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**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,
political, economic, social and cultural rights,
including the right to development**

Written statement* submitted by Al Baraem Association for Charitable Work, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[20 May 2022]

* Issued as received, in the language of submission only. The views expressed in the present document do not necessarily reflect the views of the United Nations or its officials.



Violations against Palestinian journalists and media professionals

Al Baraem Association for Charitable Work & The Monitoring Office of Journalists Support Committee (JSC) have documented a noticeable escalation of the Israeli occupation's attacks on press freedom in the occupied Palestinian territories for the year 2021, where (832) violations were recorded, the intensity of which increased in May 2021 during the aggression against The Gaza Strip, which amounted to (101) violations, and during the deterioration of security conditions in the occupied West Bank and Jerusalem.

Violations ranged from killing a journalist, (507) cases of attacks on journalists (targeting them with live and rubber bullets, stun grenades and noise bombs and toxic gases, beating them severely and releasing fierce dogs to attack them, in addition to luring and spraying dozens of journalists with sewage, to prevent them from covering news and enforce a media blackout. In addition, more than (116) cases of arrest, detention and house confinement were recorded, and more than (52) illegal arrests were extended. Adding up to hundreds of cases of cover-up and incitement bans, (5) cases of travel bans have been documented. The occupation forces also destroyed and closed more than (62) media outlets in the occupied Palestinian territories.

The digital content of Palestinian journalists and media professionals was also targeted, as more than 220 documented cases of digital rights violations of media pages were reported, as of temporary or partial blocking, permanent blocking, or complete ban up to deletion, under the pretext of "monitoring hate speech and violating the Community Standards", especially via Facebook and Instagram, while "7amleh's organization reported confirmed that inciteful content in Hebrew against Arabs and Palestinians has increased 15 times through these social media platforms within the same period of time, without any effective measurements taken.

A report, published by the JSC in May 2021 also revealed the involvement of Israeli spyware, the most famous of which is Pegasus, developed by the Israeli NSO Group, in threatening the lives and privacy of dozens of journalists (who were documented by names and details) in many countries of the Arab world, especially by selling these spyware to regimes with history of human rights violations. Also, "Project Pegasus" was released in July 2021, which revealed the involvement of the same malware in violating the privacy of hundreds of prominent personalities around the world and threatening their lives by facilitating their pursuit and follow-up. On the other hand, a study by JSC also documented the strict military censorship imposed by the Israeli occupation on the Israeli media.

With the assassination of Al-Jazeera correspondent Shireen Abu Akleh at the dawn of May 11th, 2022, while she was covering the Israeli forces raid in Jenin camp clearly wearing her PRESS vest and using the safety tools (helmet and others), the occupation proves its continuous policy of violating the rights to protect press freedom, the right to access information from its sources, follow up on events, and its insistence on evasion of responsibility and impunity for crimes committed against journalists.

With the number of victims of the press family increasing to more than 48 victims since 2000, the Journalists Support Committee (JSC), on the occasion of World Press Freedom Day on May 3rd, 2022, issued its annual report on violations of the rights to Press Freedom by Israeli Occupation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory during the first quarter of the year 2022, where more than 220 violations of press freedom were documented. The press circles were also buzzing with the campaigns against Arab journalists, Palestinian and Lebanese in particular, which led to their dismissal, suspension of dealings with them, or prompting them to resign in the German DW case, and in the case of advocating for the release of Palestinian prisoners in Israeli prisons campaigns in Canada and elsewhere. The number of journalists targeted by direct attacks has risen to more than 66, with various injuries from live and rubber bullets, and toxic gas canisters since the beginning of 2022.

In details, the frequency of violations remarkably increased during February 2022, as a result of the intensification of the occupation's attacks and preventing journalists from covering the demolition of the homes of Jerusalemites in the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood of occupied Jerusalem by the occupation's bulldozers, as well as beating, kicking, dragging them and

using them as human shields, in addition to higher number of arrests of journalists and issuing sentences to extend detention for journalist prisoners.

In the context of silencing and shadowing Palestinian content, especially against the occupation and its policies, many journalists have been subjected to violations by the administration of social networking sites, which since the beginning of this year amounted to more than (60) violations of media outlets' and journalists' accounts, (deleting, banning and restricting publishing options). In the context of blocking coverage and preventing the delivery of the Palestinian voice, the number of journalists in the occupation prisons increased to 19 without any clear charges being brought against them. The arrest and investigations of journalists Ayman Qawariq and Abd al-Salam al-Jamal, whose detention was extended by the occupation, continued without any charges

The Baraem Association and the Journalists Support Committee, reiterating the condemnation of the attacks on journalists and media outlets, which constitute a flagrant violation of International Humanitarian Law, which classifies them as civilian assets and criminalizes attacks on them and the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Fourth Geneva Conventions and the annexed protocols, in addition to the The Statute of the International Criminal Court, UN Resolution 2222 and other relevant international conventions demand international and human rights organizations, especially UNESCO and the International Federation of Journalists, to take immediate and urgent actions to pressure the Israeli occupation authorities to stop their violations of the rights of journalists and media professionals in Palestinian territories and to secure the necessary protection for journalists and media headquarters, as those attacks aim to impose a media blackout and deprive individuals of the right to access information from its sources and follow up on events.

In parallel, we also call on the concerned authorities, especially the International Criminal Court and UNESCO, to conduct prompt and transparent investigations into crimes and attacks committed against journalists, in accordance with the principle of ending impunity for crimes committed against journalists.

Journalist support committee, NGO(s) without consultative status, also share the views expressed in this statement.