INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE QUESTION OF JERUSALEM

Virtual event

“The impact of Israeli settlement policies on the Palestinian population in Jerusalem”

Convened by the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (CEIRPP) with support of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)

20 July 2023

CONCEPT NOTE

Background

This year marks the 75th anniversary of the Nakba, the forced displacement of Palestinians from their homes and lands around the time of the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948. In resolution A/77/23, the General Assembly called on the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (CEIRPP) to dedicate its activities in 2023 to commemorate this anniversary.

This year also marks the 56th anniversary of the 1967 Arab-Israeli war and the onset of Israel’s occupation of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip which resulted in the additional displacement of hundreds of thousands of Palestinian civilians, including in East Jerusalem. The continuation of the occupation and Israel’s illegal policies and practices, including the creeping annexation, displacement, dispossession, destruction of Palestinian property and deliberate demographic changes, continue to gravely undermine the rights of Palestinians, the viability of the future State of Palestine and the two-State solution. These policies, considered by many organizations as a “settler-colonial nexus”, perpetuate the events that unfolded during the Nakba, resulting in what is being termed an ongoing Nakba. Jerusalem continues to be at its epicentre.

This ongoing process of settlement expansion and resultant demographic changes continues to threaten the presence and subsistence of Palestinian Jerusalemites, as well as the religious and cultural heritage sites that are an integral part of Palestinian history and identity. The Israeli Government’s plans for settlement expansion in the West Bank, coupled with Israeli settlers’ takeover of Palestinian land and properties in and around East-Jerusalem, along with the continued provocative attempts to assert Israeli sovereignty at Al-Aqsa Mosque/Al-Haram Al-Sharif and to push for spatial and temporal division of the holy site, in grave violation of international law and the historic and legal status quo, have led observers and Palestinians to
define such processes as an attempt to “Judaize” the City. Indeed, Israeli settlement policies in East-Jerusalem aim to change the demographic balance of the City, strengthen Israeli control, limit the growth of the Palestinian population, and alter overall the character, identity and status of the City, in grave breach of international law.

The current intensely inflammatory atmosphere in the City calls for urgent and sustained international attention to the Question of Palestine, including East Jerusalem, towards fulfilment of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian People.

**Objectives**

The panel discussion will focus on several key issues. It will explore the demographic changes resulting from the expansion of Israeli settlements and how they affect the Palestinian presence in Jerusalem. The event will also discuss Israel’s settlement policy’s legal and human rights implications, including the impact on property rights, discriminatory municipal land zoning and freedom of movement. In addition, the discussion will address the settlements’ environmental impact and their socio-economic effect on the Palestinian population, including access to resources, services, and economic opportunities.

The panel will provide a platform for Palestinian, Israeli, and international experts to present their perspectives to the international community, interact with Member States and others, and discuss possible solutions and strategies to challenge such policies.

Finally, the event will also highlight the unwavering support of the Committee and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) for the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and the latter’s role in the preservation of the final status of Jerusalem and East Jerusalem as the future capital of the State of Palestine. This joint undertaking is testimony of the ongoing strong partnership and common vision between the OIC and the Committee.

**Suggested topics**

- The segregation of Palestinians in East-Jerusalem / The impact of the separation wall on Palestinian communities in Jerusalem: the case of Shu’fat Camp
- Creating facts on the ground: Israeli infrastructure projects in East-Jerusalem for the advancement of settlements expansion
- The challenges faced by Palestinians in accessing legal remedies and seeking justice for violations of their rights caused by settlers’ actions, demolitions and revocation of residency permits
- Isolating East Jerusalem from the West Bank through settlement expansion in the Jerusalem periphery: E1, forced displacement of Bedouins
- Settlers’ threats and violence during the “Jerusalem flag day” march in East Jerusalem
- Municipal land zoning and settlements expansions in Jabal al Mukabir
- Settlements and violation of freedom of worship at the Holy Sites

**Date**

The panel discussion will be held on **20 July 2023 as a virtual event** from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. (NY time; 5 - 7 p.m. in the Middle East).

**Participation**
Participants will consist of the Committee Members and Observers, representatives of the OIC, the United Nations and the expert speakers. All Member States, intergovernmental and civil society organizations as well as the public and media will be invited to attend.

**Format**
The panel discussion will be organised as a virtual event on the Zoom platform and will be livestreamed on UNTV. It will last two hours and will consist of an Introduction, with remarks by a representative of the Committee, the OIC and the State of Palestine, followed by a discussion panel, featuring Palestinian and Israeli CSO representatives. Their interventions will be followed by questions from Member States and the audience (via the Moderator).

While participation in the virtual platform will be limited to Committee Members and Observers, the OIC and the expert speakers, viewers will be able to also pose questions via the Committee Facebook page, YouTube channel, Twitter account, the email dpr-meeting@un.org and WhatsApp +1 646 421 0579.

The working language of the event will be English.

**Media Coverage**
The event will be livestreamed on UN TV. The video recording will be uploaded to the Committee Facebook page and YouTube channel. Information about the event will be disseminated by DPR through the Committee website as well as its Twitter account and Facebook page, and the DGC Question of Palestine Trello Board. The Division will also send reminders to its large network of contacts.

**Expected Outcomes**
The Conference is expected to deliver the following outcomes:

- Serve as an international platform to highlight and discuss the challenges faced by Palestinians in East Jerusalem living near settlements or in neighbourhoods and areas targeted by Israeli settlers for takeover.
- Serve as a platform to inform Member States, media and public on initiatives and projects aimed at supporting Palestinians in Jerusalem as well as their advocacy for equality, justice and social cohesion in Jerusalem.
- Inform the international community on how to advocate against settlement expansion in Jerusalem and support the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

**Outputs**
The Conference outputs will include:

- Live tweets in Arabic and English;
- A recording of the event to be published on the Committee website and social media platforms (Facebook, YouTube, Twitter) and to be disseminated to Member States;
- A Chair Summary of the discussions within a week of the event (to be circulated to Committee members and published on the Committee website).

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