Documentation of the Work of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (CEIRPP)
Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (CEIRPP)

Committee Staff

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
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<tr>
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Agenda

I. International Action for the Release of All Palestinian Political Prisoners
II. Promoting Cooperation through Shared Water Resources
III. Strengthening Partnerships with Civil Society

Report Segments adopted by the Committee

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<tr>
<th>Code</th>
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<tr>
<td>Report Segment A</td>
<td>International Action for the Release of All Palestinian Political Prisoners</td>
<td>17 votes in favor, 3 votes against, 0 abstentions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Report Segment B</td>
<td>International Action for the Release of All Palestinian Political Prisoners</td>
<td>15 votes in favor, 1 vote against, 4 abstentions</td>
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<td>Report Segment C</td>
<td>International Action for the Release of All Palestinian Political Prisoners</td>
<td>19 votes in favor, 1 vote against, 0 abstentions</td>
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<td>Report Segment D</td>
<td>International Action for the Release of All Palestinian Political Prisoners</td>
<td>10 votes in favor, 6 votes against, 4 abstentions</td>
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Summary Report

The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People held its annual session to consider the following agenda items:

1. International Action for the Release of All Palestinian Political Prisoners
2. Strengthening Partnerships with Civil Society
3. Promoting Cooperation through Shared Water Resources

The session was attended by representatives of 22 countries, and 1 observer. The first session opened with several statements concerning the adoption of the agenda. Discussions and attempts to set the agenda endured approximately two hours. On Sunday, the committee adopted the agenda of I, III, II, beginning discussion on the topic of “International Action for the Release of All Palestinian Political Prisoners.”

By Tuesday afternoon, the body presented 4 different approaches to handle the topic of Palestinian political prisoners. Among others, there was an attempt to ensure fair trials for all Palestinian political prisoners and another one focused on the improvement of living conditions of Palestinians under Israeli detention. Overall, the work was consensus driven always striving towards the ultimate goal of releasing all Palestinian political prisoners. However, debate sparked on the definition of political prisoners being the only controversial issue. In the evening, delegates actively participated in improving their working paper, alternating between formal and informal sessions.

On Wednesday morning, the Dais approved two working papers as draft report segments. During the first session, two additional working papers were approved by the Dais. Eventually three draft report segments were modified by friendly amendments. Right before voting procedure the committee decided consensually to change the order of the draft report segments, making draft report segment C to A. The committee adopted four draft report segments. Three segments were adopted by roll call vote. Overall, report segments represented a wide range of issues, including, fair trials for Palestinian political prisoners, a provisional strategy for enhancing the lives of prisoners, the importance of rehabilitation and reintegration for Political prisoners back into society and proposed investigation and a media campaign.
I. Introduction

A. FAIR TRIALS FOR PALESTINIAN POLITICAL PRISONERS

1. Palestine believes many of its citizens have been illegally and arbitrarily imprisoned or taken to Israel detention. At the end of January 2015, 455 Palestinian administrative detainees, human beings who are under detention without trial, were being held in facilities run by Israeli prison service. The unconditional release of all Palestinian political prisoners has been requested by Palestine, but has never been acknowledged by Israel. However, so far, there have been three rounds of releases.

2. Political prisoners are defined as human beings arrested for the expression of their political views or reflecting superordinate political aims. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (CEIRPP) sees a particular distinction between political prisoners and those individuals who commit unlawful acts with political motivation. However, the final goal of CEIRPP is the release of all Palestinian political prisoners.

3. The Working Group on Arbitrary Detention was created in 1991 by the Human Rights Council (HRC) to investigate cases where human beings faced arbitrary detention as well as treatment against international human right standards. So far, this group has not thoroughly evaluated the situation of Palestinian political prisoners within the Palestinian-Israeli conflict at large.

B. PROVISIONAL STRATEGY FOR ENHANCING THE LIVES OF PRISONERS

4. During its last reporting period, the Committee observed that the ongoing detention of 6,200 Palestinian political prisoners by Israel is a barrier impeding the peace process between Israel and Palestine. A successful peace process needs the support of the people, but the ongoing dispute about unlawful detention of Palestinian political prisoners is a continuous source of tension between the two parties. Therefore, the eventual goal will be to release all unlawfully detained prisoners. However, the committee recognizes that due to the violent escalation of the conflict in summer 2014 which caused more tensions between the two parties, a total and immediate release of all prisoners is diplomatically not feasible. Nevertheless, the committee continues to work towards a full release. At the same time the committee seeks to ensure the exercise of human rights of all Palestinian political prisoners by improving living conditions of those in detention.

5. The Committee is especially concerned by the report of the Addameer Prisoners’ Support and Human Rights Association regarding the living conditions of the 1,000 political prisoners suffering from various illnesses; among these are 180 with chronic diseases and 25 diagnosed with cancer. These prisoners do not only suffer from unfair detention but also from the poor living conditions. The widespread lack of medical care worsens the impact of the living conditions on prisoners’ health as addressed by General Assembly resolution 69/93 (2014). Additionally, Addameer reported that 53 prisoners have died as a result of medical neglect since 1967. Furthermore, the detention conditions may also cause psychological stress, which could impede reintegration into society. A failure to reintegrate released prisoners may lead to further instability in the region and may harm the peace process.

6. In this sense, the Committee recognizes the importance of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in particular Article 25, constituting the right to health. Furthermore, both Israel and Palestine are parties to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which also includes the right to physical and mental health in Article 12. The human right to health is universal, inalienable and equally guaranteed to all human beings. Consequently, Palestinian political prisoners have the right to health.
7. Among the prisoners, there are not only ill human beings but according to Addameer also 173 prisoners under the age of 18. Children and adolescents constitute the future of Palestine and the committee is convinced that the success of the peace process depends on the support from the young generation. Furthermore, since children and adolescents are still in the phase of physical and mental development, they are more affected by detention and poor living conditions. Therefore, they need special support.

8. The committee is worried about the large number of young people in detention not only because of health considerations but also because of their lack of access to education. While in prison minors cannot attend school and only have limited access to books written in Arabic. Education is a human right granted through Article 13 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights Education signed by Israel and Palestine. A lack of education has repercussions on the prisoners’ ability to reintegrate into and contribute to a peaceful society. Furthermore, the committee recognizes the importance of education for mutual tolerance, respect, and appreciation within a multi-ethnic society.

C. REHABILITATION AND REINTEGRATION FOR POLITICAL PRISONERS BACK INTO SOCIETY

9. CEIRPP draws attention to Human Rights Council resolution 25/29, which states that thousands of Palestinians, many of which are women and children, are held in Israeli prisons or detention centers. These facilities are unhygienic, lack proper medical care, and deny family visits and fair trials. CEIRPP is deeply concerned about the ill treatment of Palestinian prisoners and reports of torture.

10. This committee appreciates the action of the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), which reported on children in Israeli military detention in February 2013, noticing that the ill treatment is “widespread, systematic, and institutionalized”. Moreover, the report shows that “in no other country are children systematically tried by juvenile military courts that, by definition, fall short of providing the necessary guarantees to ensure respect for their rights.” Additionally, UNICEF has provided 38 specific recommendations to help Israel resolve its violations during detention, arrest and trial of children. These recommendations are very beneficial to the international community.

11. CEIRPP is in line with the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), in particular Article 9, which underlines the fundamental right of the child to “not to be separated from his or her parents against his will”, and particularly “where such separation results from any action initiated by a State party, such as the detention, imprisonment, exile, deportation or death”. The Working Group on Arbitrary Detention found out that there have been two specific cases in which minors were taken in the middle of the night and have been confined for over a year of administrative detention not knowing the charges against them and denying access to a lawyer or visits from their families.

12. CEIRPP believes that rehabilitation and reintegration are essential for a peaceful Palestinian state. Rehabilitation and reintegration allow for Palestinian political prisoners to gain necessary resources to return to their communities. Since many of the prisoners experienced psychological and physical trauma, the usage of rehabilitation will allow these individuals to create a brighter future for themselves and their families.

D. INVESTIGATION AND MEDIA CAMPAIGN

13. Many of the ongoing investigations carried out by Addameer in partnership with CEIRPP record the tortures and abuses suffered by Palestinian political prisoners while in detention, but there are no current ongoing investigations on the medical and psychological treatment of prisoners, especially those who die of their medical ailments while in prison or shortly after their release.

14. In 2014, the Committee furthered its cooperation with civil societies through the International Year of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. The Committee along with the Division of Palestinian Rights (DPR) organized a series of meetings and conferences aimed at mobilizing governments and civil society to collaborate with the Committee. Based on the massive amount of support, the International Year of Solidarity was able to galvanize support within the international community, especially using social media outlets like YouTube, Twitter, and Facebook, etc. having a great impact on global awareness and consciousness of world issues among citizens. The DPR among its various activities has participated in the creation of monthly bulletins of the United
Nations’ actions related to the question of Palestine, reports on meetings, and conferences, and the publishing, and dissemination of that information through websites, and social information networks.

15. The Committee acknowledges the importance of public mobilization and awareness in influencing the status quo in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict and the Question of Palestine. Political leaders shape their domestic, and foreign policies according to public opinion. As such the influence citizens have on their governments can be employed to incite these leaders to engage in policies promoting a peaceful resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and the respect of human rights, including those of Palestinian political prisoners.

16. Even though releases took place, released prisoners have faced and continue to face significant problems reintegrating themselves back into society upon their release. Some of these difficulties they face include a lack of resources for work and professional success, especially with regard to entrepreneurial opportunities. Such difficulties often lead to terrorist and extremist measures against Israel on the part of these release prisoners, eventually harming cooperation attempts between both the occupied Palestinian Territory and Israel, eventually damaging peace talks.

II. Mandate

17. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was established by the General Assembly by its resolution 3376 (XXX) of 10 November 1975, with the task of recommending a programme designed to enable the Palestinian people to exercise its inalienable rights, as recognized by the Assembly in its resolution 3236 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974. Further information is available on the website maintained by the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat at http://unispal.un.org/unispal.nsf/com.htm.

18. On 26 November 2013, the General Assembly renewed the mandate of the Committee (resolution 68/12), requested the Secretary-General to continue to provide the Division for Palestinian Rights with the necessary resources to carry out its programme of work (resolution 68/13) and requested the continuation of the special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat (resolution 68/14). The Assembly also adopted resolution 68/15, entitled “Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine”.

III. Conclusions and Recommendations

A. FAIR TRIALS FOR PALESTINIAN POLITICAL PRISONERS

19. If there is too little evidence on a case, CEIRPP is convinced that the Palestinian political prisoner needs to be released immediately. Any political prisoner defined as an individual convicted for the expression of their political views or reflecting superordinate political aims should be released unconditionally as detention or imprisonment in this case is unlawful. However, CEIRPP is convinced that not all Palestinian prisoners should be released, as there is a clear distinction between political prisoners and regular prisoners who carried out an unlawful act. Additionally, all prisoners deserve the right to a fair trial and this should extend to all Palestinian prisoners currently detained and potentially detained in the future.

20. The committee recommends having fair trials that include increased involvement of observers in particular of Palestine and the international community because it may provide a new perspective and greater objectivity. These observer states will have no voting power and will not affect Israel’s legal procedure. There should be a comprehensive system created to choose representatives from Palestine and the international community to join the Israeli court system as observers.

21. CEIRPP would welcome the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention to consider arbitrary detention of Palestinians in Israel. Furthermore, the committee would appreciate an initiated dialogue between Israeli authorities and the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention on the topic of Palestinian political prisoners.

B. PROVISIONAL STRATEGY FOR ENHANCING THE LIVES OF PRISONERS
22. The human right to health is not fully achieved for Palestinian political prisoners. Therefore, a fundamental change of the health care situation among Palestinian political prisoners is necessary. The committee recognizes that Israel’s capacities regarding the medical treatment of prisoners are limited and it is as such the responsibility of the international community to support improved health care for all prisoners.

23. To improve the health care situation of Palestinian political prisoners, the committee recommends to the Third Committee of the General Assembly to discuss the health care of Palestinian political prisoners. CEIRPP would welcome initiatives from the international community to improve the health of Palestinian political prisoners. In this sense, the committee has developed a project plan how to tackle the medical issues of imprisoned Palestinians. This project will focus on enhancing health care but should not be understood as an investigation.

24. The project CEIRPP proposes is called Healthcare for Enhancing the Lives of Palestinian Prisoners (HELPP). HELPP could be implemented by a suitable United Nations body. The project should include a minimum of 20 Arab speaking medical staff from countries of which both Palestine and Israel approve. The committee would advise the General Assembly to include medical doctors as well as psychologists in the project. Medical staff should serve on a rotating basis at locations in which Palestinians are detained.

25. The medical doctors should assess the state of prisoners’ health, provide adequate treatment, and serve as a confidant for detainees. Furthermore, they could also perform regular medical check-ups as a preventive measure to identify early symptoms of physical and mental ailments. The psychologists will be on-call for all prisoners in need of psychological counseling. The committee would like to see a reconfirmation of the confidentiality of medical records to prevent misuse of information.

26. The Committee would suggest that medical staff of HELPP write a collective semiannual report to the Third Committee of the General Assembly providing an overview over the state of health of all Palestinian prisoners and on the impact of living conditions on the wellbeing of prisoners. Furthermore, the HELPP project should cooperate with existing Israeli human rights non-governmental organizations (NGOs) currently involved with Palestinian political prisoners such as Physicians for Human Rights – Israel. The findings of NGOs could be incorporated into the final report of HELPP. The committee hopes that including Israeli NGOs will encourage balanced relations between the countries.

27. As education is not only a human right but also important for shaping a tolerant society, CEIRPP would appreciate if the international community would take action to ensure proper and equal education to Palestinian political prisoners. Therefore, the Committee recommends the General Assembly to discuss the topic of existing restrictions by Israel on literature in detention centers and prisons with the goal of lifting them.

28. Furthermore, the Committee would appreciate the General Assembly to recommend UNICEF to consider working on the issue of education for Palestinian political prisoners. CEIRPP would suggest initiating an education project with volunteer teachers from Israel and Palestine. The teachers should visit detention centers and prisons where Palestinians are held. The Committee would highly appreciate if the teachers provide basic education, classes in culture and history of the region as well as Hebrew language classes for prisoners under the age of 18. It is the hope of the Committee that such a project could enhance cultural tolerance among Palestinians as well as improve their education, which will facilitate their reintegration into society.

C. REHABILITATION AND REINTEGRATION FOR POLITICAL PRISONERS BACK INTO SOCIETY

29. CEIRPP supports the unconditional release of all children, pregnant women and terminally ill prisoners. It is essential to reintegrate children back into society at a young age, protect the health of women bearing children, and respect health conditions of the terminally ill. Moreover, the committee draws attention to the importance of reintegrating former youth detainees into society via rehabilitation centers and encourages the international community to stand behind these children as they go through this process.

30. To ensure a full rehabilitation after detention or imprisonment, CEIRPP emphasizes the importance of rehabilitation and reintegration of Palestinian political prisoners. UNRWA can be a supportive source of information dealing with traumatized and ill refugees. Specifically, UNRWA has expertise on education, and advice on reintegrating people into workforce and civil society. Additionally, physical and mental health need
to be addressed during rehabilitation. CEIRPP encourages the international community to financially contribute to the provision of infrastructure and resources to enable Palestine to support Palestinian political prisoners during the rehabilitation period after their detention or imprisonment.

31. CEIRPP endorses the usage of sports and other proactive group activities as a method of rehabilitation. Modeling off of The International Day of Sports for Development and Peace (IDSP), the committee encourages the usage of sports and teamwork to foster a community of support and developmental growth. The committee also stresses the importance of family communication, including the children’s mother during and after rehabilitation of minors.

32. CEIRPP encourages the DPR to improve the diffusion of information regarding the Palestinian cause, especially through the “Question of Palestine” website, including the United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine (UNISPAL). In addition, CEIRPP urges to further develop the power of Social Media through Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and RSS to upload news and data relating to the condition of political prisoners.

D. INVESTIGATION AND MEDIA CAMPAIGN

33. The Committee recommends that the General Assembly authorize the launching of an investigation spearheaded by the Palestine Red Crescent Society and Amnesty International into Israeli detentions and prisons detaining Palestinian political prisoners. This investigation would expand on ongoing investigations currently being carried out by Addameer in partnership with CEIRPP and focusing on the medical and psychological status of prisoners.

34. The Committee would welcome the launch of an official Media Campaign, following the tremendous potential that the International Year of Solidarity with the Palestinian People made in mobilizing international support for the Palestinian people. Subsequently, such efforts should be renewed and enhanced. Therefore, a new campaign would call attention specifically to those Palestinians detained under Israeli detention centers and prisons under political, national and other such unnamed charges. This campaign also aims to build on what the International Year of Solidarity with the Palestinian People has done for the rights of Palestinian people on social media such as Twitter, YouTube, Facebook, etc. but also to expand to emerging social media outlets such as Snapchat, which are useful, efficient, and make live reporting faster on the media front in high-risk and/or dangerous conflict-zones. Outlets like these are also safer and can protect the integrity of those who report it. Additionally, the committee proposes using the hashtag #FreePalestinianPrisoners.

35. The Committee calls upon the international community to introduce a foundation in which donations from CSOs, governments and/or Member States (that are interested in a peaceful two-state resolution), and individuals will be accepted to help these released prisoners start their own businesses, establishments, and other such entrepreneurial projects. Such projects will help not only reintegrate them into Palestinian society, but will also strengthen civil society and the economy as a whole.

36. The Committee and the DPR shall continue its efforts of monitoring and dissemination of information through meetings, conferences, publications and social media, and employ those already available channels to highlight specifically the plight of Palestinian political prisoners and the release of children from Israeli prisons and detention centers.