الشبكة العربية للمؤسسات الوطنية لحقوق الإنسان
The Arab Network for National Human Rights Institutions

Statement by Arab Network for National Human Rights Institutions

Rejecting Israeli Annexation plans in the occupied West Bank

Affirming its adherence to the rights of the Palestinian Arab people on its land, the Arab Network for National Human Rights Institutions (ANNHRIs) rejects Israeli threats and plans to annex parts of the West Bank lands occupied in 1967, including East Jerusalem, settlements and lands in its vicinity, the Jordan Valley and the Dead Sea region. The ANNHRIs also rejects the application of Israeli law on these occupied parts in the context of implementing the so-called "Deal of the Century." This "Deal" is a crime against the Palestinian people and a serious violation of the rules of international law, which affirm that the occupying forces should not annex lands they occupied in any way, and that every such action unilaterally taken by these forces, under any considerations, are void and have no legal effect. This is what the UN Security Council resolutions have emphasized on many occasions since 1967, especially in Resolution No. (2334) of 2016, which emphasizes that Israel's establishment of settlements in the occupied territories since 1967, including Jerusalem, has no legitimacy.

The Network considers that the actual Israeli occupation's control of the occupied lands has started since that time. Annexation has been gradually represented in the occupying forces' control over the entire Palestinian land, crossings, resources and natural wealth, and the incessant confiscation of lands for the purpose of building and expanding settlements. It has also been evident in a set of arbitrary policies and practices that are designed to undermine the ability of Palestinians to exercise their right to self-determination.

Plans of the Israeli occupation authorities to annex lands from the West Bank of area estimated at 30% means that the remainder of the land will stand as semi-cantons and scattered residential areas isolated from the outside world, surrounded and controlled by the occupation authorities and unfit for the establishment of a state. These areas are strategic for the future state of Palestine, as they include the most important potential for agricultural and industrial development and water resources and are vital for transportation and tourism. Furthermore, these areas include the only regional borders between Palestine and Jordan and many Christian pilgrimage and archaeological sites.

The Network believes that the implementation of the annexation plan will consecrate the Israeli military occupation of the Palestinian land, and will lead to the dismemberment of Palestinian land in the West Bank and the smothering of communication between its parts. Hence, this will lead to its conversion into residential isolates, thus negatively affecting the status of rights and freedoms, as well as all levels of Palestinian life. The danger of the annexation scheme is not in it being a serious violation of international law and of the principles of international humanitarian law and a reflection of a violation of the rights of the Palestinian people, but rather in the endeavor of the occupying power to end the possibility of establishing a Palestinian state in accordance with international legitimacy resolutions. Thus, the possibility of a two-state solution is undermined in a manner that threatens peace and security on the Occupied Palestinian Territory and will also undermine the possibilities of reaching a just and comprehensive settlement of the Palestinian issue.

The Network expresses its concern that the annexation decision will lead to the cessation of border communication with Jordan and the world since it will only be possible through the occupation authorities, and will tighten the occupation's control and sovereignty over the entire Palestinian land, sea and air. The annexation will enable the implementation of the "Deal of the Century" that adopts Israeli principles. Palestine will hence become the homeland of the Jewish people. The "Deal" consequently gives the green light to discrimination and control in order to expand the imposition of Israeli sovereignty, which could lead to the

dissolution of the Palestinian Authority in order to change its functional role, which will have major consequences on the life and rights of Palestinian citizens, especially in economic terms.

The Arab Network affirms its rejection of the "Deal of the Century" and calls on the international community to recognize the State of Palestine and grant it full membership in the UN. It also commends that the UNHCHR issues a report on companies and commercial activities related to settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, based on a mandate from the Human Rights Council in its decision issued in the March 2016. The ANNHRIs further calls for continuing the hard work to pressure the occupying power to apply and respect the principles of international humanitarian law and all international human rights conventions in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

Moreover, the Network calls for the necessity of facing the Israeli annexation plan through the international community and the UN organizations assuming their legal and moral responsibilities, taking serious and concrete practical measures in order to hold the occupying power accountable in accordance with international law and UN resolutions, and ending decades of impunity of the Occupation Forces expansionist policy, threats of annexation and its crimes committed against the Palestinian people. Holding the occupying power accountable for its violations of the principles of international law and human rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, imposing sanctions on it and following up on accountability procedures will be one of the most important steps to deter the occupying power and put an end to its impunity, blatant persistence, recklessness and violations of the rules of international law and the rights of the Palestinian people and its illegal practices in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, which is expected to worsen and grow if the annexation is actually implemented on the ground.

The Arab Network supports the steps and measures taken by the State of Palestine to confront the Israeli plans for annexation and settlement expansion. It also supports the Palestinian Authority for Human Rights and encourages it to continue carrying out its tasks in the context of the difficult challenges it is working under. The Network further calls on national human rights institutions and their regional and international networks to make effective efforts to influence their governments to reject the occupation's annexation plans and impose travel bans on settlers and settlement leaders to travel and prevent them from entering their lands. The Arab Network also calls on all stakeholders to plead, in coordination with the National Institution for Human Rights in the State of Palestine, in order to activate relevant decisions and recommendations issued by the UN system, including Security Council and Human Rights Council resolutions, and recommendations and decisions of treaty mechanisms.

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