



הארגון הבינלאומי של עורכי-דין ומשפטים יהודים (ע"ר)
THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF JEWISH LAWYERS AND JURISTS (R.A.)

Mr. Michael Møller
Director-General
United Nations Office in Geneva
Geneva, Switzerland

May 25, 2014

Subject: Re: The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People
United Nations Roundtable on the Legal Aspects of the Question of Palestine
Convened at the 33 UN Office in Geneva, 24-25 April 2014

Reply to reference letter of May 7, 2014

Dear Mr. Møller:

The International Association of Jewish Lawyers and Jurists, a UN-accredited NGO with ECOSOC status, would like to address the above-referenced matter and reply to your letter of May 7, 2014.

We wish to thank you for your prompt reply to our queries on the matter. Nonetheless, we are of the opinion that the answers and clarifications provided by the Division for Palestinian Rights in the United Nations Headquarter do not adequately address the issue. We are of the view that although the Committee might have complied with its specific procedures and work guidelines, these do not provide adequate transparency of its work in general and specifically in relation to the roundtable held in April.

As a general and preliminary remark, we note that a thorough review of the Committee's website does not provide any information about its procedures, nor does it include information regarding the possibility of NGOs participating in the Committee's work or how to obtain accreditation to the Committee. In that sense, NGOs that are not acquainted with the work of the Committee, or directly connected and contacted by it, have no way of gathering information on its work.

Further, information on holding a roundtable as part of the Committee's programme of work did not specify that it would be held as a private meeting (for most of its parts). Indeed such a format is different from previous meetings held by the Committee. This in itself, however, does not imply that it will be closed to participation of those who are not members or observers of the

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Committee. Such information was provided only a week before the actual meeting was held. In addition, and as already mentioned in our correspondence of May 4, any announcement of the roundtable being convened or its format was not properly and formally transmitted to NGOs operating in Geneva; rather, it was posted only on the Committee's website.

We submit that as full access to the Committee's work is not provided to NGOs, or to non-members and non-observers, the Committee should comply with strict guidelines of disclosure and scrutiny of its resolutions, documents and work products. This, in our opinion, will ensure full transparency of the Committee's activities, actions and decisions. Therefore, we urge the Committee to provide a detailed report on its work.

Lastly, we wish to indicate that in any event, the topics covered by the mandate of the Committee are highly sensitive and volatile. Any information, decisions and resolutions discussed by the Committee affect a wide range of States and situations. Holding a round table by a UN Committee covering such issues without ensuring its transparency, impartiality (or at least the appearance thereof) and later the possibility to analyze and review its outcomes is problematic and harms the neutral appearance of the UN and its bodies.

We hope that our letter and remarks will lead the Committee to reassess and improve its procedures and working guidelines. We await the detailed report of the Committee on its recent activities.

Sincerely,

Irit Kohn
President

Cc: Mr. Ban Ki-Moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations