

Dear Mr. Lynk,

The UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian Territory Occupied since 1967,

Your Excellency, we took note of your joint statement, dated 11 May 2021, and the reiteration that “[n]either short-term calm nor long-term peace will be accomplished as long as the national and individual rights of the City's Palestinian population are routinely abrogated,” and that “[a] militarized response to civilian protests against discriminatory practices only deepens social divisions. Respecting rights is the only path forward.”

While condemning any violence and use of violence for achieving political goals, we believe the mentioned rights also include the right of the Palestinian people to self-defense. In this regard, it is highly regrettable that the international community, failed to offer effective and adequate protection from clear and blatant violations of the Palestinians’ fundamental rights, including rights to life, peace and personal security, by Israeli Occupying Power.

In numerous UN resolutions and reports, it is acknowledged that the Palestinian people have been suffering from continuous intentional discriminative collective punishment, ethnic cleansing, forced evictions, destruction of their property, annexations, occupation, the racist Apartheid policies and behavior of Israel and violation of all their human rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

Recent violence, which was triggered and spread by Israel, put the Palestinian people, in particular in Gaza Strip, on the brink of extinction. The recent blatant and ruthless actions by the Israeli Security Forces and its leadership, claiming purported self-defense, forced Palestinian people to experience massive killings of the civilian population, including innocent children and women, and the targeting and destruction of the little remaining from previous attacks on civilian buildings and infrastructures in the Gaza Strip. This all has been done persistently and violently under the disguise of countering and eliminating Hamas’s presence in those targets.

We welcome recent cease fire and those who condemned Israel for escalation of violence, as well as attacks and killing of hundreds and maybe thousands of Palestinians by air raid and shelling in Gaza. At this stage, it is difficult to estimate the real numbers of civilian casualties and their suffering, especially because of the continues Israel’s efforts to silence and scare journalists and stifle local representatives of civil society and human rights defenders, including though its Air Force recent turning into a pile of rubble the tower housing media offices. Clearly, this was done deliberately, so that the world would hear less or nothing of what is happening in the sieged and blockaded Gaza.

While local civil society activists and human rights defenders put their lives at stake to document the killing, violence and aggression by Israel, Instagram and Facebook encouraged by Israel are blocking and removing the Palestinians’ content under the disguise of countering incitement to violence and terrorism, while in reality being accomplice with Israel to erase the traces of the video recorded and well documented evidence of war crimes and crimes against humanity.

In this context, we are expressing our grave concern over the new round of killings, violence and aggression by Israel against occupied and oppressed Palestinian people. While we welcome the recent cease fire, we believe the world community does little if not nothing to effectively stop the occupation, recognize the right to self-defense and statehood, and restore peace in OPT. This round of escalation of violence is a clear indication of the need to take decisive actions to protect innocent civilian people in OPT. In this regard, in our letter to the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, we urged her Excellency, the Human Rights Council and its Special Procedures mandate holders, the General Assembly, and the Security Council to ensure necessary conditions for the decisive and swift actions in liberating and supporting the Palestinian people, against the continuous day light killing, as well as illegal, degrading and inhuman collective punishment.

Furthermore, we are expressing serious concern over various concerted efforts to prevent the world community from hearing voices from Gaza, through *inter alia* persistent legacy of the Israeli Security Forces' attacks against the journalists, civil society activists and human rights defenders. We call on your Excellency to undertake effective measures to cease and effectively prevent Israel's and other efforts in silencing and influencing the social media with the view to prevent the witness testimonies, voices and the video evidence content created by Palestinian people to reach the world community.

Considering the alarming situation and level of oppression in Gaza, and noting your Excellency's call on Israel "as the occupying power, to immediately lift its threat to evict hundreds of Palestinian households from their legally-protected homes", we encourage your Excellency to use all your capacity and resources at hand to effectively stop occupation of Palestinian people and their territories, help to recognize their right to self-defense and statehood, and restore peace in OPT. In this regard, we would like to request your Excellency to undertake a study of the exercise of the right to self-defense by people of Palestine and share your findings with the Human Rights Council in your next annual reports to the Human Rights Council and/or General Assembly.

In addition, we urge on your Excellency, in coordination with the Office of High Commissioner for Human Rights, to use all your capacity and resources at hand in supporting and conducting effective, transparent and independent investigation of the case against Israel, which was brought to the International Criminal Court by the State of Palestine. We urge the UN Human Rights Council's members to ensure allocation of necessary and if needed additional resources to your Excellency and the High Commissioner on those matters.

Finally, we encourage Your Excellency to continue and effectively increase your efforts in countering Israel's impunity for its persistent, systematic and blatant pattern of mass gross human rights violations, as well as violations of international law, international humanitarian law and all UN resolutions urging Israel to stay committed to its obligations under the international law.

Kind Regards,

Association d'amitié Euro-Arabe Syrian Medical Committee

Arab Women's Union in Norway

Communauté Palestinienne en Belgique

European Alliance for the Solidarity with the Palestinian Detainees

Follow up Committee for the Support of the Lebanese Detainees in the Israeli Prisons

Forum Démocratique Palestinien en Europe

Geneva Council for International Affairs and Development

German-Palestinian Women's Union

Group 194, Sweden

International Organization for Supporting the Rights of the Palestinian People

Khiam Rehabilitation Center for the Victims of Torture

Organisation for Defending Victims of Violence

Palestinian Community in Germany

Palestinian Community in Mönchengladbach

Palestinian Democratic Assembly in Denmark

Palstinain Democratic Gathring in Denmark

Palestinian Friendship Association Wuppertal

Palestinian Women's Association

Palestinian Roman Center

Palestnske forretning I vest Agder-Norway

Protection et Aide aux défenseurs des droits de l'homme (PADDH)

Right of Return Committees in Denmark

Right of Return Committees in Norway

Union of the Palestinian Community's, Institution's and Events in Europe