



# Centre Europe - Tiers Monde

Centre de recherches et de publications sur les relations entre le Tiers Monde et l'Europe

Rue Amat 6  
CH-1202 Genève  
Tel. +41 (0)22 731 59 63  
Fax +41 (0)22 731 91 52  
E-mail: [contact@cetim.ch](mailto:contact@cetim.ch)  
Site Web: [www.cetim.ch](http://www.cetim.ch)

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY**  
**HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL**  
47<sup>th</sup> session of the Human Rights Council  
21 June – 15 July 2021  
**Item 3: Interactive dialogue with the  
Special Rapporteur on Occupied  
Palestinian Territories**

Madame President,

I speak on behalf of the Europe-Third World Center (CETIM), in collaboration with the Union of Agriculture Work Committee (UAWC), a non-governmental development organization, established in 1986 aiming at promoting small farmers' steadfastness, sovereignty over natural resources, protecting and defending peasants' rights. UAWC annually provides services to 20 000 Palestinian small scale farmers and farming families in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Agriculture in Palestine is a mainstay and is the largest sector of the economy: it employs 13.4 % of the population and 90% of the people that formally and informally work. Yet the contributions of agriculture to the Palestinian economy have diminished over the years. Before 1967 it was responsible for 50% of Palestine's gross domestic product, and in recent years it has plummeted to 5.6%. This sharp decrease in agricultural contribution is due to Israeli Occupations' policies, which are made of closures, restricted access and confiscation of land, damage of agricultural assets, restrictions of movement and trade, uprooting of trees, grab and control over natural resources (in particular water sources etc.).

We are deeply alarmed by the systematic Human Rights violations committed by the Israeli occupation forces and settlers groups against Palestinian peasants, seeking to destroy their agricultural sector and their capacity to provide food supply to the overall population. From June 2020 to May 2021, UAWC has documented the killing of three Palestinian peasants (one of them was 14 years old) and 60 injured with metal bullets and gas bombs due to suppression of peaceful demonstration against land confiscation. Around 104 demolitions or notices of demolition were issued, mainly of agriculture facilities including greenhouses, water wells, and irrigation ponds. Furthermore, fishermen's right to life in Gaza was targeted with around 126 shooting cases by the Israeli gunboats toward fisherman boats. Adding to that, the Israeli occupation has confiscated more than 4500 dunums (450 ha) and uprooted around 24000 trees.

During the Israeli military attack on the Gaza Strip (21 - 10 May, 2021), Israeli Forces continued to disregard International and Humanitarian Law by imposing collective

punishment on Palestinians in Gaza.<sup>1</sup> During this intensified assault on Gaza, 7 peasants were killed with missiles bombed from Israeli aircraft while they were on their land. According to the Initial Rapid Assessment conducted by UAWC's team<sup>2</sup>, the following agricultural assets were completely destroyed: 30,000 km of irrigation networks and transmission lines, 50 solar energy units, 190 agricultural ponds, 500 dunums (50 ha) of crops, 2,100 greenhouses, 20 agricultural wells, 50 fishing boats, 220 damaging holes in agricultural lands caused by missiles and around 250 deaths in the animal sector.

It is widely accepted and shown that Israeli Occupation's policies and practices are in brutal violation of International Human Rights Law, International Humanitarian Law, in particular economic, social, cultural, political and civil rights, and the rights of peasants enshrined in the UN Declaration on the rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas. Occupation practices represent vicious violation of the right to life and self-determination of Palestinian in general and of peasants and fisher-folks in particular, and reflect a continuous state of impunity because of Israel's strategic importance for many powerful countries.

In light of the above, we urge the Special Rapporteur, as well as the ongoing International Commission of Inquiry in the Occupied Palestinian territories of the West Bank, Gaza Strip and Jerusalem, to investigate the violations committed by Israeli occupation forces against the Palestinian agricultural sector. This is essential to help promoting the rights of peasants and foster access justice.

Madame President,  
I thank you for your attention.

Geneva, 9 July 2021

---

1 According to the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), as of May 21st, Israel's massacres have resulted in the killing of over 260 civilians including 60 children and 40 women. More than 1,900 people have been injured where more than 60% of them are children and women .

2 <https://uawc-pal.org/pdf/UAWC%27s%20statement%20on%20the%20recent%20escalations%20in%20Gaza.pdf>