

سوريون
من أجل
الحقيقة
والعدالة
Syrians
For Truth
& Justice



March 20, 2020



©AHMAD GHARABLI/AFP/Getty Images

Palestine: Over 75 Organizations Commend the UN High Commissioner for Publishing the Database of Businesses Involved in Illegal Israeli Settlements

Palestine: Over 75 Organizations Commend the UN High Commissioner for Publishing the Database of Businesses Involved in Illegal Israeli Settlements

Background:

In a letter sent on 17 March 2020, seventy-eight organizations commended United Nations (UN) High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet and her Office for the publication of the UN database of businesses engaged in activities related to Israeli settlements (database) in the occupied Palestinian territory, ahead of the 43rd session of the Human Rights Council.

The organizations noted that the release of the database, although not comprehensive in scope, demonstrates the commitment of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) to upholding human rights standards and the rule of law in pursuit of justice and accountability for the oppressed around the world, while reaffirming the OHCHR's independence and impartiality in the face of undue political pressure.

"The database will serve as an important tool in the face of unlawful confiscation and exploitation of Palestinian land and natural resources in the context of prolonged Israeli military occupation, compounded by corporate involvement in Israel's systemic human rights violations and impunity for serious breaches of international law," said Elizabeth Rghebi, Levant Researcher at the Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies

The organizations further stressed on the importance of annually updating the database as provided for in Human Rights Council resolution 31/36 of 2016. The organizations concluded by reaffirming their commitment to supporting the work of the OHCHR in its annual update to ensure the database is a living and public document, which serves as a platform for transparency and positively incentivizes corporations to end their activities and relationships with Israel's illegal settlement enterprise.

"The economic incentive structure perpetuating the conflict must no longer be obscured by political rhetoric purporting to pursue its end. As such, this database represents an important step in addressing the whole of the conflict while contributing to the reconciliation of political positions with economic activity," said Wesam Ahmed, Business and Human Rights Coordinator at Al-Haq.

Palestinian, regional, and international organizations have worked persistently over the last three years to ensure the fulfillment of the aforementioned resolution's mandate, which requested the publication and annual update of a database of businesses operating in illegal Israeli settlements. Following its review of the 321 business enterprises and the contacting of 206 businesses operating in Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory, the OHCHR published the database report containing 112 Israeli and multinational companies.

The full list of the companies can be found in the OHCHR's [report](#) released on 12 February 2020.

The letter:

Re: Welcoming the publication of the United Nations Database of Businesses Engaged in Activities Related to Israeli Settlements

Dear Madame, High Commissioner,

The undersigned organizations commend you and your Office for the publication of the United Nations (UN) database of businesses engaged in activities related to Israeli settlements (database) in the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt), ahead of the 43rd Session of the Human Rights Council (HRC), almost four years since the establishment of the mandate. The database's release demonstrates the commitment of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) to upholding human rights standards and the rule of law in pursuit of justice and accountability for oppressed persons, groups and peoples around the world, while reaffirming OHCHR's independence and impartiality in the face of undue political pressure. We reaffirm our continued support to the independent work of the OHCHR.

Our organizations welcome the release of the database, although not comprehensive in scope, as a critical first step toward the fulfilment of Human Rights Council resolution 31/36 (2016), which strongly indicates that the OHCHR will question the role of business enterprises within the context of rapid illegal settlement expansion. It also indicates that the OHCHR will question Israel's ongoing consolidation of its unlawful annexation of occupied East Jerusalem and de facto annexation of parts of the occupied West Bank in breach of international law and human rights standards. To this end, the database's release sets an important precedent by establishing a tangible mechanism strengthening the implementation of international law, particularly in relation to State obligations and the responsibility of businesses to respect international law and the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs), including in situations of conflict and occupation.

As our organizations strongly welcome the long overdue release of the database, we also reiterate the importance of fulfilling the mandate of HRC resolution 31/36 in its entirety; i.e., to ensure the annual update of the database within the framework of the OHCHR. The undersigned organizations are committed to supporting such annual updates through increased transparency and engagement from your office in order to ensure that the database is a living and public document, which serves as a platform for transparency and positively incentivizes corporations to end their activities and relationships with Israel's illegal settlement enterprise.

We look forward to continuing to work with the OHCHR, with a view toward ending corporate impunity for profiting from grave breaches of international law.

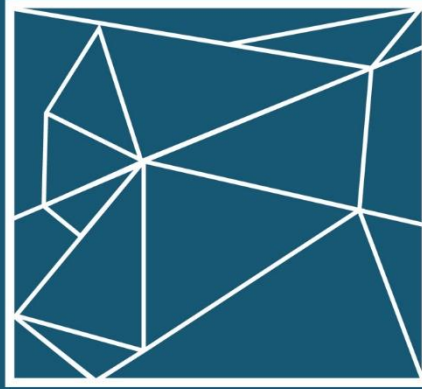
Sincerely,

1. Al-Haq
2. Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies (CIHRS)
3. 11.11.11
4. Article 1 Collective
5. CNCD – 11.11.11
6. Nederlands Palestina Komitee
7. Palestine Link
8. The Centre for Research on Multinational Corporations (SOMO)
9. The Rights Forum
10. Syrians for Truth and Justice-STJ سوريا من أجل الحقيقة والعدالة
11. Ireland-Palestine Solidarity Campaign
12. International Accountability Project
13. Vrede vzw, Belgium
14. Association Belgo-Palestinienne WB
15. Applied Research Institute – Jerusalem (ARIJ)
16. Dawlaty
17. Civic Coalition for Palestinian Rights in Jerusalem (CCPRJ)
18. De-Colonizer
19. Palestina Solidariteit vzw (Belgium)
20. Gate 48
21. Trócaire
22. Movement against Racism and for Friendship between Peoples (MRAP)
23. MIR-France, in English : IFOR (International Fellowship of Reconciliation)-France
24. Gibanje za pravice Palestincev, Slovenia
25. Union of Agricultural Work Committees (UAWC)
26. EMCEDO
27. The Land Defense Coalition & The Palestinian Grassroots Anti-Apartheid Campaign (Stop the Wall)
28. Norwegian People's Aid
29. Plateforme des ONG françaises pour la Palestine
30. Association France Palestine Solidarité (AFPS)
31. International Service for Human Rights (ISHR)
32. Collectif Judéo Arabe et Citoyen pour la Palestine (CJACP)
33. Human Rights Initiative Women in Black (Vienna), Austria
34. AssoPacePalestina
35. Broederlijk Delen
36. One Justice for Human Rights
37. Première Urgence Internationale
38. The Libyan Network for Legal Aid
39. Libyan Center for Freedom of the Press
40. Defender Center for Human Rights
41. Belady Organization for Human Rights
42. Jurists Without Chains
43. Women Defenders Network
44. Mwatana for Human Rights
45. Tiye International

46. Palestinian Non-Governmental Organisations Network (PNGO)
47. Human Rights and Democracy Media Center (SHAMS)
48. PAX
49. Oxfam
50. Women's Center for Legal Aid and Counselling (WCLAC)
51. Conectas Direitos Humanos
52. The European Trade Union Network for Justice in Palestine
53. Addameer
54. BADIL Resource Center for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights
55. Jerusalem Legal Aid and Human Rights Center
56. Al Mezan
57. Gulf Centre for Human Rights
58. Palestinian Human Rights Organisations Council (PHROC)
59. Palestinian Counseling Centre (PCC)
60. Community Action Center – Al Quds University
61. Centro de Estudios Legales y Sociales (CELS)
62. Center for Constitutional Rights
63. Euromed Rights
64. SolSoc
65. Pax Christi Vlaanderen
66. International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC)
67. Palestinian Center for Human Rights (PCHR)
68. Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF)
69. Syrian Network for Human Rights
70. Jewish Voice for Peace
71. Ramallah Center for Human Rights Studies (RCHRS)
72. Syrian Center for Legal Studies and Researches
73. US Campaign for Palestinian Rights
74. Syrian Center for Media and Freedom of Expression
75. Housing and Land Rights Network – Habitat International Coalition
76. The Palestinian Initiative for the Promotion of Global Dialogue and Democracy (MIFTAH)
77. Center for Defense of Liberties and Civil Rights "Hurriyat"

سوريون
من أجل
الحقيقة
والعدالة

Syrians
For Truth
& Justice



History

Syrians for Truth and Justice was conceived during the participation of its co-founder in the Middle-East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) Leaders for Democracy Fellowship program, who was driven by a will to contribute to Syria's future. Starting as a humble project to tell the stories of Syrians experiencing enforced disappearances and torture, it grew into an established organisation committed to unveiling human rights violations of all sorts.

Convinced that the diversity that has historically defined Syria is a wealth, our team of researchers and volunteers works with dedication at uncovering human rights violations committed in Syria, in order to promote inclusiveness and ensure that all Syrians are represented, and their rights fulfilled.

🌐 www.stj-sy.org
📘 [syriaSTJ](#)
🐦 [@STJ_SYRIA_ENG](#)
📷 [Syrians for Truth & Justice](#)
✉ editor@stj-sy.org