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HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL
Situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.
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Statement submitted by:
Badil Resource Center for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights, an NGO with special ECOSOC status.

115,000 Internally Displaced People in the OPT

The already dire humanitarian and economic situation has steadily deteriorated in the occupied Gaza Strip since the hermetic closure of the territory in June. As a result of this crisis, that could have been averted through the opening of borders, 1.5 million Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, most of whom are 1948 refugees, are today nearly 100% dependent on international humanitarian assistance. There can be no peace when people's rights to life, dignity and freedom are violated. We call on all actors not to allow political considerations to jeopardize the fundamental rights of Palestinians, especially of those living in the occupied Gaza Strip.

Meanwhile, as the Israeli regime of occupation, colonization and apartheid unfolds, Palestinians continue to be forced out of their homes and lands. In 2006, approximately 115,000 persons were internally displaced people in the occupied Palestinian territories and an even greater number were vulnerable to forced displacement. In the occupied West Bank, for instance, some 198 communities risk being forcibly displaced because of their proximity to Jewish colonies (settlements), closed military areas and restricted roads. This number includes 81 communities (260,000 persons) who are literally stuck in their homes located in closed military zones between the Wall and the "Green Line" because of military orders regulating the movement of persons and the arbitrary operation of gates sealing them from the rest of the West Bank.

A pressing example, which we brought to the attention of the Council in its last session, is the case of the Palestinian Bedouin residents of Hadadiya village in the Jordan Valley, where around 100 persons faced the threat of home demolition and displacement. The residents have since then been forcibly evicted and displaced from their homes by the Israeli army. Under duress, and in the heat of July, around 70 persons left on foot with what they could carry and moved a few kilometers away. The residents were forcibly displaced because the Israeli government argues that they are residing in a so-called 'closed military area' and are too close to the nearby Jewish colony of Ro'i. While the right of the residents to live in their village is being challenged, the presence of settlers in the colony of Roy goes on unchallenged. Moreover, despite numerous appeals to the Israeli High Court, the Court upheld the settlers' position that the residents of Hadadiya posed a threat to their security. This latest example of forced displacement not only constitutes a crime, but also destroys the way of life of the indigenous Palestinian Bedouin people and furthers the process of colonization and dispossession undertaken by the State of Israel.

We invite Special Rapporteurs to the occupied Palestinian territories to personally assess the scope and nature of forced displacement in the occupied Palestinian territories and report on their findings

and recommendations to the Council.

Badil thus calls upon the Council to

1. Encourage, in addition to the regular visits of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, Mr. John Dugard, the Representative of the Secretary-General on the human rights of internally displaced persons, Mr. Walter Kälin; the Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, Mr. Miloon Kothari; the Special Rapporteur on the situation of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous people, Mr. Rodolfo Stavenhagen; and, the Special Rapporteur on Contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, Mr. Doudou Diène to visit Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories.

2. Consider urging state members of the UN to take measures such as economic sanctions and diplomatic boycott against Israel for its breach of international law and non-implementation of UN Resolutions, as well as the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on *The Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory*.