

Final Statement of the Human Rights Symposium on the Occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People

Doha – December 2, 2024

The Arab Network for National Human Rights Institutions, in collaboration with the Independent Commission for Human Rights in Palestine, held an online human rights symposium to mark the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People under the title:

“Implications of Israel's Measures and Decisions to Ban UNRWA Operations in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.”

The symposium was attended by heads and representatives of national human rights institutions, human rights activists, members of the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions, as well as international organizations and solidarity partners. It explored the legal, political, and humanitarian dimensions of the Israeli Knesset's decision to ban UNRWA operations in the occupied Palestinian territories.

Key Recommendations and Outcomes:

1. Cease the genocide against Gaza: Immediate action is required to end the ongoing genocide in Gaza, which has persisted for 14 months.
2. Denounce UNRWA ban as a violation of international law: Emphasize that Israel's decision to ban UNRWA constitutes a blatant violation of international law and the UN Charter, particularly the "Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations" (1946) and relevant General Assembly resolutions. Call on UNRWA to maintain its headquarters in Sheikh Jarrah, Jerusalem, and resist any pressure to abandon it.
3. Preserve UNRWA's symbolic role: Highlight UNRWA as a reflection of the international community's commitment to Palestinian refugees' rights and their right of return under international resolutions. Stress that targeting UNRWA is not merely an attack on its humanitarian services but a political move to undermine Palestinian refugees' rights and erase their cause on the global stage. Reject any efforts to replace UNRWA with alternative organizations, as such actions weaken its legal and foundational role in protecting refugee rights.
4. Sustainable support for UNRWA: Urge national institutions to encourage UN member states to provide sustained financial and political support to UNRWA, ensuring the continuation of its vital services, particularly in health and education.
5. Accountability for violations: Call on the international community and international courts to take firm steps to hold Israel accountable for its violations against UN institutions, including filing legal complaints based on UN resolutions, such as Resolution 2730 (2024). Highlight the legal steps already initiated by countries like Norway.
6. Independent investigation into UNRWA targeting: Demand the establishment of an independent international commission to investigate attacks on UNRWA's resources and personnel, including the

killing of 247 of its staff members in Gaza, and civilians sheltering in its facilities. Ensure accountability for these crimes under international law.

7. Address catastrophic humanitarian consequences: Stress the dire humanitarian implications of the UNRWA ban on millions of Palestinian refugees, especially in Gaza, where 65% of the population depends on its services.

8. Global solidarity campaigns: Organize international solidarity and media campaigns to raise awareness of the humanitarian and legal implications of Israel's decision to ban UNRWA, focusing on its essential role in protecting and supporting Palestinian refugees.

9. Practical solidarity initiatives: Encourage national institutions to urge their governments to propose tangible solidarity initiatives with the Palestinian people and work towards forming international pressure coalitions to revoke Israel's decision.

10. Enhance cooperation with international organizations: Strengthen collaboration with UN and regional organizations to secure necessary support for Palestinians and ensure continued services amid the ongoing genocide.

11. Legal memorandum to mobilize support: Prepare a legal memorandum on behalf of the Arab Network for National Human Rights Institutions, drawing on UN resolutions and the current situation on the ground. This document will be addressed to UN agencies and Western diplomatic entities to highlight the catastrophic consequences of banning UNRWA. Simultaneously, appeal to Arab nations to provide financial and political support for UNRWA to address its deficits and counter the risks posed by this decision.

12. Call for ending Gaza genocide: Demand the cessation of genocide in Gaza, ensure the entry of aid—especially to UNRWA—and protect civilians.

Conclusion:

The Arab Network for National Human Rights Institutions emphasizes the necessity of doubling international efforts to support the Palestinian people in their legitimate struggle for their inalienable rights, including self-determination and the right of return. It calls on all parties to resist attempts to dismantle UNRWA as a global symbol of support for Palestinian refugees and ensure the continuation of its services as a cornerstone of justice and international law.

Finally, the symposium renews its call for urgent international action to end the Israeli occupation and guarantee the rights of Palestinians to peace, dignity, and justice.

General Secretariat of the Arab Network for National Human Rights Institutions

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