

UN rights group concludes evaluation of Palestinians living under occupation

17 July 2017 – A committee of United Nations experts has completed its annual evaluation of the situation of people in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, hearing serious concerns about Israel's human rights record, including the deteriorating situation in Gaza, inadequate protection for detained children and increasing obstacles being faced by human rights defenders and journalists.

In a [news release](#), the [UN Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories](#) said that during its fact-finding visit to Amman, Jordan, its members heard testimony on the expansion of settlements, the ongoing use of administrative detention, excessive use of force and possible extrajudicial killings, and lack of accountability. "Based on this testimony, the Committee clearly observed that the Israeli authorities continue with policies and practices that negatively impact the human rights situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory," it said in the release.

The Committee also heard troubling testimony regarding the arrest and detention of children, including cases of reported ill-treatment and lack of adequate protection.

Other testimony described grave concern over the situation of Palestinian detainees reportedly living in difficult conditions in Israeli prisons, as well as the continued use of administrative detention.

Other issues raised included the effects of the separation wall on Palestinians' rights, and the demolition of homes and other structures in the West Bank including East Jerusalem, as well as in the Syrian Golan. The use of punitive demolitions in the West Bank including East Jerusalem was described as a form of collective punishment.

Many organizations highlighted with concern the continued lack of accountability for allegations of excessive use of force and violations of international law by the Israeli forces, including during the 2014 hostilities in Gaza. A number of organizations emphasized that the lack of accountability further exacerbated the cycle of violence.

Human rights defenders and journalists seeking to highlight violations of human rights and humanitarian law told the Committee that the space in which they were free to operate was shrinking at an alarming rate. They reported cases of the detention of peaceful demonstrators and the targeting of journalists covering protests.

The news release also noted that the Government of Israel does not recognize

the Committee, which was therefore unable to speak to the relevant Israeli authorities or access the occupied territories.

The Committee will submit a full report on its mission and other activities to the UN General Assembly in November 2017.

The Committee was [established](#) by the UN General Assembly in December 1968 to examine the human rights situation in the occupied Syrian Golan, the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip. It is composed of three UN Member States: Sri Lanka, Malaysia and Senegal.