

ENGLISH ONLY

Human Rights Council-16th Session, SR on Human Rights Defenders

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Oral statement submitted by Badil Resource Center for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status.

Palestinian Women Human Rights Defenders Face and Resist Compounded Oppression

Mr President,

Badil welcomes the report of the SR on human rights defenders and endorses the gender emphasis.

We wish to draw the SR's attention to the special case of Palestinian women in the OPT and Israel.

As rightfully stated in the report, various human rights instruments articulate the protection that should be afforded to women and lay primary responsibility upon the State. Accordingly, several UN bodies have commented on the situation of Palestinian women, including most recently, the UN CEDAW's concluding observations of February 2011.

Badil wishes to bring to your attention the excessive and illegal use of force by Israeli police and army personnel in suppressing women-led demonstrations both in Araqib Bedouin village in the Negev as well as in different parts of OPT.

The first case involves Palestinian-Bedouin women human rights defenders whose village-Al-Araqeeb and houses have been demolished by Israel authorities at least a dozen times. Recently, on 9 Feb 2011, Israeli police shot rubber bullets at Palestinian women protestors in order to forcefully disperse them. The attack injured many women protestors and required their hospitalization. In addition, the police prevented relatives from approaching the wounded women, aiming at deterring Palestinian women from participating in similar human rights activities into the future.

In different parts of OPT women human rights defenders have been trying to manifest their right to assembly also by demonstrating regularly in the villages of Bilin and Nilin against the construction of the separating wall. On January 1st, Jawaher Abu-Rahmi, A Palestinian woman died after suffering intense tear-gas inhalation used by the Israeli army the day before during an anti-wall rally in Bil'in village. Once again, on March 5, the Israeli Army forcefully dispersed a women-led demonstration held in commemoration of IWD nearby Qalandia checkpoint by using rubber bullets and causing several of women injury.

Mr President, Badil asks the HRC:

1. To urge Israel to cease immediately from its policy and practice of harassing and persecuting women human right defenders in both the OPT and Israel.
2. To urge Israel to investigate all human rights violations committed during women-led demonstrations in the view of bringing perpetrators to justice and remedy victims.
3. And we invite the SR to visit the region in order to develop more insight regarding the situation of Palestinian women human rights defenders and examine the established oppression endured by those women.

Thank you for your attention