

International Organization for the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (EAFORD)

25<sup>th</sup> Session of the UN Human Rights Council

3 – 28 March 2014

*Statement Delivered During the High Level Segment on Behalf of Civil Society Organizations*

On 6 March 2014, Mr. Issa Amro, human rights defender and coordinator of Youth Against Settlements in Hebron/Palestine, participated in the High Level Segment of the Human Rights Council, addressing issues such as occupation and settlements, the importance of item 7 and the situation of human rights defenders working in the field. At the occasion of the UN international year of solidarity with the Palestinian people, he exposed the human rights violation occurring under occupation and called on the international community not to cease in its efforts and let itself influenced by political pressure.

Full Text of the Statement

Mr. President,

I am Issa Amro from Palestine. I am honored to address you in my personal capacity as representative of a civil society dedicated to the implementation of all UN resolutions on Palestine and the full observance of human rights and international humanitarian law under occupation.

I am particularly pleased to be able to take part in this part of the Human Rights Council at the time when we are observing the International Year of Solidarity with the Palestinian People in 2014. I trust that you will all, as peace loving states, do your utmost to make this year a turning point in pressuring the occupying power to end its illegal occupation.

I come from the city of Hebron in Palestine where the Palestinians are suffering from Apartheid, discrimination and displacement. I wish in this context to take the opportunity to express my thanks to Professor Richard Falk and the other Special Procedures of the Council who have protested against my arrests and mistreatment, because I participated in peaceful protests against the illegal settlements, as other defenders of human Rights.

For the victims of such grave breaches of international Humanitarian Law and Human Rights Laws, the engagement by the Special Rapporteurs is a small but very important relief that must be strengthened and not undermined by any compromises to an Occupying Power. In this regards I hope from the council to continue protecting human rights defenders around the world who often work under conditions that place them at grave risk in every aspect of their work.

We are deeply concerned about the boycott of Item 7 on Palestinian rights during the recent two sessions of the Council by a group of countries that was instituted to comfort the occupying power and encourage it to end its boycott of the UPR. I wish to remind the Members of the Council that they agreed to keep the question of human rights in Palestine on their agenda until the illegal occupation is ended. I appeal to all countries and regional groups to participate constructively in the discussion under Item 7 at this session of the Council.

I also appeal to the Council to sustain its own credibility by naming at this session a Special Rapporteur on the question of Human Rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territories who is up to the function due to his or her expertise about Palestine and the applicable international law.

Finally, I urge the Council to ensure the prompt and effective implementation of the conclusions of its international fact finding mission on the settlements. These illegal settlements are strangling the lifeblood from Palestine. Please continue to support our legitimate right to self-determination and statehood by your prompt and effective actions.