



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



- 30th special session of the Human Rights Council
- Joint Oral Intervention¹
- 27 May 2021
- Speaker: Maisaa Abo El-Ouf

Madam President,

I am Maisaa Abo El-Ouf, a Palestinian citizen. I miraculously survived the illegal targeting of civilian homes in the center of Gaza City. I am speaking to you today on behalf of thousands of Palestinians, to attain justice for the victims.

Eleven days ago on May 16, I was sitting with my family when we heard bombing and shelling. Within moments, the house collapsed, and I found myself and my family under the rubble. I screamed hysterically, hoping that someone would hear me, but no one did.

I lost my sisters Rawan and Shaima in front of my eyes under the rubble. Around me, my family were among the dead and wounded. 43 killed and 120 injured. They are not statistics. They were my family, friends, and neighbors.

The root causes can no longer be ignored. We have been forcefully displaced, strategically fragmented and placed into a system of racial and ethnic domination. This is apartheid. This is a War Crime. The Palestinians have been divided into Gaza, the West Bank and 48 sub-regions. In

¹ **Signatories with ECOSOC status:** Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR), Al Mezan, Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies (CIHRS), Al-Haq, Habitat International Coalition, Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counseling (WCLAC), Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), Human Rights and Democracy Media Centers SHAMS, The Palestinian Initiative for the Promotion of Global Dialogue and Democracy - MIFTAH, International Service for Human Rights (ISHR), CELS. **Signatories without ECOSOC status:** Jerusalem Legal Aid and Human Rights Center (JLAC), Community Action center- Al-Quds University, Civic Coalition for Palestinian Rights in Jerusalem.

each, the policies have the same goals – to impose Jewish-Israeli ethnic domination and control and deny our right to exist in the land we were born in, the right to choose our own destiny.

Today, I call on you, I demand – on behalf of those who have lost loved ones, or their homes, for those whose lives have been destroyed, for the children that have been murdered, and for my sisters -- you must put aside petty politics and double standards and support the resolution before you.

A permanent investigation is required because we are locked in a nightmare that has become permanently fixed - a prison where the guards bomb and kill whomever they want with complete impunity.

My sisters were not numbers, we are not political pawns - we are people trying to survive and live decent lives. Human beings, women and children, with hopes and dreams. I plead with you to push for justice, and to hold the perpetrators accountable and stop Israel's crime of apartheid against the Palestinian people.

To deny us protection and justice is to destroy any hope for peace.

Thank you.