



Date: 22 November 2016

Palestinian Human Rights Organizations Holds Press Conference on 3rd Legal Submission to ICC on Gaza Closure

Palestinian human rights organizations (Palestinian Center for Human Rights (PCHR), Al-Haq and Al Mezan Center for Human Rights) held today, 22 November 2016, a press conference to announce presenting the third legal submission to the International Criminal Court (ICC) titled as *"Gaza Illegal Closure: Persecution and Other Inhumane Acts Committed against Civilians as a Crime Against Humanity"*. The conference was held in PCHR's head office based in Gaza City and was attended by a large number of journalists.

Both of lawyer Raji Sourani, Director of PCHR, and Issam Younis, Director of Al Mezan, delivered speeches during the conference while Shawan Jabareen, Director of Al-Haq, held a meeting in the Hague with Prosecutor of the ICC, Ms Fatou Bensouda, to deliver the legal submission on behalf of the Palestinian human rights organizations. It should be noted this is the third legal submission of its kind to the ICC by the Palestinian human rights organizations.

Sourani stressed that the human rights organizations has pledged on behalf of the victims to neither forget nor forgive and to proceed with the prosecution of Israeli war criminals for all their crimes, including the Israeli closure imposed for nearly a decade that has turned the Gaza Strip into the world's largest open-air prison and resulted in a man-made disaster.

Sourani added that the human rights organizations' role before the ICC will not end here, however, there are further submissions on settlement activities and the harvest of human rights organizations' legal work before the Israeli judiciary.

Issam Younis added that today is a big day in the context of seeking justice for Palestinian victims in light of long-standing denial of justice within the Israeli judiciary. He considered resorting to the ICC as an indispensable step after the State of Palestine had acceded to the international conventions and ICC's Rome Statute.

Younis also said that the human rights organizations consider the ICC as a resort to grant justice. He hoped that ICC would seriously investigate the Israeli crimes and then move to the most important step that is starting the court proceedings. He said, "Where to achieve justice if not in the ICC?" Younis believes that the human rights organizations do not consider resorting to the ICC as a political conflict with the Israeli occupation, because the ICC was founded so that the victim and the criminal can square off. The liability and accountability are missing in this part of the world.

Raji Sourani, Director of PCHR, and Issam Younis, Director of Al Mezan



Shawan Jabareen, Director of Al-Haq, and Prosecutor of the ICC, Ms Fatou Bensouda.

