

## **UNHRC- BG**



## **SSN MUN 2018**

## **LETTER FROM THE EB**

Dear Delegates,

The Executive Board welcomes you to the simulation of the United Nations Human Rights Council at SSN MUN 2018. The Human Rights Council is a prominent body within the United Nations. The Special Session has been convened to address the extraordinary circumstances that persist in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the impacts that it has on the Human Rights situation in the region. As such, the executive board has prepared a study guide that covers several aspects of the agenda to aid your research. It is to be noted that the Background Guide is in no manner exhaustive and your research is not expected to be limited to the topics presented within.

We hope to see all of you prepared to the best of your abilities.

Regards,  
The Executive board.

**\*The council will follow UNA-USA Rules of Procedure. Deviations from procedure, if any, will be made at the discretion of the executive board to enhance the scope of debate.\***

## **2) THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL:**

The United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) is a United Nations System inter-governmental body responsible for promoting and protecting human rights around the world. Its 47 seats are filled by member states elected for three-year terms.

The UNHRC is the successor to the UN Commission on Human Rights (UNCHR) and is a subsidiary body of the UN General Assembly. The council works closely with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and engages the United Nations' special procedures.

The General Assembly established the UNHRC by adopting a resolution on 15 March 2006, in order to replace the previous UNCHR, which had been heavily criticised for allowing countries with poor human rights records to be members.

The UNHRC addresses human rights-related situations in all UN member states. The UNHRC also addresses important thematic human rights issues such as freedom of association and assembly, freedom of expression, freedom of belief and religion, women's rights, LGBT rights and the rights of racial and ethnic minorities.

### **The Mandate of the UNHRC :**

The mandate of the Human Rights council is established by the United Nations General Assembly resolution - A/RES/60/251 . The link for the same has been attached below for the delegates reference.

[https://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/docs/A.RES.60.251\\_En.pdf](https://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/docs/A.RES.60.251_En.pdf)

## **Agenda Overview:**

With the rise of occupation in 1967, Israeli authorities had begun to pursue a policy of physical, political and economic segregation of East Jerusalem from the rest of the occupied Palestinian territory (OPT), which continues apace today. Segregation strategies gained momentum during the last decade through measures that have altered the physical and demographic realities of the city and its predominantly Palestinian and Arab landscape. These include the city's annexation and the expansion of Jewish settlements in and around East Jerusalem, as well as the construction of the separation barrier.

The separation barrier, among other obstacles to movement, hinders movement into and out of East Jerusalem, cuts it off from the remainder of the West Bank, its natural hinterland, and hinders access to its markets and health services by Palestinian Jerusalemites now living on the other side of the barrier nominally under Palestinian Authority jurisdiction. Land expropriation by Israel and restrictions on Palestinian building activities have increased recently. Palestinians are only permitted to build on a limited part of the land area of East Jerusalem and face obstacles in obtaining building permits issued by Israeli municipal authorities.

The economy of East Jerusalem is not only affected by Israeli impediments affecting OPT generally. Many of the obstacles to the city's development are specific to the status of East Jerusalem as an occupied territory subsequently unilaterally annexed to Israel. Palestinian Jerusalemites are considered "permanent residents" under Israeli law, but only as long as they maintain their physical presence. The differential legal status of Palestinian Jerusalemites compared to Palestinians under Palestinian Authority jurisdiction and compared to Israeli settlers in East Jerusalem implies a host of further impediments, especially with regard to housing, employment, taxation and representation. Access to education and health is restricted, which affects the quality of the most

important Palestinian resource, human capital. Another key impediment to reviving the economy of East Jerusalem is the lack of access to finance due to occupation-related complications. Palestinian Jerusalemites receive a disproportionately small share of municipal services.

The weight of the economy of East Jerusalem has been steadily diminishing relative to that of the rest of OPT since the signing of the 1993 Declaration of Principles on Interim Self- Government Arrangements, known as the Oslo Accords, and related Israeli-Palestinian agreements. This decline, in large part, has been the result of an array of Israeli policies that have hindered development of the East Jerusalem economy as an integral part of the larger Palestinian economy and labor market. The deterioration in socioeconomic conditions has had a significant impact on Palestinian Jerusalemites in their standards of living, housing, health care and education.

Israeli policies have entailed a partial and distorted “integration” of the East Jerusalem Palestinian economy into Israel and its regulatory framework. Meanwhile East Jerusalem has been gradually detached from the rest of the Palestinian economy despite the city’s historic position as the commercial, transport, tourism, cultural and spiritual centre for Palestinians throughout the occupied territory.

In 2010, more than half of the East Jerusalem labor force worked in services, commerce, hotels and restaurants, while the construction and agricultural sectors accounted for less than one quarter of total employment. Unemployment rates reached record highs in the aftermath of the second intifada, which declined since but remained high nonetheless, along with systematically higher poverty rates among Palestinian Jerusalemites as compared to Israelis residing in the city.

Consequently, the East Jerusalem economy finds itself in a world quite apart from the two economies, Palestinian and Israeli, to which it is linked. It is at once integrated into neither, yet structurally dependent on the West Bank economy to sustain its production and trade of goods and

services and for employment, and forcibly dependent on Israeli markets to whose regulations and systems it must conform and which serve as a source of employment and trade and as the principal channel for tourism to the city.

These paradoxical relations have served to effectively leave the East Jerusalem economy to fend for itself in a developmental limbo, severed from Palestinian Authority jurisdiction and subordinated to the Jewish population imperatives and settlement strategies of Israeli municipal and State authorities. Just as the economic growth pattern and overall direction of the Gaza Strip in recent years has veered in a distinct and separate direction from that of the West Bank, so has East Jerusalem's economic trajectory diverged from that of the rest of the West Bank. These disturbing trends risk rendering redundant the notion enshrined in United Nations resolutions and the Oslo Accords, namely that the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem constitute a single territorial and legal entity. This in turn has critical implications for development prospects and eventual policy interventions in the East Jerusalem economy.

### **Human Rights Situation**

Compounding the increasing fragmentation and hollowing-out of a once vibrant and well-connected urban economy of East Jerusalem, social conditions have deteriorated in an unprecedented manner. The economy is battered by the same shocks affecting the rest of OPT in downturns, but hardly benefits from OPT's recovery in upturns. Furthermore, social conditions remain bereft of the same attention and resources that public authorities provide to Jewish communities in the western sector and in settlements in the east. An assessment of the complex and myriad challenges of East Jerusalem social development (welfare, municipal and social services, housing and related factors affecting Palestinian society) is beyond the scope of this report. However, to provide further context for understanding the distinct challenges faced by the Palestinian

economy in East Jerusalem, some pertinent aspects of social conditions are mentioned below.

**a) Palestinian labor and poverty in East Jerusalem**

Like any urban economy, Jerusalem has historically exercised a strong pull on Palestinian jobseekers, from different regions of the West Bank, before and after the Israeli occupation. A Palestinian agrarian population from the surrounding villages, especially of the southern, Hebron region, has looked to East Jerusalem as an alternative to increasingly limited land and rural employment opportunities.

**b) Population displacement and home demolitions**

The growing poverty and humanitarian need in the occupied Palestinian territory can be primarily attributed to the Israeli closure system, which restricts Palestinian access to health and education services, employment and social networks. Additionally, Israeli settlements, the confiscation of land and the construction of the barrier in the West Bank, which contradict the Geneva Conventions and other norms of international law, isolate occupied East Jerusalem, dissect the West Bank into dozens of enclaves and curtail normal economic and social life.

**c) Mobility restrictions and closure policies**

The imposition by Israel of a comprehensive closure regime is the main cause of deteriorating humanitarian and economic conditions in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. External closure consists of the control of crossings into and out of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, thereby sealing off these territories from Israel and the rest of the world. Internal closure consists of the use of such physical obstacles as earth mounds, trenches, roadblocks, concrete blocks, barbed wire, gates, restricted roads and manned checkpoints.

**d) Israeli settlements**

International law: The Fourth Geneva Convention prohibit an occupying power from transferring its own citizens to an occupied territory. The Hague Regulations prohibit an occupying power from making

permanent changes in an occupied area except for pressing and strictly military reasons, or unless they are undertaken for the benefit of the local population. The settlements are linked to each other and to Israel by an extensive road network. Palestinians for the most part are either prevented from using these roads or have only restricted access to them. The roads have also fragmented the West Bank into a series of isolated enclaves that Palestinians must access via alternative roads, checkpoints, bridges and tunnels that circumvent the roads reserved primarily for settlers.

#### **e) Natural resources, water and environment**

In July 2008, 84 million litres of raw and partially-treated sewage per day were being released into the sea along the coast of the Gaza Strip. Irregular fuel supplies and the lack of spare parts and materials have made it very difficult to treat sewage adequately before releasing it into the sea. In June 2008, the Coastal Municipal Water Utility (CMWU) received some supplies for the first time in more than a year, which enabled it to complete some delayed repairs. However, these supplies constituted only 10-20 per cent of what is required, and during July 2008, CMWU received 50,000 litres of diesel, which represents only 40 per cent of its monthly fuel requirements.

#### **f) Occupied Syrian Golan**

Israel uses approximately 500 square kilometres for cattle. Out of the 100 square kilometres of cultivated land, Syrian Arabs have access to only 20 square kilometres, while Israeli settlers have access to the remaining 80 square kilometres. Israeli settlements are reported to use a disproportionate quantity of water resources for domestic and agricultural purposes. Syrian citizens have restricted access to water, receiving only 20 per cent of their needs, which negatively affects the agricultural output of their land.



### **g) Restricted access to educational and health services**

Alongside access to health and cultural rights, educational opportunities play significant roles in the development of human capital, and consequently the development of the economy as a whole. The education system in East Jerusalem has been greatly affected by Israeli policy neglect.