

The Honorable Alex Van Meeuwen
President, Human Rights Council
United Nations
Geneva

The Member States of the Human Rights Council
United Nations
Geneva

5 March 2010

Dear Excellencies,

We, the undersigned Palestinian human rights organisations have been working for many years in defence of Palestinian human rights. Most of our organisations have consultative status and conduct our work as human rights defenders within the UN human rights system, particularly the Human Rights Council and its Special Procedures.

We are deeply concerned over the removal of the Report by Professor Richard Falk, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Palestinian territories occupied since 1967 (Special Rapporteur Falk) from the agenda of the Human Rights Council's 13th Session.

The reports provided by the Special Rapporteur provide the Council with an independent legal analysis and overview of the application of human rights to the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT) by an expert in international law. The information and analysis provided is crucial in assisting the Council in carrying out its mandate to promote universal respect and to address violations of human rights. The role of Special Rapporteur Falk, as with previous Rapporteurs, is crucial in bringing to international attention the human rights situation in the OPT.

Furthermore, we are concerned about the urgent need to defend the independence of the Special procedures, including the Special Rapporteurs, of the Human Rights Council, without which the integrity of the Human Rights Council, as well as the United Nations as a whole, is considerably compromised. Professor Falk has been prevented from carrying out his duties in a fully comprehensive means due to Israel's continued refusal to allow him entry to the entirety of the OPT. Despite this unacceptable obstruction to the work of the UN, we have full faith in his ability and commitment to the protection and promotion of all human rights, and we consider it imperative the Special Rapporteur's Reports are given the serious attention they deserve at the Council.

Therefore, we urge you to act immediately to ensure Special Rapporteur Falk's Report is kept on the 22 March 2010 agenda, and to reassert your Governments' support for the independence of the Special Rapporteurs and Special Procedures.

Our organisations are prepared to offer any assistance that you may find necessary.

Sincerely,

Hassan Jabareen, Director
Adalah, The Legal Centre for Arab Minority Rights in Israel

Sahar Francis, General Director
Addameer Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association

Khalil Abu Shammala, Director
Al-Dameer Association for Human Rights-Gaza

Al-Quds Human Rights Clinic

Shawan Jabarin, General Director
Al Haq

Ingrid Jaradat Gassner, Director
Badil Resource Center for Palestinian Residency & Refugee Rights

Rifat Kassis, Director
Defence for Children International - Palestine Section (DCI-Palestine)

Shawqi Issa, Director
Ensan Center

Issam Aruri, Director
Jerusalem Legal Aid & Human Rights Center(JLAC)

The Independent Commission for Human Rights - ICHR (the Palestinian National
Institution for Human Rights)

Kassem Aina, General Director
National Institution of Social Care & Vocational Training

Ghassan Abdallah, General Director
Palestinian Human Rights Organization - PHRO