



Palestinian Working Woman Society for Development: The Occupation Must Be Held Accountable for Its Crimes against Humanity

On the 5th of June, 2020, 53 years after the [1967 War](#) or as it is known to Palestinians, the Naksa (setback or defeat), Israeli occupation authorities continue to deny Palestinians our right to freedom and self-determination, instead pursuing annexation within the framework of the so-called “Deal of the Century”. To all Palestinians, this constitutes a continuation of the catastrophe, or the Nakba that Palestinians have experienced since 1948. The ethnic cleansing and land confiscation that took place in 1948 transformed two-thirds of Palestinians into refugees in the diaspora and into internally displaced people. Annexation will only entrench crimes against humanity by resulting in even more displacement and forcible transfer of Palestinians. These measures take place within an Israeli colonial context in which the occupation continues to besiege the Gaza Strip, works to minimize or erase Palestinians’ presence from Jerusalem, and deprives Palestinians of their fundamental rights as guaranteed by the international human rights system and decades-old United Nations resolutions regarding the Israeli/Palestinian conflict. Furthermore, the Israeli occupation continues to commit war crimes including executions, arrests and the use of torture. The most recent and egregious of these crimes was the cold-blooded murder by occupation soldiers of Jerusalemite Iyad Al-Hallaq, a disabled autistic Palestinian man. His death is part of a systematic push by the occupation to push Palestinians out of Jerusalem through the use of violence and other intimidation tactics. The occupation is cynically exploiting the world’s preoccupation with the COVID-19 pandemic to continue its violations against Palestinians’ rights by building more illegal settlements, demolishing Palestinian homes, and delivering notifications of intent to demolish more Bedouin homes and communities in the Jordan valley especially.

In a context where over 800,000 Palestinians were forcibly displaced as a result of the 1948 Nakba events and over 200,000 Palestinians were forcibly displaced as a result of the 1967 Naksa events (the majority of the latter to Jordan from the Jordan Valley, which was particularly targeted for forced displacement measures), this annexation plan announced by the occupation represents an even further expansion and control over 89 square kilometres of agricultural land in the Jordan Valley and the forcible transfer of more than 50,000 Palestinians within the year 2020. Furthermore, it is clear that the annexation plan in a broader sense also includes Israeli settlements illegal under international law and represents the policies of the right-wing Israeli government which views annexation as a “historic opportunity” only matched by the events of 1948 and the fruition of the “Deal of the Century” which is in direct defiance of international law. Additionally, the Jordan Valley being strategically surrounded by settlements indicates how annexation and the resulting seizure of and full control over these lands would directly impede Palestinians from obtaining any civil or political rights. In summation, this colonial policy will deprive Palestinians of their basic rights including the right to live in freedom, peace and security, and the right to access natural resources including land and water. Annexation will also strengthen Israeli control over the Palestinian economy, increase Palestinian food insecurity and threaten regional and global peace and security in violation of UN resolutions regarding



the Palestinian cause. Annexation also represents a flagrant violation of international humanitarian law and a crime against humanity, as the occupation's annexation plan does not comply with the provisions of the International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid. According to the convention, the crime of apartheid includes "any measures [legislative and non-legislative] calculated to prevent a racial group or groups from participation in the political, economic, and cultural life of the country and the deliberate creation of conditions preventing the full development of such a group or groups, in particular by denying to members of a racial group or group basic human rights and freedoms"¹.

On the anniversary of the Naksa, the Palestinian Working Woman Society for Development (PWWSD) raises its voice against the decades-long failure to achieve peace and justice based on a respect for and implementation of UN resolutions regarding the conflict made throughout the years of Israeli occupation. This disregard for the international rule of law will enable successive instances of colonial policies that have and will continue to be detrimental to all aspects of Palestinians' lives in general and the lives of Palestinian women in particular; the security of Palestinian women and girls is particularly at risk, especially in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and its economic, social and political implications which have proven to be particularly burdensome on women who have also been facing increased rates of gender-based violence and other violations. Thus, we at the PWWSD call for international organizations to finally hold the Israeli occupation accountable for its crimes committed against the Palestinians which are considered as crimes against humanity; through strict international accountability instruments. PWWSD also calls on the United Nation Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women to take immediate measures to ensure the right to safety and security for Palestinian women and girls and to ensure opportunities for a just peace in accordance with the determinants of Security Council Resolution 1325. Furthermore, PWWSD calls on the international community to pressure the occupation to stop its unilateral measures to impose the "Deal of the Century", engineered by the American administration, onto the Palestinian people and to instead comply with international laws and norms.

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¹ https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/documents/atrocities-crimes/Doc.10_International%20Convention%20on%20the%20Suppression%20and%20Punishment%20of%20the%20Crime%20of%20Apartheid.pdf