

**INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION
(EAFORD)**



www.eaford.org

**34th Session of the UN Human Rights Council
27 February 2017 to 24 March 2017**

SUMMARY REPORT OF EAFORD'S INTERVENTIONS

EAFORD's Interventions during the 34th Session of the Human Rights Council



The 34th regular session of the Human Rights Council was held in Geneva from 27 February - 24 March 2017. The Council adopted 41 resolutions on a variety of issues, as well as the Council's report for the session, and the outcome of the Universal Periodic Review of 11 countries. Moreover, 3 Special Procedures mandate holders were appointed.

In his opening statement, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mr Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, brought to the attention of the Council an emerging pattern, whereby political leaders are increasingly denying universal human rights. He stated there is a need for these political actors to understand that only by accepting fundamental human rights will durable peace and success in development be possible. He further asked the Council to ensure the rights of all are upheld, warning that "our rights, the rights of others, the very future of our planet cannot, must not, be thrown aside by these reckless political profiteers."

Resolutions

At the end of the session, a number of resolutions were adopted by the Council, addressing different pressing issues. The Council decided to urgently dispatch an independent international fact-finding mission to Myanmar to investigate the facts and circumstances of the alleged recent human rights violations by both military and security forces. In the same resolution, the Council extended by one year the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar.

The Council also extended the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Council called upon the Government of South Sudan to investigate all violations and abuses of human rights, and extended the mandate of the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan, composed of three members. The Council also decided to extend the mandate of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, and decided to transmit all reports and oral updates of the Commission of Inquiry to all relevant bodies of the United Nations.

The Council further adopted four resolutions related to the occupied Palestinian territory: on ensuring accountability and justice for all violations of international law; on the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination; on the human rights situation in the occupied Palestinian territory; and on Israeli illegal settlements. A text was also adopted on human rights in the occupied Syrian Golan.

The Council also voted to renew the mandate of the Intergovernmental Working Group on the Effective Implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action; and of the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. Another text related to the elaboration of complementary standards to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. The Council further recommended that the United Nations General Assembly establish a forum on people of African descent.

Finally, a number of resolutions which demanded all States to implement comprehensive transitional justice strategies and to develop mechanisms to address past atrocities, as well as to promote and protect all human rights, were also adopted by the Council during this session.

EAFORD Participation

EAFORD participated in the 34th session of the Human Rights Council by delivering 15 oral interventions and submitting 11 written statements. EAFORD further co-organized two side events on different topics, one covering the human rights situation in Palestine, and the other on human rights education and the obligation of governments to prevent incitement to racial hatred and hate speech. The official copies of the written reports submitted to the Human Rights Council are available to download from this brief report, along with the summaries of the side events.

EAFORD ORAL STATEMENTS

Civil society representative Ms. Fatima Al Ani delivered a statement on behalf of NGOs during the General Segment of the 34th Session of the Human Rights Council. EAFORD delivered several joint oral statements under items 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, 10 of the agenda of the Council. EAFORD also delivered two high-level panel statements, one joint statement during the interactive dialogue, and two panel statements. The oral statements which were delivered by EAFORD, jointly with other NGOs, can be viewed via the links provided in the next section.



[Civilians in Conflict: Human Rights Violations in the “War on Terror”](#)

[\(Original\)](#)

General Segment - 8th meeting, 34th Regular Session Human Rights Council

Statement delivered by Dr. Fatima Al Ani

This statement is intended to bring to the attention of the Council, the concern of the civil society around the world with regard to the negative impacts of the so-called “war on terrorism.”

Since 2001 – the war on terror has resulted in the deaths of thousands of civilians, and destroyed the infrastructure of several countries. However, it has not eliminated terrorism, or terrorist organizations. On the contrary, we have witnessed the emergence of a new criminal terrorist group called ISIL, as well as, a number of armed militia groups.

The counter-terrorism military campaigns have provoked political turmoil and killed thousands of civilians in the targeted countries. Yet despite the acknowledged link between the global war on terror, and the surge of violent extremism, world leaders have failed to modify their strategies. With the destruction of several cities in Syria and Iraq just the most recent examples of a disorganised and non-prioritised war on terror.

Mr. President, distinguished members,

Our main concern is that in the modern war on terror, there is no differentiation between armed terrorists and innocent civilians. Thousands of civilians have been trapped in the besieged cities, where humanitarian access is denied, including essential supplies of food and water - resulting in a multitude of deaths. Besides being deprived of basic medical care, education, and housing, they are then continuously subjected to bombing and shelling.

The media has shown disturbing images of women and children, trapped under the bricks of their homes. Yet the international community has failed, again, to halt the international and government-led coalitions from targeting civilian-inhabited areas, and to respect human rights and the humanitarian law.

Even those who manage to escape the fighting are never safe, as they either face persecution by the terrorists, or by governmental forces and their affiliated militias. If captured alive, they are at risk of being tortured or subjected to the most cruel and degrading punishment.

Mr. President,

While we are aware of the threat that terrorism poses to the world, we do not think it should be dealt with by aggressive military intervention and the violation of human rights. On the contrary, a comprehensive strategy should be developed, in order to address the root causes of this global crisis. Alongside this, a development plan should be enacted, and measures should be taken to fight corruption, which has deprived the people of their basic rights.

Finally, we cannot defeat terrorism by the creation of unlawful militias, whose actions are casting doubt on who is the real terror threat. Instead of fostering hatred and sectarian discrimination, we must strengthen the affected societies and invest in education, health, and fighting unemployment.

It should be recognized that although States are sovereign to undertake their own counterterrorism measures, they have an equal duty to maintain and uphold their human rights obligations. Any deviations must, and shall, be accounted for.



[Sectarian Mastermind of the Middle East](#)

General debate on Item 2: Annual report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and reports of the Office of the High Commissioner and the Secretary-General

Statement delivered by Ms. Lisa-Marlen Gronemeier

Thank you, Mr President.

This is a joint statement by the International Organization for the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination (EAFORD) and Geneva International Centre for Justice (GICJ).

We appreciate the reports and oral updates by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.

We would like to express our serious concerns regarding the grave systematic human rights violations by the Iranian government.

We are alarmed by the continuous persecution and abuse of ethnic and religious minorities in Iran and in the region. The groups targeted by the government include the Hazaras, Pashtuns, Balochs, Azeris, Baha'is, and ethnic Arabs on its soil. Furthermore, every attempt at peacefully denouncing these violations results in more people injured or killed. Particularly disturbing is the treatment of ethnic Arabs in Al-Ahwaz province. They are subjected to various human right violations, from forced displacement to mass killing, including denial of the right to education and access to healthcare.

Under the pretext of fighting Daesh, Iran has put in place a militarized security structure to export the so called "Islamic revolution" which results in terrorizing non-Shiites in the neighboring countries. The Iranian government provides support to the armed groups in Lebanon, the Popular Mobilization militia in Iraq, the Houthis in Yemen and similar sectarian groups in Syria. It is well-known that these parties commit serious crimes against the civilian population.

Iran should stop implementing its sectarian agenda in the Middle East as it aggravates the tensions and further violates human rights in several countries. The international community should take effective measures in this regard.



[Global Efforts to Combat Racism](#)

Item 2: Interactive Dialogue with the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

Joint Statement with Comité International pour le Respect et l'Application de la Charte Africaine (CIRAC)

Statement delivered by Mr. Jan Lönn

I make this statement on behalf of 13 organizations with a long-standing commitment to the struggle against racism in particular the full implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action (DDPA). On 19 December 2016, the General Assembly adopted an exceptionally important resolution on global efforts to combat racism which we fully support. We would like to know how your office will bring this important resolution to the public and actively seek its implementation.

In particular, the General Assembly called for the Human Rights Council to adopt at its 34th session a multi-year outreach program for Durban Programme information and mobilization. What contributions is the OHCHR making to the development of this important outreach program?

The General Assembly has also requested the Secretary-General to fill the vacancies in the Eminent Independent Expert Group for the DDPA before the end of March. We count on your office to facilitate these important appointments. In 2015 you drastically eliminated three staff positions from the work to implement the Durban Programme. Could you kindly explain the rationale for this and if you plan to reinstate the three essential staff positions.

Finally, we would like to have your explanation of the reasons for deciding not to publish an official Council document of the 34th session, which has a document number in the annotated agenda, namely the report of the October 2016 session of the Intergovernmental Working Group for DDPA implementation.



[A War Steeped in Falsehood: Iraqis Right to Truth, Justice and Reparations](#)

General Debate on Item 3 - Promotion and Protection of all Human Rights, Civil, Political, Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Including the Right to Development.

Statement delivered by Ms. Alice Wickens

Thank you Mr President.

This is a joint statement by the International Organization for the Elimination of all Forms of Racial

Discrimination (EAFORD), International-Lawyers.org and Geneva International Centre for Justice (GICJ). We ask the Council to remember that in ten days time, the people of Iraq will commemorate 14 years since the illegal invasion and destruction of their country by the United States and its allies.

The aggression towards the people of Iraq was against a sovereign State, which was one of the founding Members of the United Nations. Beyond the deaths of a reliably estimated 1.5 million Iraqi people, it has since affected all of their fundamental rights. As a result, even in 2017, Iraqis are still being deprived of their most basic needs.

Before sanctions were imposed in 1991, Iraq's health and education systems were among the most developed in the world. Today, with its schools and universities leveled, illiteracy has become higher in Iraq than it was 25-years-ago, unemployment is increasing, and hospitals lack basic drugs, equipment, and health professionals.

Iraqis only want what most people anywhere want - education, a good job, and a safe home to raise their children. Iraqis have the right to truth, the right to justice and the right to reparations. How many more years must pass, how many more Iraqis blood must be shed, and how much more must conditions of life deteriorate, before this Council takes action to insist on the accountability of those who caused these human rights atrocities? We ask you please do not let it be another 14 years before the Council breaks its silence.



[Human Rights Education: A Sustainable Approach to Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue](#)

General Debate on Item 3 - Promotion and Protection of all Human Rights, Civil, Political, Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Including the Right to Development.

Joint Statement with International Organization for the Right to Education and Freedom of Education (OIDEI)

Statement delivered by Ms. Claire de Lavernette

Thank you, Mr. President.

I speak on behalf of 25 organizations¹.

We would like, first of all, to thank the Member States, and particularly the Platform for Human Rights Education and Training², for their participation in the high-level panel discussion that took place in September on the occasion of the 5th anniversary of the UN Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training. The World Programme for Human Rights Education is an essential tool for implementing the UN Declaration, by providing a concrete framework for action and by strengthening partnerships and cooperation at all levels.

¹ This statement reflects views of NGOs expressed in the discussions of the NGO Working Group on Human Rights Education and Learning of the NGO Human Rights Committee of Conference of NGOs (CoNGO).
<http://ngowghrelgva.wordpress.com/>

² Brazil, Costa Rica, Italy, Morocco, the Philippines, Senegal, Slovenia, Switzerland and Thailand

We are in the Third Phase of the World Programme (2015-2019)³, which aims to promote social inclusion of marginalised groups; foster interreligious and intercultural dialogue; and combat stereotypes and violence, with a particular emphasis on the role of journalists and other media professionals.

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) has recently invited all Member States and National Human Rights Institutions to submit information on national implementation of the third phase of the World Programme. We urge all Member States to contribute their national feedback, due on 18 April.

Human rights education is a sustainable approach to address the root causes of any human rights violations, concerning all people, and is key to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

Human Rights Education requires the involvement of all relevant actors, including the participation of civil society at all stages of the policy-making processes.

In this spirit, the NGO Working Group on Human Rights Education and Learning is co-organizing an exhibition on Human Rights Education with SGI and HRE2020⁴, with thanks to the OHCHR. You are most welcome to visit.



[The Recent Declaration on the Right to Peace](#)

General Debate on Item 3 - Promotion and Protection of all Human Rights, Civil, Political, Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Including the Right to Development.

Joint Statement with (APG23)

Statement delivered by Ms. Maddalena Lise

Mr President,

I am delivering this joint oral statement on behalf of APG23 and 21 co-signing NGOs.

We are taking the floor to celebrate the adoption of the recent Declaration on the Right to Peace at the 71th General Assembly in New York on December 19, 2016.

Regrettably, the resolution (A/RES/71/189) to which the Declaration is attached did not reach a consensus but has been adopted with 131 countries voting in favour, 34 against and 19 abstentions.

³ A/HRC/27/28 (4 August 2014), “Plan of Action for the third phase (2015–2019) of the World Programme for Human Rights Education”.

⁴ Global Coalition for Human Rights Education, www.hre2020.org

The new declaration states: “Everyone has the right to enjoy peace such that all human rights are promoted and protected and development is fully realized.”

With this declaration, peace becomes a universal and inalienable human right clearly indivisible, interdependent and interrelated to all other human rights.

Peace, the peaceful settlement of disputes and the development of friendly relations between the Nations are the foundations of the international legal framework, as stated in the Preamble and Art.1 of the United Nations Charter.

In today's world, devastated by a “piecemeal Third World War” where armed conflicts, hate and poverty prevail, the recognition by an overwhelming majority of States that “Everyone has the right to enjoy peace”, sends a very much needed message of peace and hope to humanity and in particular to young and future generations.

This Declaration on the Right to Peace is a further step in the right direction, but it is not the end. We cannot stop here.

It is now necessary to take appropriate measures to implement the right to peace, first of all by promoting, at all levels, a culture of peace and nonviolence. States should support the development of infrastructures for peace in order to put this in practice and realize the right to peace.

We appeal to all Member States, which bear the primary responsibility for the international order, to make an even greater effort to ensure peace in the world, respect human dignity and human rights, protect all people, especially the poorest and most vulnerable, and realize a more equitable and sustainable development.

As the Secretary-General Antonio Guterres clearly called for on the 1st of January 2017 - “Let us make 2017 a year for peace”.



[Climate Change and the Rights of the Child](#)

Panel Discussion on Climate Change and the Rights of the Child

Statement delivered by Mr. Mutua Kobia

Thank you Mr. Vice-President.

This is a joint statement by the International Organization for the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination (EAFORD) and Geneva International Centre for Justice (GICJ).

We thank the panelists for their presentations and especially for integrating a human rights-based approach to climate change.

Climate change is directly and indirectly linked to all human rights issues. The rights of the child and climate change are intrinsically related in a myriad of ways, most notably, the physical and mental health of children, their development, exposure to disease, housing and education among others.

Agricultural based communities rely heavily dependent on predictable and stable weather patterns. Constant droughts abate traditional farmers' and indigenous communities' access to grazing lands and clean water. In Kenya, rising average temperatures and unpredictable rain patterns accelerates desertification making shelter and nutritious food sparse for children. In Bangladesh as well, ground water depletion, exacerbated by climate change, unfavorably reduces food production and nutrition for children. Water availability and quality will also be adversely affected.

Furthermore, this phenomenon adds to the loss of livestock and cattle, a main source of income for pastoral and agricultural livelihoods; hence, families and communities are unable to generate capital to sustain their children in terms of food, schooling, or ensuring their security and access to adequate health care services as per the Convention of the Rights of the Child.

Climate change also adds the dimension of "food stability and systems" in that changes in climate and weather upset the stability of people's and government's food security strategies generating inconsistent and inadequate availability of nutritious food, especially for children.

We recommend to:

- Address the challenges facing children from agriculturally based communities who are negatively affected by climate change;
- Provide necessary and relevant safe havens and appropriate and accessible education to children on the phenomenon of climate change;
- Provide adequate, regular, and nutritious food to children affected by climate change through community food banks close to affected livelihoods;
- Engage and involve children and young people in the climate change dialogue.



[Interactive Dialogue with the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan](#)

Interactive Dialogue with the Commission on South Sudan

Statement delivered by Mr. Mutua Kobia

Thank you Mr. Vice-President,

Grave human rights violations in South Sudan persist and spread to previously unaffected areas where farmers are expelled from their land and more civilians are discriminately targeted, attacked, and killed based on ethnicity and/or allegiance as indicated in numerous reports.

Property, homes, humanitarian goods, livestock, farming land, and villages are looted and torched. The escalating severity and scale of sexual violence, rape, and gang rape of women and girls by warring parties

cause severe mental and emotional breakdowns and trauma. Victims were selected by ethnicity or allegiance regardless of age while perpetrators enjoyed impunity.

Altogether, reported crimes constitute 'genocide' as defined under Articles 1a through c of the 'Convention on Genocide' warranting immediate peaceful action in response to and in solidarity with the South Sudanese people. Notwithstanding atrocities and difficulties in bringing about peace, acknowledgement of on-the-ground peace, reconciliation, and empowerment organizations and programs is essential.

Accountability is two-fold; the UN and global community must protect civilians and hold perpetrators accountable. To reiterate Stephen O'Brien of OCHA, further reports on violations are futile; action or non-action will be testament to our efficacy, responsibility, and worth.

NGOs signatories to this statement recommend:

The South Sudanese government:

- To uphold the "Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan" for immediate and permanent Cease-fire;
- Ensure all South Sudanese women their right to be actively involved in and engaged with the peace process, especially at the discussion and decision-making table for a gender-responsive peace agreement;
- Enforce Geneva Convention (IV) relative to "Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War." Specifically Article 27 for protection of women against sexual violence and increase security on sites of refuge;

That the Council:

- Pressure all relevant parties to impose immediate arms embargo as in Annex of Security Council Resolution 2304; including targeted sanctions and freezing of assets that fund the war;
- Enhance psychosocial and mental health care services for victims of all trauma;

That the Commission and international community:

- Reach out, support, and engage local grass roots peace and reconciliation organizations, projects, and forums.



[The Devastating Effect of the Conflict in Syria on Civilians](#)

High Level Panel Discussion: Human Rights Situation in the Syrian Arab Republic

Statement delivered by Ms. Giulia Squadron

Thank you Mr. President.

This is a joint statement by the International Organization for the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination (EAFORD) and Geneva International Centre for Justice (GICJ).

Our organizations are dismayed by the consequences of the bloody conflict that has been tearing Syria apart for almost six years. All parties have breached international humanitarian law and international human rights law, and have provoked unthinkable suffering to the civilian population. Thousands of people

have died, millions have fled the country, many more are internally displaced, and the majority of the population is suffering for the lack of basic infrastructures.

The gravity and scope of human rights violations committed by all actors involved in the conflict have reached new lows, and urgent actions are needed to prevent a complete destruction of the country. The future of Syria and its inhabitants depends on the ability of the international community to acknowledge that the pretext of combating terrorism cannot be used to indiscriminately hit civilian-inhabited areas and deploy weapons of mass destruction. Even the countries claiming to be intervening following the request of the government should be held accountable for the violations they continue to commit on a daily basis.

Civilians suffer the dramatic consequences of the use of cluster munitions, barrel bombs and incendiary weapons, which are extremely inaccurate and provoke substantial damages in widespread areas. The destruction of entire villages and the blockage of humanitarian convoys is further deteriorating the situation: millions of people are deprived of basic supplies, including water, food and health care, and the conditions of life in the IDPs and refugee's camps are below all international standards.

While we welcome the new recent rounds of peace talks, we wish to express our deepest concerns for the conditions of the millions of Syrians internally displaced and for those who are forced to leave their country. We call on this Council and all Member States to take immediate measures to prevent security and opposition forces as well as militias from breaching international law and international human rights law. We further urge the Syrian government to provide immediate redress to all victims and to allow humanitarian convoys to reach all areas.



[The Violence of Indifference](#)

General Debate Item 4: Human Rights Situations that Require the Council's Attention

Statement delivered by Ms Alice Wickens

Thank you Mr. President.

This is a joint statement by the International Organization for the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination (EAFORD) and Geneva International Centre for Justice (GICJ).

In five days time, the people of Iraq will commemorate 14 years since the illegal invasion and occupation of their country by the United States and its allies. Yet while those responsible are free to earn millions of dollars as after dinner speakers, this Council should not forget the 1.5 million innocent Iraqi's who died as a result. Nor should we forget the devastation and instability it has caused to Iraq.

Mr President,

There aren't many things which are more corrosive to democracy than impunity. Yet, so far, the international community has failed to hold those responsible to account, and 14 years later, it must still be asked, where is the justice for Iraq?

This war was waged on a false pretext, on one of the founding members of the UN. It left behind a

devastated country, and a shattered society. It caused not only deaths, but total destruction, whereby schools, hospitals and homes were leveled. It also created a power vacuum that has fuelled and spread terrorism across the region, with ISIS now ensuring there is no end to the suffering of the Iraqi people.

But in 2017, an official apology has never been delivered, an adequate compensation has never been paid, and responsibility has never been taken. The Iraqi people deserve truth, they deserve justice, and they deserve reparations - and for the sake of an entire nation, it is high time the Council takes action.



[Debate on Racial Profiling and Incitement to Hatred in the Context of Migration](#)

Panel Discussion on Racial Profiling: Debate on Racial Profiling and Incitement to Hatred, Including in the Context of Migration

Statement delivered by Mr. Mutua Kobia

Thank you Mr. President.

This is a joint statement by the International Organization for the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination (EAFORD), International-Lawyers.org and Geneva International Centre for Justice.

The current worldwide migration phenomenon is linked to a myriad of human rights issues. It is imperative to address root causes as well as current drivers of mass migration, such as environmental degradation, climate change, and types of conflict to better understand and manage migration flows. Among migrants and refugees, children, women and people with disabilities are most vulnerable, and most targeted regarding abuses and violence. Additional burdens include race, ethnicity, and religion.

Promotion of best practices and added values, such as valuable knowledge and experience, various skill sets, and culture of migrants can curtail and eliminate racial profiling, hatred, xenophobia, racism, discrimination and intolerance towards migrants. As well, enhancing and encouraging quality and accurate human rights education and of the host countries' local norms and laws, practices and cultural values towards migrants and refugees ensures raised awareness and familiarity of their host environment and lifestyle.

To better protect migrants, we must keep in hindsight that migration and integration, migrants and hosts are in and of themselves two-fold and interrelated.

To the members of the Council, we recommend pursuant to several human rights laws and obligations:

- Provide quality human rights education and training for border patrols and law enforcement and increase international communication and cooperation on border control and management;
- Provide accessible education and information on local norms and laws to migrants and refugees upon arrival;
- Promote two-way education and learning by establishing migrant cultural hubs as platforms for communication and assistance with integration;

- Provide opportunities for migrants and refugees to exercise their freedom and right of being active participants in society including peace and reconciliation processes;
- Convene close collaborative work with the SR on torture regarding the link between migrants and torture;
- Provide adequate and appropriate specialized health care services for victims of abuses and crimes on transit.



[Nothing Succeeds like Failure: Israel's Incessant Absence of Human Rights](#)

General Debate on Item 6: Universal Periodic Review Outcome

Statement delivered by Ms. Lisa-Marlen Gronemier.

Mr. President,

Half a century has elapsed since Israel established its brutal occupation of Palestine and seven decades have passed since the Palestinian Nakba. Since then, all efforts by the international community to effectively address Israeli violations, including Palestinian inalienable rights, are consistently undermined by Israel's non-cooperation.

After having failed to appear in the UPR of January 2013, Israel's subsequent actions were marked by non-compliance. Contrary to recommendations, Israel consistently fails to cooperate with human rights mechanisms and to recognize and abide by its international obligations as Occupying Power.

Israel rejected all recommendations containing the term "State of Palestine" – an absurd move that reflects Israel's longstanding, strategic, and organized negation of Palestinian legitimate national claims. In direct contravention to UPR recommendations, Israel persists in its illegal occupation, including the suffocating Gaza blockade, and subjects Palestinians on both sides of the Green Line to a system of apartheid and institutionalized discrimination affecting all spheres of life. In breach of UPR recommendations, Israel has issued anti-democratic laws and increasingly persecutes human rights defenders, including Jewish Israeli dissidents, as public enemies.

Israel's complete disregard of UPR recommendations renders its contempt for human rights blatant. The international community must now take forcible measures to compel Israel to cease its violations and to hold Israel accountable for its complete intransigence and disrespect for all of its obligations to give way to real democracy and just peace in the region.



[Our Reality Here, Daily, is a Violent Reality](#) - [\(Original in Arabic\)](#)

General Debate Item 7: Human Rights Situation in Palestine and Other Occupied Arab Territories

Statement delivered by Mr. Naser Abuhammoud.

Mr. President and distinguished members,

This is a joint statement by the International Organization for the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination (EAFORD) and Geneva International Centre for Justice (GICJ).

I am speaking as the representative of the Dawabashih Family from the village of Duma, Palestine. Less than two years ago, members of my family were brutally murdered by criminal Israeli settlers from a nearby illegal settlement. 18-month-old Ali, his 4 year-old brother Ahmed, father Sa'ad, and mother Reham were sound asleep when the Israeli settlers set fire to the family home in the night of 31 July 2015. The parents tried desperately to rescue their children but could only rescue Ahmad, while toddler Ali was burned alive in the fire. Both parents later succumbed to their injuries, leaving the permanently injured Ahmad orphaned. This atrocious murder shows the magnitude that settler violence takes in Occupied Palestine, for which accountability remains absent.

This attack has deepened the plight of my family. We have fallen victim to many settler attacks in the past, which render life almost unbearable. Settler violence is a daily part of life for many Palestinians: Armed Israeli settlers – endowed with impunity by the Israeli State – regularly carry out attacks against Palestinian civilians and property by, *inter alia*, shooting and harassing Palestinians and damaging and destroying their belongings.

We are not safe from actions by Israeli forces either, as they engage in violent acts against Palestinians, including the use of excessive and often lethal force and targeted assassinations. Violence by the occupying forces has created an atmosphere of terror among the Palestinian population since the beginning of the occupation. Such atrocious acts add to the climate of violence in which Palestinians live and inflict unquantifiable psychological harm on Palestinians, especially on children who witness their parents being beaten or murdered and their homes being destroyed.

The arson attack on my family is not the first crime by the settlers and it will not be the last if the international community does not take immediate measures to hold Israel accountable, to cease its violations and prevent violence by settlers and soldiers, and to conduct investigations and guarantee accountability for illegal actions.



[UN-Decade for People of African Descent: Recognition, Justice, Development](#)

General Debate Item 9: Racism, Racial discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Forms of Intolerance, Follow-Up to and Implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action

Statement delivered by Mr. Mutua Kobia

Thank you Mr. President.

This is a joint statement by the International Organization for the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination (EAFORD) and Geneva International Centre for Justice (GICJ).

We believe that it is high time to implement the programme of activities set forth in the International Decade for People of African Descent, particularly on capacity-building, empowerment, and awareness raising. In past years there have been numerous consultations but not enough substantive results. The more time given to discussions on informalities, language, and other such matters we forget there are people relying on our diligent support and protection.

There is a shared concern over the lack of activities and mandate of the independent experts and the working group. Moreover, we fail to see the relevance of an eminent independent expert as they lack resources, have no secretariat support and do not hold annual meetings.

While the addition of a forum, as discussed in recent meetings, may be of added value we must take into consideration implementation strategies. Civil society organizations are particularly concerned whether relevant parties to the establishment and modalities of the forum are prepared to provide the necessary funding for its proper functioning. Additional costs must be considered and co-sponsors to the Durban Declaration must be ready to cover such costs if the forum is even to be discussed at this point.

Lastly, more attention must be paid to the visibility of the International Decade, the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, and people of African descent through various types of media, campaigns, and promotion of already published materials.



[A Nation under Siege: Civilians Caught in the Middle](#)

General Debate Item 10: Technical Assistance and Capacity-Building

Statement delivered by Ms. Alice Wickens

Thank you Mr. President.

This is a joint statement by the International Organization for the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination (EAFORD) and Geneva International Centre for Justice (GICJ).

We wish to thank the High Commissioner for his update on Yemen. Our organizations remain deeply concerned about the dramatic worsening of the conditions on the ground, and moreover, by the failure of the international community to take effective measures in this regard.

Today, the escalation of the conflict has provoked an unprecedented humanitarian crisis in Yemen, only worsened by the famine and the shortage of food supplies. To date, more than 4 in 5 Yemenis need some type of humanitarian assistance, 28 million people are short of food, 7 million children lack the basic nutrients, and 1 in 5 children are now underdeveloped because of chronic malnutrition. This is a result of the decimation of water and sanitation infrastructures during the conflict, the restrictions on imports which have caused water and fuel shortages, and the extremely limited access to health care and functioning hospitals.

Furthermore, Iran, which was accused of initiating the conflict by arming and funding al-Houthi militias, still remains deeply involved in Yemen. This means that not only is Iran fuelling this bloody war, but it is also hindering the achievement of peaceful settlements. The international community must take all the necessary measures to stop such an illegal interference.

Finally, we believe it is important to enhance the effectiveness of the existing human rights monitoring mechanisms in Yemen, and we urge all Member States to take action and ensure there are adequate resources to alleviate the civilians' suffering.

EAFORD WRITTEN STATEMENTS

During the 34th Session of the Human Rights Council, the International Organization for the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (EAFORD) submitted nine joint written statements, addressing the most concerning cases of human rights violations and abuses occurring in Syria, Palestine, Iraq, Iran, South Sudan, and Myanmar. The written statements also tackle the issue of children in armed conflict – including the appalling violence and deprivations to which children are subjected in war-torn countries – and analyze the implications of indiscriminate attacks conducted within the framework of the “war on terror”. Each statement concludes with a series of recommendations that EAFORD, and the co-signatories NGOs, wish to address to the UN bodies, and particularly to the Human Rights Council.

[Civilians in Conflict: Human Rights Violations in the “War on Terror”](#)

As outlined in this statement, civilians in the Middle East have become side casualties of merciless and indiscriminate attacks perpetrated in the name of the “war on terror”. The recent destruction of Aleppo in Syria, Fallujah, Ramadi, and Mosul in Iraq are among the most appalling examples of the worst implications of disorganized and inconsiderate military campaigns. Such attacks have been conducted in blatant disregard of international law, and have caused thousands of civilian casualties as well as a multitude of other human rights violations, including destruction of civilian-inhabited areas and forced displacement. The statement recommends immediate cessation of indiscriminate attacks, and calls for the implementation of special measures to protect civilians while countering terrorism. Particular emphasis is given to the necessity of conducting effective investigations in order to ensure accountability and reparation. [Link to full report](#)

[Innocence in the Twilight Zones of Armed Conflicts](#)

This statement outlines the dire impact of armed conflict on children. All over the world, minors are killed, wounded and maimed, and they suffer for the lack of adequate health care facilities and supplies. Moreover, millions of children are out of school and are forcibly recruited to serve as soldiers during combat. Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan, Yemen, and South Sudan are among the worst cases: here, violence against children has reached new lows. This statement calls for the immediate implementation of special measures to ensure the protection of children, as well as for the cessation of forced recruitment and sexual violence against minors. [Link to full report](#)

[The Devastating Effect of the Conflict in Syria on Women](#)

The statement denounces the mass-scale human rights violations committed in the Syrian Arab Republic. The six-year-long conflict has provoked unthinkable suffering and losses to the Syrian populations. Civilians have been killed, abducted, tortured, arbitrarily arrested and subjected to all kinds of inhuman treatments. Moreover, gender-based discrimination and violence against women, in particular sexual violence and social stigmatization, have dramatically increased since 2011. Being one of the most vulnerable segments of societies during war time, women suffer for the lack of appropriate health care supplies and medical facilities, and for the absence of legal and psychological assistance. This statement calls for the immediate cessation of gender-based violence – in particular of sexual violence – and for the provision of adequate redress and protection for victims. [Link to full report](#)

[Sectarian Mastermind of the Middle East](#)

The statement addresses Iran's interference in the region in pursuit of a militarism policy, which involves widespread and systematic violations of human rights, torture and other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment and punishment, forced displacement and limitations to freedoms of expression, association and peaceful assembly, lack of accountability and rule of law. Several recommendations to the Human Rights Council, treaty bodies and special-mandate procedures are outlined. The international community is urged to monitor the worsening situation of human rights as well as denounce the sectarian agenda which is further aggravating regional tensions and contributing to the deterioration of the humanitarian crisis in the Middle East. [Link to full report](#)

[Incessant Absence of Human Rights](#)

This statement outlines Israel's consistent and blatant disregard of all its international obligations with regards to the inalienable rights, including the right to self-determination and fundamental human rights, of the Palestinian people since its establishment. Thereby, it continuously derails all peace efforts, intensifies human misery, and undermines the viability of a future Palestinian state. The statement therefore recommends the Human Rights Council and other competent UN bodies to take all necessary measures to make Israel abide by its international obligations and cease its prolonged occupation as well as all other violations of Palestinians' inalienable rights. [Link to full report](#)

[Our Reality Here, Daily, is a Violent Reality](#)

This statement addresses the situation in occupied Palestine in which a defenseless civilian population faces a vast and powerful military apparatus under Israel's prolonged illegal military occupation. The decades-long daily violent reality is marked by its disproportionate and excessive use of force in blatant violation of Israel's obligations as Occupying Power, in particular the Fourth Geneva Convention. In view of this, our statement recommends that the international community spare no efforts to ensure Israel's recognition and application of human rights and international humanitarian law, particularly the Fourth Geneva Convention, in occupied Palestine. [Link to full report](#)

[Threshing Arms of Occupation](#)

In this statement, it is argued that the prolonged illegal Israeli occupation of Palestine is intricately linked with Israel's historically rooted apartheid system as well as with Israel's increasingly anti-democratic policies and practices targeting Israeli dissidents. All efforts to effectively address the violations are consistently undermined by Israel's non-compliance and non-cooperation with UN stakeholders and mechanisms. The statement therefore recommends the UN to take all necessary measures to ensure Israeli cooperation and compel Israel to implement all relevant UN resolutions and recommendations, including by calling on Member States to end all forms of cooperation with the Israeli authorities and to impose political and economic sanctions on Israel. [Link to full report](#)

[The Worsening Situation in South Sudan](#)

This statement examines the status of civil war in South Sudan where civilians are indiscriminately targeted, attacked, and killed, as assaults and sexual violence escalate and spread across the country. The UN Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan's Report (2016) recognized, among other grave violations, the "targeted killing of Dinka women and children" illustrating that the attacks are ethnic-based. On a whole the crimes committed amount to 'genocide' as defined in the 'Convention on Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide'. This statement calls for immediate cease-fire and urgent protection of civilians, as well as, the initiation of the Hybrid Court for South Sudan (HCSS) to hold perpetrators accountable. [Link to full report](#)

[The Plight of the Rohingya in Myanmar](#)

The statement outlines the general human rights situation in Myanmar (Burma), with a particular focus on widespread and systematic violations against the Rohingya Muslim community – which amount to genocide. Rohingyas face brutal threats and violence, including mass killings, rape, extrajudicial executions, enforced disappearance, arbitrary detention, torture, segregation, denial of citizenship, restrictions on freedom of movement, and limited access to education. Given the clear intent to destroy, the report addresses fundamental recommendations to the Human Rights Council and the Burmese government calling for immediate action and cessation of violence. [Link to full report](#)

SIDE EVENTS

The International Organization for the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (EAFORD) and Geneva International Centre for Justice (GICJ), in co-operation with several other NGOs organized two side events. The topics discussed were human rights education and the Israeli settlements and violence in

the occupied Palestinian Territories and Israel.

“Human Rights Education–States Obligations in Preventing Incitement to Hatred and Hate Speech”

On 16 March, the International Organization for the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (EAFORD), in co-operation with Geneva International Centre for Justice (GICJ), organized a side event during the 34th session of the UN Human Rights Council titled “Human Rights Education - States Obligations in Preventing Incitement to Hatred and Hate Speech.”

Human Rights Education:
States obligations in preventing incitement to hatred and hate speech

Speakers:
Dr. Nabeel Ali Mohammad Alatoom
Mr. Ahmed Al Quraishi
Mr. Tahar Boumedra

Moderator:
Ms. Gulnoz SAYDAMINOVA

Organisers:
International Organization for the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (EAFORD) and Geneva International Centre for Justice (GICJ)

In collaboration with: The Arab Association for Human Rights, International Educational Development, Inc, The Arab Lawyers Association-UK, Organisation for Justice and Democracy in Iraq (OJDI), The Iraqi Commission for Human Rights (ICHR), The Iraqi Centre for Human Rights, The Brussels Tribunal.

[Link to side-event summary](#)



“Israeli Settlements and Violence in the Occupied Palestinian Territories and Israel”

On 17 March 2017, Meezaan Organization for Human Rights and Geneva International Centre for Justice (GICJ) co-organized, with the participation of the International Organization for the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (EAFORD) and International-Lawyers.Org, a side event entitled “Israeli Settlements and Violence in the Occupied Palestinian Territories and Israel”.



Israeli Settlements and Violence in the Occupied Palestinian Territories and Israel

17 March 2017, 11h30-13h00, Room XXIII
Palais des Nations, Geneva

Speakers:

- Mr. Omar Khamaisi, Opening Remarks, Director, Meezaan Organization for Human Rights
- Mr. Naser Dawabshih, Representative of the Dawabshih Family
- Mr. Ra'afat Badran, father of 15-year-old Mahmoud Badran, killed by the Israeli security
- Dr. Daud Abdullah, Director of Middle East Monitor, London
- Ms. Lisa-Marlen Gronemeier, Geneva International Centre for Justice

Moderator:

- Dr. Ahmad Amara, Legal Adviser, Meezaan Organization for Human Rights

Organisers:

Meezaan Organization for Human Rights, International Organization for the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (EAFORD), International-Lawyers.org, Geneva International Centre for Justice (GICJ)



[Link to side-event summary](#)


