

BADIL's Oral Intervention

Human Rights Council

39th session, Item 7 "human rights situation in Palestine and other occupied Arab territories." 24 September 2018

By Ms. Dalia Qumsieh

Mr. President:

Of course, it was never true that Israel is the only state forming a permanent subject on the agendas of the Commission on Human Rights or Human Rights Council, the UN's highest human rights policy-making bodies.

Nor was it ever true that this has been the only item on the human rights of people under foreign and military occupation. While Western Sahara and Tibet deserve commensurate attention, occupied Cyprus has been a perennial subject of both the Commission and the Council. But, arguably, any other case rarely involves the level and frequency of atrocities, human rights violations, grave breaches, war crimes and crimes against humanity as those consistently carried out by Israel across Palestine.

Item 7 is about prolonged occupation that has morphed into these systematic and comprehensive violations like no other state since World War II. This body has witnessed Israel maintaining the serious crime of population transfer as its very *raison d'état*, not to mention as its central practice in the Palestinian and Syrian territories it belligerently occupies. And it began that prohibited practice in the very near shadow of its prosecution at Nuremberg and Tokyo.

The cry to remove item 7 as somehow unfair is heard loudest from Israel and the United States, the latter of which bears the most-direct extraterritorial human rights obligations vis-à-vis Israel's prolonged occupation of neighboring peoples and states. These are crocodile tears, and this Council should not be bullied or coerced into averting its gaze from gross violations so systematic, so deliberate and so institutionalized as to deprive the Palestinian people of its land, means of subsistence and, hence, its self-determination.