



CAIRO INSTITUTE
FOR HUMAN RIGHTS STUDIES
Institut du Caire pour les études des droits de l'homme
مركز القاهرة لدراسات حقوق الإنسان



Item 7 Oral Statement

23RD Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council

10 June 2013

Mr. President, honorable members of the Council,

This OI is delivered on behalf of al-Haq and the Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies.

We would like to express our alarm at the apparent inclination of the international community, including Member States of the United Nations (UN), to disregard accountability mechanisms in favour of concession-making as a means to secure Israel's cooperation.

In recent months, while proposed goodwill measures in peace negotiations between Israel and Palestine have required Israel to freeze its illegal settlement enterprise, Palestine has been required to desist from pursuing the realisation of its right to self-determination and its human rights agenda at the UN.

Despite ongoing efforts towards negotiations, however, Israel's settlement enterprise continues unabated. On 5 June 2013, the Hazeitim interchange, part of the 'E1' plan to link settlements to East Jerusalem and thereby divide the West Bank in two, was approved by the Jerusalem Local Planning and Building Committee.

Yet, in place of measures by the Council aimed at persuading Israel to respect its obligations as an Occupying Power, senior officials in the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs have publicly stated that they expect "political rewards in exchange for renewing ties to the Council".¹ Given the position of the United States, and more recently the European Union, with regard to standing Item 7, we express our deep concern that this essential forum for the Palestinian people to highlight Israel's persistent violations of international law will be used as a bargaining chip to persuade Israel to re-engage with the Council.¹

In January 2012 Israel became the first Member State to refuse to participate in its Universal Periodic Review (UPR). This decision not only resulted in Israel avoiding rigorous criticism of its violations of international law, but also risked undermining the entire process.

Member States of the Council must ensure that Israel does not receive concessions in return for its renewed cooperation, and thereby reassert that human rights are paramount to political and diplomatic considerations.

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<http://www.haaretz.com/news/diplomacy-defense/israel-to-negotiate-renewal-of-cooperation-with-un-human-rights-council.premium-1.519719>

The Council must further ensure full transparency in arranging Israel's UPR in the event of its expected reengagement, such that all stakeholders are aware in advance of Israel's intended attendance, thus providing for effective and meaningful engagement by Member States and civil society.