

**THE INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF RACIAL
DISCRIMINATION (EAFORD)**

5 route des Morillons, CP 2100. 1211 Geneva 2, Switzerland
Telephone: (022) 788.62.33 Fax: (022) 788.62.45

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Item 7. Human rights situation in Palestine and other occupied Arab territories

The Price between Knowing and Not Knowing

The Declaration and Programme of Action of the World Conference Against Racism, urges the prosecution of perpetrators of racist acts, while recognizing that colonialism has led to racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerances. It further recognizes that both apartheid and genocide; in terms of international law; constitute crimes against humanity and are the principal derivations and manifestations of racism and racial discrimination which have resulted in unmentionable atrocities and suffering throughout recorded history.

Any review of the implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action must seriously consider further actions, initiatives and practical solutions for combating all contemporary afflictions of racism, wherever they occur, including the severe human rights violations against Palestinians within the context of discriminatory and racist practices.

It is common knowledge that the Israeli cabinet and its ministers have supported what has come to be known as '*transfer*'; a politically correct term, for what is really nothing else but a disguise for ethnic cleansing! Israel is imposing '*facts on the ground*', while distancing themselves, they believe, from these facts, and thus remain beyond international reproach.

History has taught us, the all too real fact, that Israel had decided to persevere in its control of the Occupied Palestinian Territories soon after the 1967 war, even if it meant by force of arms. This policy was not adopted as a reaction to what they conveniently call, *Palestinian terrorism*, which in any other context, would be termed *freedom fighting*. Nor was it Palestine's refusal to recognize the legitimacy of the illegal Jewish state either.

A report referred to in Siegman's book *Grab More Hills, Expand the Territory*, which was categorized as *top secret*, was one prepared by Mossad at the behest of the IDF on June 14, 1967. It outlined how some of the most prominent figureheads in the West Bank, including so called extremists, were ready to concede to; even at that time, a peace agreement with a two state solution, as long as this constituted an independent Palestine.

The founding of Jewish settlements in occupied Palestinian lands has always been justified by Israel in terms of maintaining security, yet by its very nature, the truth of the matter is, that these very settlements are what have perpetuated the so-called *security problems*! The blatant and outright theft of Palestinian land, not to mention, the involvement of every strata of Israeli society, in propelling settlement increase, is an obtrusive and deliberate violation of international law that constitutes crimes against humanity, and should not be tolerated! The International Court of Justice, in its Advisory Opinion on the Wall, has unanimously declared that all settlements in the Occupied Territories are illegal. Even the American judge, who dissented from the Opinion, could not but agree with the other judges on this point.

Many are aware, that these settlements were thoroughly investigated in 2005, by Talia Sasson, who headed a commission appointed by Sharon, to unearth illegal undertakings, some of which he himself had instigated. Sasson noted that these settlements, which had already been established as illegal, were actually founded with clandestine corroborations from the IDF, Shin Bet, and government ministers. When the findings came to light, both Sharon and his ministers shamed to be scandalized by its implications, and concealed said report.

It is noteworthy here, to recall, that Israeli settlers are often motivated by economic considerations, and government subsidies, and not ideology, which, in any event is no justification and grants no legality. Some settlers are not particularly religious, while others are ultra-orthodox Jews. Both of those groups may remain ambivalent to Zionist exploitations, yet are driven by economic considerations in grabbing more land and expanding their illegal hold on occupied territories.

Some constitute a small religious-nationalist group, whose affiliates are considered to be, the shrewdest and most well-connected, and are the propellants behind the settlements. They are fanatically religious and nationalistic, and in every sense ethnocentric. They, in turn, bred even more radical youths, known as the *Hill-top Youth*. They are the ones, who, in October 1998 answered Sharon's (then foreign minister) call, to seize the hilltops in the West Bank areas from which both he and Netanyahu had agreed to withdraw, but never did.

The newer generation of these youths disavows state authority; they attack Palestinians, vandalize and destroy their homes and means of livelihood, beat and kill innocents. On rare occasions, the IDF may intervene, but their efficacy is restricted because of their deep-rooted belief, that their primary mission, is to protect the illegal settlers, and not the poor, threatened and terrorized people under occupation.

For the first time, the Supreme Court and Association for Civil Rights in Israel acceded that the very notion of different roads for Palestinians in the Occupied Territories was an initial step in setting up an apartheid system. This should be shunned and deemed despicable by any civilized individual and society today.

It is an irrefutable and a daunting fact that senior IDF officials are, more and more, the settlers belonging to the religious-nationalist group. Many of them are under the influence of settler rabbis, who themselves instigate their flock to extremes, even to the extent of killing Israeli Prime Ministers who dare transgress settler demarcations. The IDF were recently found culpable by Haggai Alon, a senior member of Olmert's Ministry of Defense, as abetting settler plans. They were accused by him, of disregarding Supreme Court rulings concerning the trajectory of the internationally condemned *Apartheid Separation Wall*, which will not permit the founding of a Palestinian State.

In 2005, an agreement was negotiated, that would ease the debilitating restrictions on Palestinians in the Occupied Territories, which both the Palestinian Authority and Israel endorsed. The IDF then proceeded to relieve these forced, contemptible barriers for settlers instead; for the Palestinian people under occupation the check-points were doubled! This according to Alon is "*carrying out an apartheid policy*", which is forcibly vacating Hebron of Arabs while "*Judaizing*" the Jordan Valley, openly and purposefully conducting and abating settlers, to make a two state solution intangible and unattainable.

The Israeli propaganda machine that continually states, that it is only Palestinian violence that has forced and compelled them to stay in occupied land, is just a pure and utter fabrication. Their constantly publicized story-line, of their pursuit of peace, was only construed to gain more time, so that they can continue to entrench "*facts on the ground*." The ever growing settlements in the West Bank, their intrusion, and incumbency continues, the price to be paid for their success: not only by Jews, but by millions of Palestinian people, becomes too appalling to speculate.

Let us ask ourselves, here today: "What is the price between knowing and not knowing, between silence and acknowledging, between lies and truth? We all must confront our choices to know or not to know the facts. We choose every day, in countless ways, between denial and knowledge." We know of the suffering imposed on the Palestinian people, it is a fact that cannot be denied. We have no choice, we must condemn any,

regardless, of nationality or creed, who impose their will on others, the few anywhere over the many, as well as nationalistic, religious extremists, or fundamentalists from any faith or nationality; any who attempt to subjugate another.

Have Jews everywhere forgotten the terrors of the Holocaust to such an extent, as to allow Israel to pursue, and inflict one on the Palestinian people? Or has the world forgotten the horrors of apartheid South Africa, to condone what is happening in Palestine today, every day? Are we, all here today, really willing to allow history to condemn us for yet another in-action, another failure to stand up and say no more; another silence?

We at this great Council, can, and should, say NO! We are under a universal, moral and legal obligation, an imperative and directive, to do so. We must protect the rights of our brothers and sisters who remain without the means, or voice, to protest against the exploitations of discrimination and racism that they are subjected to everyday. Unseen, and most times, unheard, because of the great Israeli lobby that would accuse us, vilify us, of anti-Semitism if we did report the grave violations. Let us, once and for all, catch on to this game plan, because for all that it is, it is simply just: an old and abused attempt at utilizing the feeling of guilt amongst some to inflict another holocaust on innocent Palestinians and to deny access to the present truths.

To those of us, to whom much has been given, much is expected! The present day Holocaust of the Palestinian people, their dignity, and their struggle for freedom will not be cancelled, as the Jewish Holocaust was not, from history. Basic humanity impels us to make a stand, to shout from the roof-tops- NOT AGAIN, NO MORE!

Protect the human rights of the millions of Palestinian people from the mass prisons such as the so called self-determining and self-rule prison that is Gaza, refugee camps, checkpoints, occupied territories, imposed settlements, apartheid roads, and walls, like those of the old Berlin... Defend the defenseless in what remains of Palestine, and allow future history, to forgive us on this day, for not doing it sooner; posterity will make the reckoning. This is the action demanded from this Council to fulfill its universal, humanitarian obligation.

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