

Delegation from the Kingdom of Bahrain
Position Paper for the United Nations Human Rights Council

The Delegation from the Kingdom of Bahrain is looking forward to dedicated deliberations in the Human Rights Council (HRC) upon the topics of I. *Equitable Access to Safe Drinking Water as a Human Right*, II. *Human Rights of Unaccompanied Migrant Children and Adolescents* and III. *The Human Rights Situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory*.

I. Equitable Access of Safe Drinking Water as a Human Right

The Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967 mentioned in his report on the human rights situation in oPt (40/73), "Water is an indispensable precondition for life". As he then continues describing the collapse of the last natural water source in the Gaza and the destruction of water infrastructure in the south Hebron hills, the life threatening situation in oPt due to water scarcity becomes undeniable, proving that the human right of access to safe drinking water is still not materialized globally.

Article 6 of the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* (ICCPR) and Articles 11 and 12 of the *International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights* (ICESCR) from 1966 already closely link human rights to the accessibility of safe drinking water. Thus, to derive access to safe drinking water as a human right makes combatting unjust and inhumane living conditions around the world easier. Consequently, by acknowledging the access to safe drinking water as a human right in resolution 15/9 in 2010, after deliberations with Special Rapporteur on the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation, the HRC enabled Member States to tackle the issue of scarce water supply more effectively. In the mostly arid regions of the members of the OIC, the matter of a hygienic, sufficient and accessible water supply has been addressed multiple times. After the final meeting of the Islamic Conference of Ministers responsible for Water (ICMW) of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), a plan of action was implemented, successfully enhancing water infrastructure throughout the region by implementing a regional framework to coordinate efforts for efficient implementation of the OIC Water Vision. In support of the materialization of the plans, the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) contributes financially with the *IsDB Strategy for Water Resources Sector*, while the OIC Water Council coordinates the activities. Being part of this regional framework, Bahrain encourages other regional organizations to follow this example to successfully implement measures to improve water supply. As a kingdom in an arid region Bahrain is familiar with multiple sustainable measures to cope water scarcity through technological advancement.

To improve the implementation of the human right of access to water around the world, Bahrain wants to shift the focus towards the most urgent situations. Therefore, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967 and Special Rapporteur on the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation should work on a first joint report upon the situation of water supply within the oPt, giving concise policy advice to the different United Nations (UN) bodies, considering their mandate, on how to improve the humanitarian situation in Palestine by assuring a safe water supply. This report should be presented to the HRC by 2022, leaving the HRC time to make recommendations to other UN bodies to successfully implement the advice. The collaboration will be considered successful, if the policy advice helps to directly improve the water supply situation in the oPt until 2027. With this promising approach, the HRC should consider more collaborations. An example for this could be a joint work between the Special Rapporteur on the right to development and Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967.

II. Human Rights of Unaccompanied Migrant Children and Adolescents

As a state open for migrant workers, clear policies are important to protect humans from trafficking and children from being abused. As the UN High Commissioner on Refugees mentioned in the *Global Trends – Forced Displacement in 2017* 173,800 migrant children were migrating unaccompanied, exposing themselves to dangerous situations and abuse while 800,000 underaged are facing threats do to ongoing conflicts in the occupied Palestine territories (oPt).

Based on General Assembly (GA) resolution 71/1 the *New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants* of 2016 has enabled real progress towards the protection of the rights of migrants, paying particular attention to the special vulnerabilities of migrating children and women. Parallely, 2016 the HRC passed resolution 33/7 to better understand the human rights violation young migrants are confronted with, encouraging Member States to report to the Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families information about unaccompanied migrant children. Moreover, at the 4th session of the Islamic Conference of Youth and Sport Ministers (ICYSM) the Outcome Document of the *International workshop on the Role of the Youth in Facing Migration Challenges*, held in collaboration with the UN International Organization of Migration (IOM), as well as the *OIC Youth Strategy* were discussed with aspiration while constructing the *Joint Youth Action Plan*,

adopted in resolution 4/4. Simultaneously, the Kingdom of Bahrain is constantly improving its migration policies in accordance with the 2002 National Plan of Action to counter trafficking and prevent abuse of migrants. This plan also included the establishment of a *Dar Al Aman Home*, providing shelter to abused children and women.

With many regions actively working on implementing better policies to protect the rights of unaccompanied migrant children, it seems like internally displaced migrant children are often left out of discussions. Thus, the HRC should ask Special Rapporteur on the rights of internally displaced persons (IDPs) to publish a special report until the end of 2021 upon the situation of internally displaced children and adolescents in areas of conflict, including the occupied Palestinian Territory. The report should include the information sent by member states to the formerly mentioned Committee. Further, the HRC should encourage states to grant the Special Rapporteur access to the concerned areas, to enable a comprehensive and objective analysis. Based on the report, the HRC should make recommendations to other UN organs to enable adequate protection of internally displaced underage migrants.

III. The Human Rights Situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory

In 2019 the humanitarian situation in the oPt further deteriorated after several events throughout the year. Newly constructed water infrastructure was destroyed, leaving over 30.000 people without connection to a water network. Further, access to medical treatment was denied to people critically in need, whilst the Israeli-Palestinian conflict intensified once more. The international community should therefore reaffirm its commitment to international declarations and urge towards a peaceful solution of the conflict.

Since the occupation of Palestine and other territories 1967 several resolutions by different organs of the UN determined to resolve the conflict by finding a peaceful solution abiding international law. In 1968 the GA established the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories by passing Resolution 2443, which reports to the GA about the Israeli practices concerning the Human Rights situation in the region. Further, in 1993 the Human Rights Committee appointed the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian Territory occupied since 1967, to examine human rights violations in Palestine and the oPt. However, so far, the Special Rapporteur has yet to receive official access by Israel to actively participate in field work to examine the situation. Beyond, official Israeli representatives have yet to answer his request for dialogue, thus obstructing initiatives to resolve the conflict, as he mentioned in his report to the HRC on the human rights situation in the oPt (40/73). In this report the Special Rapporteur further emphasizes that after the continuing blockade of the Gaza region by Israel, the Palestine economy in the Gaza has almost entirely collapsed which not only discriminates the people's right to self-determination, it also results in the complete lack of simple socioeconomic rights, causing more and more people in the region to suffer from mental health disorders. So far, his recommendations to the Israelis Government were not answered with action by the Government of Israel. Instead infringement upon the Palestinians right to self-determination, demolition of infrastructure and private property, violation of international law and moves towards annexation continued. Working towards finding peaceful solutions, the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (CEIRPP) in cooperation with the OIC regularly convene for conferences concerning the question of Jerusalem. Aware of the need for dialogue, the League of Arab States' Permanent Representatives and the Members of the EU Political and Security Committee therefore convened for their 8th meeting in January, emphasizing their mutual interest regarding a comprehensive peace in the Middle East, particularly concerning the question of Palestine. In the light of finding a peaceful solution, the Arab League additionally reaffirmed their commitment to the Arab Peace Initiative in 2017, advocating a two-state solution. More generally, as a tolerant kingdom, Bahrain, hosting a synagogue and a Jewish community in its capital, acknowledges freedom of religion and coexistence, as proven by the "This is Bahrain"-Delegation, which advocated for peace and tolerance immediately after renewed protests when the issue of the location of Israel's capital resurfaced.

In the name of religious coexistence and international law the Kingdom of Bahrain reaffirms its support towards the brotherly people of Palestine and the two-state solution as advocated by the Arab Peace Initiative. To achieve a comprehensive and sustainable peace, the HRC should encourage Israel to grant the Special Rapporteur official access to the oPt, so he can contribute to the fieldwork for an unbiased perspective. Reminding of the deteriorating human rights situation in Palestine due to the actions taken by Israel, solving this conflict becomes more urgent every day. Therefore, the HRC should additionally recommend the General Assembly to consider a new annual joint conference initiated by the CEIRPP, focusing on the topic of the human rights situation in oPt with the objective to encourage new partnerships between Member States that would actively contribute towards fulfilling the Palestinians right of self-determination.