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**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,
political, economic, social and cultural rights,
including the right to development**

Written statement* submitted by Maat for Peace, Development and Human Rights Association, a non- governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[01 June 2019]

* Issued as received, in the language(s) of submission only.



Restrictions imposed on the right to education in occupied the State of Palestine

Denial from education in West Bank and Gaza Strip

According to the information provided by Palestinian official bodies and other independent human rights bodies, the education system faced many difficulties during 2017; because of the political and economic instability, and the restrictions imposed by the Israeli occupation authorities on the freedom of movement. Thus, a lot of students have been forbidden from their right to education. For, instance, the closure of "Beit Hanoun" crossing, and the persistent destination of many students, as well as insulting them while crossing the crossing resulting in weak access to the educational institutions.

Directorate of Education in "Jenin" in the northern West Bank has demanded the protection of the educational institutions from the Israeli occupation authorities' violations, as well as protecting the students and teachers. Whereas "Izz al-Din al-Qassam secondary school" in Yabed village, in south of Jenin, has been attacked resulting in the death of a student named "Fouad Turkman".¹ In November 2018, "Auref secondary", in south of Nablus, was attacked by the occupation forces resulting in the injury of many students, including cases injured by live bullets, and cases of suffocation among teachers and students.²

The residents of Gaza Strip live in a distressing economic conditions, as result of the siege imposed by the occupation force since 2006, which have led to a severe shortage in the basic needs such as food, feule, and many more problems. For instance, the difficulty of providing education to their children; whereas 65% of the Stripe's families were incapable of providing their children with the required needs of school, according to the Palestinian Statistical Center for 2018.³

The Palestinians has decided to overcome all the obstacles arising from the siege for the education of their children, however all the tragic conditions they live in. Furthermore, children are vulnerable to the Israeli violations, also streets are not safe for them. Whereas a student named "Ahmed Khalil" has narrated, a frequent scene, that a settler has attacked his colleague while going to school, then the Israeli occupation army has biased toward the settler, and the Palestinian student has been detained.⁴

In November 2018, the Palestinian Ministry of Education announced the suspension of study in all the educational institutions in the Gaza Strip and the Palestinian universities; because of the Israeli attacks on schools and universities. The decree was issued in order to protect students' safety; because of the deteriorating security state.

Restrictions on education in Jerusalem

The Israeli occupation authorities continue to their racial policies aiming to isolating Jerusalem from other cities through the construction of the separation wall, and the absolute control. This has been reflected in the educational situation, whereas a decline in students' access to schools and universities in the city has occurred due to arrest and detention.

As result of the distressing conditions that Palestinians are suffering from in Jerusalem, for example, the restrictions on enrolling their children in Palestinian schools. Many people have no choice but to enroll their children in Zionist schools, which teach different curricula to those of Palestinian schools in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The

¹ Demands to protect schools in the West from the attacks of occupation, the Palestinian Center for Information. <https://bit.ly/2Fp8U6e>.

² Settlers target schools - attack students of teachers north of the West Bank <https://bit.ly/2zdRx4I>.

³ Return to schools in Palestine, Palestinian Education Aid School, 30 August 2018. <https://bit.ly/2JsAEL5>.

⁴ West Bank schools renewed suffering from settler attacks and price hikes, Palestinian Information Center, 27 August 2018. <https://bit.ly/2Y7Rqm6>.

occupation authorities force, through their control on the areas inhabited by the people of Jerusalem and the restrictions on education, them to accept the imposed situation, and enroll their children in Zionist schools. In addition, these violations are committed under the supervision provided by the Palestinian Ministry of Education in Jerusalem. Furthermore, the occupation authorities seek to close the private schools which refuse teaching the Zionist curricula, also close the kindergartens, more than 50, in the Old City and transfer the kids to kindergartens administered by municipality of the occupation.

The occupation authorities open public centers for the sake of spreading their cultural and social programs and applying them on the Palestinian children and families in Jerusalem.⁵ In October 2018, the Palestinian Ministry of Education and Higher Education accused the occupation authorities of distorting its curricula in Jerusalem. The Minister of Education and Higher Education, Sabri Sidem, declared that the occupation authorities has printed distorted copies of Palestinian textbooks and distributed them to schools supervised by the occupation authorities. The distortion includes all books issued by the curriculum center of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, and they deliberately have deleted the Palestinian flag from all the covers of books, in addition to the deletion of the name of the State of Palestine and its logo, also they have deleted everything that refers to the Nakba that afflicted the people of Palestine, the destruction of Palestinian cities and villages and the massacres committed by the Israeli occupation forces.

The occupation authorities continue to widely attack schools. For instance, the occupation forces attacked more than 95 schools during 2017. These attacks ranged from storming and firing live ammunition, gas and sound bombs, and causing physical damage, resulting in the wholly or partly disruption of school time in a large number of schools estimated by 54 schools due to the spread of military barriers and gates and the closing of streets leading to these schools, which hindered the arrival of teachers. In addition to firing tear gas and sound bombs, resulting in the loss of 2,343 educational sessions. Furthermore, schools have severe shortage of classrooms due to that the occupation authorities prevent updating and building additional classrooms in the schools of Jerusalemite. Whereas recent studies have stated that 2500 classrooms are needed.⁶

In addition, the lack of infrastructure and basic services necessary for the educational process and suitable for the school environment in a large number of schools and kindergartens, and the lack of programs for persons with disabilities and lack of places for them, resulting in the dropout of schools, especially in high schools which is more than 50%, among the students of the city, and the work in the occupation labour market because of high wages.

The total number of violations during 2017 was 80279 students and 4929 teachers and employees have been attacked by the occupation forces, resulting in martyrdom, wounding, arrests, detention, house arrest and delays at checkpoints, in addition to unsafe access to schools.⁷

Withdrawal of UNRWA school permits

In January 2019, the occupation authorities announced the withdrawal of UNRWA schools permits administered by the United Nations Agency. UNRWA schools constitutes 70.1% of total schools compared to 58.4% of the schools of the Palestine Ministry of Education and Higher Education.⁸ Whereas the Israeli National Security Council has decided to withdraw the UNRWA schools permits working in the Palestinian districts to be replaced with

⁵ The weakness of Palestinian education curricula forces Jerusalemites to go to Israeli schools, *Erm News*, February 2019. <https://bit.ly/2HJXAmH>.

⁶ Palestinian Education Ministry accuses Israel of misrepresenting its curricula in Jerusalem, *euronews*, 25 October 2018. <https://bit.ly/2OfI2rU>.

⁷ Report on Israeli violations against the educational march during 2017 - Palestinian News and Information Agency <https://bit.ly/2Wa6Qo1>.

⁸ See *Al Mezan Report for Human Rights 2017 - Status of Economic and Social Rights* <https://bit.ly/2BQDymM>.

schools administered by the Jerusalem Municipality of the occupation Ministry of Education that teach the Zionist curricula. UNRWA administers 7 schools teaching more than 3 thousand students in two refugee camps in Jerusalem. In the Gaza stripe, there are 275 of UNRWA schools provide more than 272 thousand students with education.⁹

The deterioration of the economic conditions of Palestinians has led many families to retreat from enrolling their children in private schools, to go to UNRWA schools and public schools. President Trump's administration earlier announced that it had withdrawn about \$ 300 million from its funding to UNRWA, saying it will not financially support the agency after decades of funding. Washington has withdrawn other aid to the Palestinians trying to pressure the Palestinian National Authority to negotiate with the occupation authorities.¹⁰

The violations committed by the occupation authorities against the Palestinian people constitute a violation of Article 13 of the International Covenant on Economic and Social Rights, which recognizes the right of everyone to education without discrimination.

Recommendations

- The occupation authorities shall retreat from withdrawing the UNRWA school permits administered by the United Nations Agency.
- International organizations shall intervene to stop the attacks of the occupation forces on students while going to school.
- The occupation authorities shall stop attacks on schools so that Palestinian students can be educated.
- The competent international bodies shall examine the infrastructure crisis in the Palestinian classrooms and provide the number of classrooms so that the dropout of schools is reduced.
- The occupation authorities shall lift the restrictions on the freedom of movement at the Beit Hanoun crossing, which prevent many students, including West Bank university students, from going to universities.
- The occupation authorities shall stop its attempts to control the city of Jerusalem.
- Article 13 of the ICCPR shall be applied in the occupied Palestinian territories in line with its international obligations as an occupation authority.

⁹ The latest update to the United Nations Agency for Human Rights in 2018 <https://bit.ly/2IpZfL7>.

¹⁰ Israel intends to close UNRWA schools in East Jerusalem, Times of Israel, 20 January 2019, <https://bit.ly/2ExRJ1M>.