

PHROC Dismayed by Israel's Election to Chair the General Assembly's Legal Sixth Committee



16 June 2016

PHROC Dismayed by Israel's Election to Chair the General Assembly's Legal Sixth Committee

On 13 June 2016, Israel won a vote to chair the United Nations Legal Affairs Sixth Committee (hereinafter the Committee), with the support of 109 member states and no votes against.^[1] The Committee acts as the central space through which legal questions are brought before the General Assembly. For 2016-2017, the agenda of the Committee will include measures to eliminate international terrorism, the rule of law at national and international levels, and responsibility of States for internationally wrongful acts, amongst others.^[2]

The Palestinian Human Rights Organisations Council (PHROC) reminds the international community of Israel's countless policies and measures towards Palestinians which violate international human rights and humanitarian law, including UN conventions and resolutions. Such flagrant violations of law have occurred since the establishment of Israel in 1948. While the UN and the international community at-large continually condemn Israeli crimes such as the illegal presence and expansion of settlements, the transfer of civilians, and excessive use of force against Palestinians, including cases which may amount to extra-judicial killings, no real action has been taken to change the status quo.^[3]

PHROC further notes Israel's continuous attempts to undermine and obstruct the work of various UN mechanisms, including the Human Rights Council and treaty bodies, and its failure to permit entry to UN-mandated Special Rapporteurs. Such actions weaken essential mechanisms that promote and guarantee international human rights and justice.

Rather than taking stock of Israel's history and the current state of Palestinian rights both in the













Occupied Palestinian Territory and within the Green Line and implement sanctions against Israel, member states instead elected Israel's UN Ambassador, Danny Danon, as chair of the Committee. Danon is known for his rightwing views which contradict basic tenets of international law, including the annexation of Israeli settlements^[4] and the immediate deportation of asylum seekers.^[5]

PHROC is dismayed by Member States who voted in favour of Danon's appointment, as well as those who abstained. By electing an individual such as Danon to a **legal** committee, the international community's commitment to human rights and international law is put into question.

Instead of rewarding Israel, States should work to end the prolonged occupation of Palestine and hold Israel accountable, by means of sanctions, for its breaches of international law. In light of this, PHROC considers such vote as evidence to the international community's failure to respect and abide by norms of international law.

- ENDS -

Palestinian Human Rights Organizations Council

	Addameer Prisoners' Support and Human Rights Association Sahar Francis General Director		Aldameer Association for Human Rights Halajaber
	Al-Haq ShawanJabarin General Director		Al Mezan Center for Human Rights IssamYounis General Director
	Badil Resource Center for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights NidalAzza General Director		Defence for Children International Palestine Section Khaled Kuzmar General Director
	Ensan Center for Human Rights and Democracy HasiebNashashibi General Director		Hurryyat - Centre for Defense of Liberties and Civil Rights Helmi Al-araj General Director
	Jerusalem Center for Legal Aid and Human Rights IssamAruri General Director		Ramallah Center for Human Rights Studies Suhaib Sharif General Director
	Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling RandaSanyora General Director		The Palestinian Center for Human Rights RajiSourani - General Director

[1] Israel elected to chair UN committee for first time, 14 June 2016, available at <http://www.dw.com/en/israel-elected-to-chair-un-committee-for-first-time/a-19327852>

[2] General Assembly of the United Nations, Legal - Sixth Committee, available at <http://www.un.org/en/ga/sixth/>

[3] See *for example*: UN rights office 'extremely concerned' about killing of Palestinian man in West Bank, UN News Centre, 30 March 2016, available at <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=53571#.V2FGitj97IU>; Local EU statement on recent demolitions and confiscations in Area C, 24 February 2016, http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/westbank/documents/news/2016/20160224_eu_local_statement_on_recent_demolitions_and_confiscations_in_area_c_en.pdf; Accelerated Settlement Activity Casts Doubt on Israel's Commitment to Two-State Solution, Secretary-General Tells Security Council, United Nations Meeting Coverage, 18 April 2016, available at <http://www.un.org/press/en/2016/sc12327.doc.htm>

[4] Making the Land of Israel Whole, New York Times, 18 May 2011, available at http://www.nytimes.com/2011/05/19/opinion/19Danon.html?_r=1

[5] TA anti-African rally ends in rioting, assaults, Jerusalem Post, 24 May 2012, available at <http://www.jpost.com/National-News/TA-anti-African-rally-ends-in-rioting...>
