Water Authority, 11% of families in the Gaza Strip use a safe drinking water source, as the statistics indicate that the percentage of families that use a safe drinking water source (The public water network connected to the house, a public tap, a protected artesian well, a protected spring, rainwater, and mineral water). The reason for the decrease in the percentage in the Gaza Strip is due to the deterioration of the quality of the water extracted from the coastal basin, the

continuation of the siege that impedes the desired development in the water sector.

- More than 97% of the quality of the water pumped from the coastal basin (Gaza Strip) does not comply with the standards of the World Health Organization, as the water extracted from the coastal basin in the Gaza Strip amounted to 178.7 million m³ in 2017, and this amount is considered an oppressive pumping, the amount of safe pumping and the sustainable energy of the basin is only 50-60 million m³, which led to the inconsistency of more than 97% of the quality of the water pumped from the coastal basin with the standards of the World Health Organization, which in turn leads to the depletion of the groundwater reserves as the water level reached groundwater in the coastal reservoir to 19 meters below sea level.
- 77% of available water is taken from ground and surface water. the percentage of water extracted from ground and surface water is high compared to the available water in Palestine, as this percentage reached about 77% in 2017, not to mention that the Israeli occupation prevents Palestinians from exploiting their right from the water of the Jordan River Since 1967, which is estimated at about 250 million cubic meters annually, on the other hand, the amount of water pumped from groundwater wells (the Eastern Basin, the Western Basin, and the Northeast Basin) in the West Bank has reached about 86 million cubic meters.

Second: 2020 witnessed the worst chapters of violations committed by Palestinians hands, as political and arbitrary arrests and summoning campaigns continued in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and the work to issue and implement the death penalty in the Gaza Strip continued as follows:

- The collective sanctions taken by the presidency and the Palestinian government against the Gaza Strip continued, which have negatively affected the entire life and humanitarian system, especially the health, education, electricity, water, economy, trade, banking, and other vital sectors.
- This was accompanied by the continuation of the executive bodies in the West Bank and Gaza Strip to practice a series of violations against citizens, journalists and writers, and the violation of the right to peaceful assembly, in addition to imposing taxes, especially in the Gaza Strip despite the deteriorating economic conditions, all of these actions violate the Palestinian Basic Law and international conventions.

Gaza- El-Roots old Restaurant Abu Karsh
building - first floor

غزة مقابل مطعم الروتس القديم عمارة أبو كرش - الطابق الأول

- The political summoning campaigns continue; Whereas, from time to time, the security services carry out summon campaigns that affect dozens of young activists in the various governorates of the Gaza Strip, and what happened in the security services' dealings with the movement We Want to Live provides additional evidence of the continued pursuit of the policy of political summons and arrests against political opponents.
- Continuing torture while in detention, where human rights organizations' reports indicate that the anti-drug agency has the lion's share in cases of complaints that citizens are subjected to torture while in detention, especially in light of the prevailing culture of this agency that those accused of drug trafficking wont confess without beating them.
- Excessive restrictions on rights and freedoms in states of emergency; Whereas, on more than one occasion, the security services and the police impose excessive restrictions on rights and freedoms during states of emergency.
- Courts in the Gaza Strip have issued 17 death sentences since the beginning of 2020, in contradiction to the obligations of the State of Palestine joining the Second Optional Protocol to the 1989 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, related to the abolition of the death penalty.
- Much information related to the financial revenues and expenditures of the official authorities in the Gaza Strip continues to be withheld, where the Ministry of National Economy continues to implement decisions that prove the existence of an approach focused on taxation. The Palestinian people complain publicly about the increase of taxes, knowing that according to Article 88 of the Basic Law which states: "The imposition of general taxes and fees, and their amendment and abolition, can only be done by law, and no one is exempted from paying all or some of them, except in the cases stipulated in the law.
- The observer of government measures designated to narrow the area of the Coronavirus spread can say that it does not rise to the level of an integrated strategy, insofar as they are procedures appear overlapping and sometimes contradictory; Therefore, it is necessary to benefit from the countries' experiences and start from where the others left. The fact that the return to the policy of comprehensive closure holds the government the burden of providing citizens with basic materials free of charge, which is difficult. Therefore, consideration must be given to adopting smart measures drawn from the experiences of other countries, mainly seeks to promote and popularize

- measures based on citizen awareness, and the possibility of partial closure of some facilities, especially primary and middle schools.
- In 2020, violence escalated against the background of family and personal quarrels, which resulted in the death and injury of a number of citizens, and damaged some private properties in different areas of the Gaza Strip.
 - 2020 witnessed a significant increase in violations of freedom of opinion and expression in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, as the summons, detention and arrest of dozens of citizens against the background of freedom of opinion and expression, and the dispersal of 6 peaceful gatherings were monitored and documented. The security services in the West Bank detained many activists, journalists, and other citizens, for sharing posts on social media. A number of detainees in both the West Bank and Gaza were beaten and ill-treated, and their right to fair trial guarantees were not respected, especially their detention in inhuman conditions despite the spread of the Coronavirus.

The International Commission to Support Palestinians' Rights (ICSPR) wishes that 2021 will be a year in which the rights of the Palestinian people will be respected, and sends its regards to the peoples of the world and to all countries that have supported and stood in solidarity with the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and establish their independent state with Jerusalem as its capital. It calls for 2021 to be considered the year of achieving national unity, rebuilding the Palestinian political system according to a new social contract, based on democratic and participatory foundations, the separation of powers and the independence of the judiciary, in a manner that guarantees the protection of human rights. ICSPR and on behalf of all those displaced from their homes in refugee camps, those who are in the prisons of the Israeli occupation, those dreaming of self-determination and building an independent Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital, and in the name of all those looking for a morning that does not shine with oppression and persecution, we turn to all living consciences with the following:

1. **ICSPR** calls on the international community to undertake its responsibility to enforce the decisions it issued, which guarantee the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, including decisions that confirm the illegality of the Israeli occupation and settlement, the illegality of any amendments to the special status of Jerusalem, and to work hard to activate the measures stipulated in Chapter Six and Seven of the United Nations

- Charter, and to provide international protection for the Palestinian people from the crimes of the occupation, including the demonstrators in the activities of the "Great Return Marches" and to work hard to hold the occupation leaders accountable for the crimes they committed against the participants and peaceful demonstrators.
2. **ICSPR** calls on the Arab League and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation to stop the farce of Arab normalization with the Israeli occupation and work to take practical measures to protect the rights of Palestinians, to work to protect the city of Jerusalem, confront settlement crimes, lift the siege, and support the steadfastness of the Palestinians under occupation.
 3. **ICSPR** urges the Palestinian leadership to reconsider the conduct of negotiations with the occupation, to stop betting on the path of settlement, and on the other hand, to work seriously to urge the Pre-Trial Chamber to allow the Office of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court to start conducting investigations to prosecute the perpetrators of the crimes described in the Rome Statute committed against children of the Palestinian people.
 4. **ICSPR** calls for activating the campaigns of solidarity with our Palestinian people and boycotting and isolating the Israeli occupation and the United States of America politically, economically, culturally and academically, including keenness to invest the energies of the Palestinian communities in expanding networks of solidarity and boycott and defending the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination.
 5. **ICSPR** calls for activating the role of Palestinian diplomacy at the regional, Islamic and international levels in exposing the violations of the occupation and mobilizing an official stance in support of our people's right to salvation from the Israeli military occupation.
 6. **ICSPR** calls on the Presidency and the Palestinian government to invest in the state of Palestinian factional consensus to take decisions related to holding general elections, to stop collective punishment, and to address the realistic effects in line with national and international law, through the implementation of realistic plans responding to strengthening the steadfastness of the Palestinians inside the occupied territories.
 7. **ICSPR** urges the forces and components of our people to take action to protect reconciliation, restore national unity on the basis of partnership, reform and activate the institutions of the Palestinian political system,

- including finding a solution to the legacy of internal violations by developing a national system or program for transitional justice inspired by the positive aspects of Arab and international experiences.
8. ICSPR demands improving the living environment for the residents of the Gaza Strip by opening crossings and allowing citizens and goods to move freely.

Finally, the International Commission (ICSPR) stresses the need to work forward during 2021 by all parties in order to ensure the internationalization of the conflict with the Israeli occupation, to maximize the diplomatic, public, legal and political engagement with the Israeli occupation, and to activate the accountability path of the occupation leaders, isolate the Israeli occupation, strengthen the boycott movement, and work until the completion and restoration of the Palestinian reconciliation, neutralize services and human rights from political disputes, and strengthen people's steadfastness in the face of the successive Israeli policies and procedures.