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**Human rights situation in Palestine and other
occupied Arab territories**

Written statement* submitted by the Charitable Institute for Protecting Social Victims, 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.

[14 February 2011]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

Human rights situation in Palestine and other occupied Arab territories

Sadly through a sixty year old process, the destruction of homes, enforcement of very harsh restrictions on construction of homes, issuing of military court sentences, the siege of Gaza and the continuation of the construction of Jewish settlements, have all been important cases of the organized violation of the human rights of Palestinians. This process – both in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank – has been taking place in various forms. In the West Bank it's the day to day restrictions on things like shelter, the right to safety, education and institutionalized discrimination by the Jewish Settlements, and in the Gaza Strip it's the restrictions on the right to life of the people.

In West Bank

Palestinians living under Israeli occupation in East Jerusalem and the rest of the West Bank face tight restrictions on their rights to adequate housing. Demolition crews, accompanied by security officials, may arrive at any time, giving families little notice or opportunity to remove their possessions. Under Israeli law, evicted families are not entitled to alternative housing or compensation, meaning many would face homelessness.

Palestinians in the West Bank are subjected to Israeli military laws that enable sweeping restrictions to be placed on their most fundamental rights. Israel's land grab and dissection of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, have had a devastating impact on the lives of Palestinians.

In East Jerusalem, 35 per cent of the land has been expropriated for settlements in which 195,000 Israelis live. Meanwhile, more than 250,000 Palestinians are designated only 13 per cent of East Jerusalem, which is already heavily built up. The confiscations, seizures and appropriations of land for settlements, bypass roads, the fence/wall and related infrastructure have resulted in the forced eviction of Palestinians.

Israeli policies in the West Bank harshly discriminate against Palestinian residents, depriving them of basic. There are many discriminatory practices that have no legitimate security or other justification. Palestinians face systematic discrimination merely because of their race, ethnicity, and national origin, depriving them of electricity, water, schools, and access to roads, while nearby Jewish settlers enjoy all of these state-provided benefits.

Israeli policies control many aspects of the day-to-day life of Palestinians who live in Area C and East Jerusalem. Among the discriminatory burdens imposed on Palestinians are Israeli practices of expropriating land from Palestinians for settlements and their supporting infrastructure; blocking Palestinians from using roads and reaching agricultural lands; denying access to electricity and water; denying building permits for houses, schools, clinics, and infrastructure; and demolishing homes and even entire communities. Such measures have limited the expansion of Palestinian villages and imposed severe hardships on residents, including leaving them with limited access to medical care.

In Gaza

Israel's military blockade of Gaza has also left more than 1.4 million Palestinian men, women and children trapped in the Gaza Strip. Mass unemployment, extreme poverty and food price rises caused by shortages have left four in five Gazans dependent on humanitarian aid. As a form of collective punishment, Israel's continuing blockade of Gaza is a flagrant violation of international law.

Gaza's civilians are facing dire shortages of food, water, cooking gas, fuel and medical care due to insecurity and enforced closure of all of Gaza's borders. Electricity is sharply down, and in some places open sewage is spilling into the streets. Children, who make up 56 percent of Gaza's residents, are especially vulnerable.

Humanitarian law provides that Israel as an occupying power must ensure the safety and well-being of the civilian population, but as past decades have showed, this is the last thing in Israel's plans for Gazans. The blockade is a form of collective punishment and is in violation of international law.

Alongside these clear blatant violation of Palestinians rights, a lot of other areas of the social life of these people are faced with harsh Israeli imposed restrictions. The Occupied Territories are faced with problems in education. Until May 2006, 12 schools and universities were closed on the orders of the Israeli IDF in the Occupied Territories and another 1125 schools and higher education institutions were forced to shut down because of the terrible conditions brought on the continuation of occupation. Furthermore 359 schools were bombed, 43 became military bases, and 845 students were killed.

With regards to health and medical treatment, due to the continuation of the siege, the lack of enough and lack of access to needed equipment, the territories are faced with a lot of shortfalls. The mortality rate among children and acute malnutrition are some of the important problems that the Palestinians suffer from.

The employment market in Palestine following the Al Aqsa Intifada and imposing of severe restrictions by Israel, has dropped sharply. The lack of access to raw materials for manufacturers and high unemployment rate, has affected the Palestinians income conditions. As well as this, the eviction and forced move of the Palestinians putting them further away from their homes and lands has resulted in jobs and income opportunities to be very limited for this community. This condition has got worse due to the increase in settlement buildings, the Jewfication of the Occupied Territories, the construction of the Security Barrier, confiscation of property, and arbitrary detentions.

The confiscation of water resources by Israel and restrictions on Palestinians access to these resources is another problem that has brought about noticeable negative consequences for this society. As well as causing health and hygiene problems, the agricultural sector of the Palestinian society has been affected heavily. Since the start of the Al Aqsa Intifada till the end of 2008, approximately 1.6 million trees were destroyed in the Occupied Territories.

As a human rights NGO, we call upon the Council to adopt measures that at least the Council focuses on Israel's actions over the last four years if not sixty years, and once and for all to draw the attention of all United Nations member states.