UNITED NATIONS FORUM ON THE QUESTION OF PALESTINE

The threat of de facto annexation - What next for Palestine?

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BIO NOTES

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PANEL I

Mr. Raji Sourani is the Director of the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR) which he founded in 1995 with a group of fellow lawyers and human rights activists in the Gaza Strip. The centre provides legal and other services to victims of human rights abuses in the Gaza Strip to seek justice and reparation. Despite periods of political imprisonment in Israel, Mr. Sourani has maintained an unwavering commitment to promotion and protection of human rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. He has received many honors in his career including the Right Livelihood Award for 2013.

Ambassador (ret.) Ilan Baruch was until recently the policy advisor to the Chairperson of MERETZ. He has 36 years of diplomatic career which included overseas postings in Asia, Europe and Africa. Ambassador Baruch was a team member of the Israeli delegation to the Oslo Peace Interim Accords negotiations, and participated in various negotiations with the Palestinian Authority, Jordan and Egypt on economic agreements. Ambassador Baruch is currently the Chairperson of the Policy Working Group, a team of activists devoted to promoting a Middle East Peace Process based on the two-state paradigm. He is also an editorial board member of the Palestine Israel Journal and co-founder of a new cultural center start-up, the Palestine House in TLV.

Mr. Michael Lynk is the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967. Mr. Lynk is also Associate Professor of Law at Western University in London, Ontario. Prior to becoming an academic, he practiced labour law and refugee law for a decade in Ottawa and Toronto. He also worked for the United Nations on human rights and refugee issues in Jerusalem. Mr. Lynk has written widely on labour law and human rights issues in Canada, and published articles on the application of international law to the Middle East conflict. He has regularly acted as a labour arbitrator in Canada. Mr. Lynk
received his B.A. and his LL.B. from Dalhousie University, and completed his LL.M. at Queen’s University in 2001.

**Mr. Mouin Rabbani** is an independent analyst, commentator and researcher specialising in the contemporary Middle East. He is a Senior Fellow with the Institute for Palestine Studies. Previously he served as Principal Political Affairs Officer with the Office of the UN Special Envoy for Syria, Head of Middle East with Crisis Management Initiative/Martti Ahtisaari Centre, and Senior Middle East Analyst and Special Advisor on Israel-Palestine with the International Crisis Group. Rabbani is Co-Editor of Jadaliyya, Contributing Editor of Middle East Report, Associate Fellow of the European Council on Foreign Relations, and Policy Advisor to Al-Shabaka - The Palestinian Policy Network. A graduate of Tufts University and Georgetown University’s Center for Contemporary Arab Studies, Rabbani has published, presented and commented widely on Middle East issues, including for most major print, television and digital media.

**PANEL II**

**Ms. Emily Schaeffer Omer-Man** is a human rights lawyer based in Tel Aviv. Prior to founding a new law practice in 2018 that brings strategic litigation abroad against human rights violations committed under the Israeli occupation, she served as senior counsel and acting director of the Michael Sfard Law Office. Alongside Attorney Sfard, she litigated constitutional challenges before the Israeli Supreme Court, including representing the West Bank Village of Bil‘in in reclaiming land annexed by the Wall and successfully challenging the IDF’s use of white phosphorus in Gaza. Emily served as legal counsel to the Israeli human rights NGO Yesh Din, where she represented over 500 Palestinian victims of crimes committed by Israeli soldiers and police. She also provided legal counsel to human rights defenders and leading human rights organizations, among them Breaking the Silence, Peace Now, Who Profits, the Palestinian Center for Human Rights, Al-Haq, and Human Rights Watch.

**Senator Frances Black** is an Independent Senator in the Seanad Éireann (Irish Senate), singer and founder of the RISE Foundation, a charitable organisation working with people with a loved one in addiction. A strong advocate for social justice and equality. In January 2018 she tabled the Control of Economic Activity (Occupied Territories) Bill, which would prohibit the import and sale of goods, services and natural resources originating in illegal Israeli settlements in Occupied Palestinian Territory. The bill – the first in the EU - has been passed by the Irish Senate and is currently being debated by the Lower House of Parliament.

**Conor O’Neill** is a researcher and policy advisor in Seanad Éireann (Irish Senate). He worked with Senator Frances Black in preparing and progressing the Control of Economic Activity (Occupied Territories) Bill, which would restrict certain Irish commercial involvement with Israeli settlements in Occupied Palestinian Territory, in response to sustained violations of
international law. His other recent parliamentary work has focused on issues of justice, migration and the rights of asylum seekers. Previously he worked in the EU institutions and with rights-based NGOs in Brussels. O’Neill has a B.A. in Business & Political Science and an M.Sc. in International Politics from Trinity College, Dublin.

**Mr. Ziad AbuZayyad** is an attorney at law, who graduated from Damascus University in 1965. He is the co-editor and co-publisher of the *Palestine-Israel Journal of Politics, Economics and Culture*, which he co-founded in 1994 with prominent Israeli journalist Victor Cygielman as a joint Palestinian-Israeli venture. He is also the weekly columnist of *Al-Quds*. Mr. AbuZayyad was also a former member of the Palestinian Legislative Council, former Minister of State in the Palestinian Authority, and former Deputy Chairman of the Political Committee of the Euro-Med Parliament. He was also the advisor to the Palestinian negotiating team in Washington, D.C., in 1992, and later a member of the post-Oslo negotiating team that concluded the 1994 Israeli-Palestinian Agreement (“Cairo Agreement”). He co-authored *The West Bank Political Lexicon* and co-edited the book *Islamophobia and Anti-Semitism*.

**Ms. Marya Farah** is a Legal Researcher & Advocacy Officer at Al-Haq, an independent Palestinian non-governmental human rights organisation based in Ramallah, West Bank, that documents violations of the individual and collective rights of Palestinians in the OPT, irrespective of the identity of the perpetrator, and seeks to end such breaches by way of advocacy before national and international mechanisms and by holding the violators accountable. Her current focus is on Israel’s policies of transfer of Palestinians from Jerusalem, and business and human rights issues in the OPT. Prior to joining Al-Haq, she worked with the International Commission of Jurists in Geneva and Cairo on issues related to the rule of law, independence of the judiciary, and human rights in the MENA region.

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