



EuroMed Feminist Initiative
المبادرة النسوية الأورومتوسطية
Initiative Féministe EuroMed

Justice Delayed- Justice Denied PWWSD and IFE-EFI welcome the report of the Commission of Inquiry and engender its findings

03.03.2019- The Palestinian Working Woman Society for Development (PWWSD) and the EuroMed Feminist Initiative – EFI welcome the report, issued on Thursday the 28th of February 2019, by the independent, international commission of inquiry (the Commission/ CoI) that was dispatched in May 2018 by the United Nations Human Rights Council, in resolution S-28/1 to “investigate all alleged violations and abuses of international humanitarian law and international human rights law in the OPT, including East Jerusalem, particularly in the occupied Gaza Strip, in the context of the military assaults on the large-scale civilian protests that began on 30 March 2018” and “to identify those responsible, to make recommendations, in particular on accountability measures and on protecting civilians against any further assaults”¹.

PWWSD extended support for the Commission, which was not allowed to enter Gaza due to the on-going Israeli blockade, through facilitating first-hand interviews with women and children who were directly affected by the on-going demonstrations in Gaza of the Marches of Return since March 2018. As part of its advocacy towards ending the culture of impunity that Israel enjoys and holding it accountable for breaching IHL and IHRL, PWWSD documented, through statements under oath, more than 50 human rights violations that the occupation committed against civilian women and children, in order to highlight the disproportionate impact of violence incurred during the continuing Great Marches of Return against women and girls. The statements aimed at engendering the findings of the report and voicing messages of Gazan women and female youth in light of the atrocities that the Israeli occupation is committing in the Strip, undermining the peace and security of women and girls and jeopardizing their right to self-determination, which in itself is a prerequisite to the enjoyment of all basic human rights and fundamental freedoms as enshrined in Article 1 of the ICCPR² and ICESCR³.

Despite the prolonged humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip and the repercussions of the 12 year blockade, 2018 bared further oppression and multidimensional insecurities to Gazans on economic and social fronts, in addition to increased vulnerability to gender-based violence, mainly among women and children. The occupation’s escalated oppressive policies against the non-violent marches of Return and the use of illegal excessive lethal force against civilians resulted in the martyrdom of 251⁴ civilians as they demonstrated peacefully besides the borders. The open fire also resulted in injuring 28,188⁵ of whom some have to live with serious injuries or amputated limbs. On the global context in the Strip, Gazans are affected by the US administrations’ decision to completely withhold all funds it has for decades provided for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA). This announcement is alarming since more than half of Gaza’s two million populations are dependent on aid from UNRWA relevant to education, health care and social services. In fact, persistent aggressions on Gaza, supported by illegitimate decisions like the US Administration’s to move the US embassy to Jerusalem or the Jewish State National Bill among others, undermine prospects for peace and threaten the right of Palestinians to self-determination and a sovereign State within the two-state solution.

¹ <https://www.ohchr.org/En/HRBodies/HRC/CoIOPT/Pages/OPT.aspx>

² International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

³ International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

⁴ <http://www.moh.gov.ps/portal/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/1.2019-Israeli-Aggression-Against-Peaceful-Return-March.pdf>

⁵ <http://www.moh.gov.ps/portal/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/1.2019-Israeli-Aggression-Against-Peaceful-Return-March.pdf>



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PWWSD and EFI echo the call of the Commission for all duty bearers to implement fully previous recommendations made by UN human rights and fact-finding bodies. PWWSD and EFI also urge for the immediate implementation of recommendation highlighted in the report, mainly those addressed to the Government of Israel to “Refrain from using lethal force against civilians, including children, journalists, health workers and persons with disabilities, who pose no imminent threat to life”. Given the fact that Marches of Return are still ongoing, the commission also recommended that “States Members of the United Nations employ every means to prevent further use of lethal force against civilians at demonstrations, including by demarches and by ensuring protective monitoring of the demonstrations by independent entities (United Nations entities or non-United Nations)” and demanded the occupation to “Lift the blockade on Gaza with immediate effect”, “Ensure that all those injured at demonstrations are permitted prompt access to hospitals elsewhere in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, in Israel or abroad” and “Ensure timely access of medical and all other humanitarian workers to Gaza, including to provide treatment to those injured in the context of demonstrations”.

The Commission also called for ensuring accountability and reparations for violations committed and called Israel to “In accordance with General Assembly resolution 60/147, ensure prompt, adequate and effective remedies for those killed or injured unlawfully, including timely rehabilitation, compensation, satisfaction and guarantees of non-repetition”.

For more on the Commission’s findings, see full [report in PDF](#).