

Geneva International Centre *for* Justice

**Summary of 2019 Annual
Report**

1. Human Rights Council

40th Session of the UN Human Rights Council

Oral Statements

GICJ, along with the International Organization for the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, International-Lawyers.org, and the Union of Arab Jurists, delivered 19 joint oral statements.

Thematic Issues

Environment

GICJ and International-Lawyers.org delivered two joint statements concerning the environment.

GICJ noted in its first statement that 92% of pollution-related deaths occur in low- and middle-income countries. Solutions that will not hinder upon the economic growth of developing countries must be found.

In a second statement, the organization stressed the urgent need for action to ensure compensation to the victims of environmental damage to life and property, as well as the need for an International Court of Climate Justice.

Peace and Security

The GICJ stated that the events in Iraq, Yemen, and Venezuela reminded us that the United Nations must address humanitarian crises, end conflicts, and achieve peace through peaceful means and without military intervention.

Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia, and Related Forms of Intolerance

During the General Debate, the GICJ addressed the rise of hate speech around the world. First, along with International-Lawyers, the GICJ urged the Council to increase efforts to eliminate racism and quash violence-inciting hate speech at every level, and promote justice for all survivors of hate-based violence.

Second, jointly with EAFORD, the GICJ highlighted the importance of domestic legislation aimed at defining and criminalizing racist and xenophobic hate speech in accordance with international standards.

Finally, GICJ appealed to all nations and individuals to combat the rising tide of anti-Islamic, anti-migrant, and anti-other sentiments.

Country-Specific Issues

Central African Republic (CAR)

While commending the CAR for its developments amidst an armed crisis; GICJ and EAFORD jointly raised concerns about perpetrators who continue to enjoy impunity for crimes of sexual and gender-based violence as well as justice for the victims of such crimes. GICJ urged the government to strengthen its justice system and to speed progress in opening further investigation into such crimes.

China and Myanmar

GICJ and EAFORD called for urgent action to be taken to address serious human rights situations in China and Myanmar. The two organizations called on the Council to continue to investigate and address these situations. GICJ also urged China and Myanmar to allow UN special procedures to visit their countries.

Jordan

EAFORD and Geneva International Centre for Justice encouraged the Jordanian Government to continue working on the effective implementation of the Comprehensive National Human Rights Plan until 2025, and to strengthen programmes aimed at building capacity for legal professionals in application of the standards of international organizations relating to women's rights and to provide shelter services and protection to vulnerable women threatened with honour crimes.

Iran

EAFORD and Geneva International Centre for Justice jointly called on Iran to end the practice of executing minors and to address the legitimate needs of its people, including the Arab population of Al Ahwaz. In addition, GICJ appealed to Iran to work toward peace in the region by ending its support of militias in Iraq and Yemen.

Iraq

GIJC made two joint statements with the Union of Arab Jurists. First, the Organization urged the Council to encourage all special mandate holders to urgently visit Iraq, and to create the mandate for a Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in Iraq to

monitor and report on the situation. GICJ also urged the Council to listen to the Iraqi people, who demand an end to the human rights tragedy that has lasted for 16 years.

The second joint statement drew the Council's attention on the human rights situation in Iraq where massive, grave and systematic violations keep occurring daily since the US invasion of 2003, and recommended the creation of a Special Rapporteur for Iraq.

Mali

GICJ supported the Independent Expert in urging Mali to enact a law which incriminates all gender-based violence, including female genital mutilation. In order to fight impunity, EAFORD and GICJ called upon all states to support Mali, not only by providing financial support, but also by helping to develop the country's capacity to establish an independent and effective criminal justice system.

Occupied Palestinian Territory

EAFORD and GICJ submitted two written statements regarding the Occupied Palestinian Territories. First, in response to the violation of rights of Palestinians to preserve their natural resources, the organizations called on Israel and the international community to enforce international humanitarian law by ensuring Palestinian civilians have effective access to justice to protect their lives, their communities, and their country.

In a second written statement, GICJ then drew the attention of the Council to the discriminatory and inhumane segregation system the Palestinian people are facing, maintaining that it constitutes the crime of Apartheid according to the Rome Statute. GICJ therefore called on the Council to take all the necessary actions to end the discrimination and segregation of Palestinians, and to support the right of self-determination of the Palestinian people.

Sudan

Grave human rights violations and abuses that amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity continue to ravage the country and perpetrators continue to enjoy impunity. GICJ urged the government of South Sudan to enhance its communication with the UN Special Procedures, and the international community, in order to provide reparations and justice for victims.

Syrian Arab Republic

GICJ highlighted the responsibility of each State to hold the perpetrators responsible of the atrocious crimes that civilians in the Syrian Arab Republic have had to face. Such accountability is a precondition for a sustainable peace in Syria.

Venezuela

The joined statement expressed its concern about the growing calls for military intervention in Venezuela, as well as the calls for sanctions that will lead to the starvation of the population and the collapse of the healthcare system. GICJ agreed with the Special Rapporteur on the negative impact of the unilateral coercive measures, and that dialogue should be the foundation of peaceful settlement of disputes.

Written Statements

GICJ submitted 12 joint written statements with other NGOs, covering specific country situations prior to the 40th Regular Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council (HRC).

Central African Republic

Armed groups in CAR have been mostly targeting innocent civilians and basic facilities including sites where displaced people take shelter. As such, the GICJ recommended that the Human Rights Council create a fund to support technical assistance and capacity for the judiciary system and education, as well as provide human rights training to government authorities and security forces.

Iraq

The GICJ submitted three written statements concerning Iraq. First, following the government use of its Anti-Terrorism Law (Law No. 13 of 2005) to justify occurrences of arbitrary arrests, executions, enforced disappearances and torture, GICJ recommended that the government of Iraq create a new law against hate speech, ban militias, and provide justice and remedies for victims of discrimination.

Second, GICJ recommended that the UN establish an independent international commission of inquiry to look into the human rights situation in Mosul. Furthermore, the Organization recommended that Iraq join the International Criminal Court, ensure the protection and support to victims of human rights violations in Mosul, as well as dedicate resources to begin rebuilding the city.

Finally, the examples of Mehdi Salah and Ghassan Abdul Hussein, detained and beaten, as well as Souad Al-Ali and Abdul Kareem, killed in broad daylight, serve to highlight the danger faced by human rights defenders.. GICJ strongly recommends that the government of Iraq cease punitive actions against human rights defenders, hold perpetrators accountable, and disband all militias.

Myanmar

GICJ urged the government of Myanmar to allow for immediate and unimpeded humanitarian access, grant safe return and citizenship to Rohingyas, and investigate and punish the perpetrators of sexual violence against Muslim women and girls. Furthermore, GICJ called upon the members of the Security Council to immediately refer the case to the International Criminal Court.

Palestine

GICJ delivered four written statements concerning Palestine. First, the GICJ recommended that the UN Commissioner for Human Rights ensure the protection and support for health workers in war zones and improve access to healthcare services. Governments were urged to ensure the effective integration of core human rights obligations into housing and social policies.

Second, with regards to the ongoing situation in Gaza, the GICJ called the international community to strongly condemn the indiscriminate use of lethal force on unarmed demonstrators, and to take appropriate measures against the impunity of Israeli soldiers regarding clear violations of international law. In addition, the Organization urged the appropriate UN bodies to promote respect of the fundamental rights of peaceful assembly and expression of the Palestinian people, as well as commit to protecting medical infrastructure and the right to health and medical care in Gaza.

Third, concerning the policies and practices of racial oppression and segregation faced by the Palestinian people due to a complex Israeli occupation system, the GICJ called upon the international community to end such segregation, and take a clear position against Israel's decision to end the Temporary International Presence in Hebron. All the Member States must satisfy their legal duty to prevent these segregations.

GICJ finally recommended that all UN bodies implement UN General Assembly Resolution 181 concerning the status of Jerusalem. It further recommended that the international

community to put pressure on Israel to stop biased media campaigns, house searches and raids, administrative detentions, and intimidation.

Sudan

Among its recommendations, GICJ urged the government of the Republic of Sudan to remove all national laws that restrict the right to associate and peacefully assemble, as well as promote the latter.

Tunisia

While recognizing progress, GICJ encouraged the Tunisian government to extend and further develop the mandate of the Truth and Dignity Commission, elaborate a strategic plan against de-radicalization, as well as initiate and maintain a dialogue with its civil society on social grievances and economic concerns.

Yemen

GICJ recommended that all states comply with the Security Council's travel, finance and military supply embargo against the Houthi militia and its allies, support the legitimate government of Yemen in its search for a peaceful resolution to the crisis, and avoid actions that may prolong the conflict.

GICJ's Co-sponsored Side Events

On 19 March 2019, GICJ and partner organizations hosted an event on the exploitation of Palestinian natural resources by Israel, featuring two prominent experts: Mr. Michael Lynk, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, and Mr. Alfred de Zayas, Former United Nations Independent Expert on the promotion of a democratic and equitable international order.

41st Regular Session of the UN Human Rights Council

Oral Statements

GICJ, along its partners, delivered 21 joint oral statements.

Thematic Issues

General Debate

Jointly with EAFORD and International-Lawyers.org, GICJ's first statement in the General Debate addressed the ongoing discrimination against women in the workplace and the

overall responsibility of businesses to respect human rights. The second statement specifically considered how extractive industries perpetuate racism and colonialism.

Environment

GICJ and EAFORD delivered a joint statement drew the Council's attention to the human rights impacts of climate change, specifically the need for gender sensitive responses, as well as called upon the States to strengthen gender mainstreaming in climate change response activities.

Human Rights Defenders

GICJ partnered with Kayan Feminist Organization and EAFORD to deliver two joint statements, the first drawing the attention of the Council to the treatment of Human Rights Defenders by Israel that has deteriorated steadily over the years and has now reached an alarmingly serious point.

GICJ also expressed its concern about the ongoing human rights situation in the Central Mediterranean and the growing criminalisation of NGOs activities in this area by several States, some of which are currently serving as members of this Council.

Migrants

GICJ and EAFORD delivered a joint statement concerning female migrants during an interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants. The statement recommended to member states to ensure that opportunities to promote safe and regular migration, consider gender factors, and to implement an adequate special prosecution unit for all perpetrators human rights abuses against migrant women and girls.

Racism, Xenophobia, and Related Forms of Intolerance

Two written statements were submitted on this topic. GICJ expressed grave concerns about the increasing phenomenon of hate speech and called on the Council to encourage world leaders to be committed to international treaties and avoid hate speech, preventing incitement to violence and atrocity crimes.

In a second statement, the organization advocated for the Council to take strong action to prevent impunity for perpetrators of such crimes.

Country-specific Issues

Afghanistan

Along with International-Lawyers.org, GICJ delivered two joint statements concerning the UPR review of Afghanistan. The first statement addressed violence against women and gender-based crimes and recommended that Afghanistan reinforce its measures protecting women and girls from violence, and increase access to Justice. The other statement, with EAFORD, discussed the need to combat impunity for human rights violations through investigations and prosecution of crimes, as well as provide for legal remedies and protection for civilians.

Burundi

EAFORD and GICJ called for an investigation into human rights violations committed by the Imbonerakure, and immediate measures toward the protection of the right to freedom of expression, association, and peaceful assembly.

Central African Republic

GICJ called for the full respect and application of sanctions in the event of human rights violations, and recommended greater participation of the population through consultations, especially of the most vulnerable as women, children, elderly, disabled people and ethnical minorities.

Iraq

GICJ delivered two joint statements concerning the human rights situation in Iraq. EAFORD and GICJ first requested that the High Commissioner further investigate gross human rights violations due to a dysfunctional judicial system. The second statement urged Council to examine the situation and take the necessary measures to stop wide scale torture and unfair applications of the death penalty.

Myanmar

GICJ joined with EAFORD and International-Lawyers.org to deliver two joint statements concerning the human rights situation in Myanmar.

First, GICJ recommended that national authorities to effectively prosecute hate speech against all religious and ethnic minorities, and put an immediate end to the violation of the freedom of worship for Muslims living in Myanmar.

GICJ urged, in a second statement, prompt action by the Prosecutor or the International Criminal Court is need in order to hold perpetrators to account for violations, as well as cooperation by Myanmar authorities on the matter.

New Zealand

In two joint statements, GICJ encouraged New Zealand to continue its efforts in improving its legislations regarding the rights of minorities. It strongly recommended the New Zealand Government to eradicate discrimination against Maori by tackling social inequalities in health, housing, employment, education and access to Justice, as well as addressing sexual and domestic violence.

Occupied Palestinian Territories

GICJ and Kayan submitted oral written statements with regards to the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. They called upon the Council to take prompt action against the widespread phenomenon of hate speech in Israeli society and put pressure on Israel to implement the Durban Declaration and the Rabat Plan of Action, and restate the fundamental right to self-determination of the Palestinian people.

In its second written statement, GICJ also called upon the Council to pressure Israel to terminate illegal settlements and discrimination against the Palestinian people, as well as take measures to protect women who have faced sexual harassment and other abuses while detained by Israeli authorities.

Written Statements

GICJ submitted 12 joint written statements with other NGOs, covering specific country situations prior to the 41st Regular Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council (HRC).

Iraq

Two written statements were submitted regarding the human rights situation in Iraq. Due to the appalling scale of corruption in the country, GICJ recommended that the government of Iraq pursue its stated efforts to prosecute high-profile corrupt practices and begin reducing the overall culture of corruption, and that the international community and trans-national corporations operating in the country reject corrupt practices and work toward greater transparency in their activities. It called upon the Human Rights Council to appoint a Special Rapporteur for Iraq to investigate and monitor corruption and its impact.

Second, concerning the rule of law in the country, GICJ condemned its disregard, and recommended that the government of Iraq follow its own Constitution in elections, and

end its alliance with private militias so as to prevent the exploitation of innocent civilians. The judiciary must ensure accountability for arbitrary killings, as well as the right to a fair trial to all prisoners. Finally, the international community must urge the Iraqi government to abolish the death penalty.

Libya

As some countries have been blatantly ignoring international understandings on the matter, GICJ urgently recommended that the international community enforce the arms embargo and that foreign powers refrain from interfering in the Libyan civil conflict.

Myanmar

GICJ therefore recommended the effective prosecution of hate speech against all religious and ethnic minorities, as well as commensurate sanctions. The organization recommended as well that the leaders of the Government of Myanmar condemn such hate speech, and that the Chauk Township authorities immediately put an end to the violation of the freedom of worship for Muslims in its jurisdiction.

Occupied Palestinian Territories

Three written statements were offered by GICJ. The first called for the Council to take prompt action against the widespread phenomenon of hate speech in Israeli society and to put pressure on Israel to enact and implement specific domestic legislation aimed at criminalizing racist and xenophobic hate speech.

In a second statement, the organization also urged the Council to take urgent action against the criminalization policy adopted by Israel against human rights defenders.

Finally, GICJ urged Israel to adopt prompt measures aimed at encouraging Palestinian women victims of abuses during detention by Israeli authorities to report those acts, as well as at promoting general awareness on the issue.

Side Events Co-sponsored by the GICJ

GICJ, EAFORD, and International-Lawyers.org hosted an event on the use of imprisonment and torture across the Middle East to silence political dissent, which featured three experts who provided examples of how imprisonment and torture are currently being used to punish and intimidate political dissent by Iraq, Yemen, Israel and Palestine.

42nd Regular Session of the UN Human Rights Council

Oral Statements

GICJ delivered 21 oral statements jointly with International Organization for the EAFORD and International-Lawyers.org.

Thematic Issues

Hazardous Waste

GICJ highlighted the situation of child and adult workers in conflict situations who are often exposed to toxic and hazardous substances. In Iraq, contamination, pollution, tonnes of war debris and toxic waste as a result of the 2003 invasion and the following armed conflict have resulted in an environmental disaster leaving, among others, high levels of radiation, extensive PCB and sulphur contamination, and several toxic stockpiles.

Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent

Much more needs to be done to eliminate the scourge of racism, including acknowledging the various existing forms of Afrophobia and disaggregated data collection. GICJ agreed with a comment by the Council of Europe (CoE) on human rights that historical roots, namely colonialism and the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, are acknowledged as persisting factors towards modern prejudices and inequalities in Europe.

General Debate

Highlighting the case of Switzerland and the worrying institutional and structural racism against unaccompanied minor migrants in its territory, GICJ expressed worry and disappointment about the lack of commitment of UN members for eliminating all forms of racial discrimination and other related forms of intolerance. GICJ recommended that Member States adopt and fully implement the DDPA, and exercise due diligence with regard to all forms of media so as not to spread hatred but promote inclusion, integration, and solidarity.

Country-specific Issues

Albania

Pertaining to the challenges of women and children of Roma and Egyptian ethnicities, International-Lawyers and GICJ described the positive impact of access to healthcare, education, jobs, and other social services.

Brunei Darussalam

GICJ delivered a joint statement with International-Lawyers.org concerning the UPR review of Brunei. GICJ urged Brunei to commit to creating a national independent human rights institution in accordance with the Paris Principles.

Costa Rica

GICJ expressed concern about discrimination against indigenous people, persons of African descent, migrants, asylum seekers, refugees, women, older people, and persons with disabilities. We called for implementation the UPR recommendations it accepted in this and in previous sessions.

Côte d'Ivoire

GICJ addressed major issues concerning the rights of children, encouraging Côte d'Ivoire to continue in its efforts to combat child trafficking and child labour by regularly assembling the committee, clarifying roles and providing increased training for law enforcement and judicial officials.

Ethiopia

The statement spoke to difficulties faced by displaced persons throughout the country and the need for the government to provide proper support systems, especially for displaced children. GICJ called on the Ethiopian government to accelerate the reconstruction of the affected areas and turn its attention to the infrastructure for the purpose of resettling the displaced persons.

Iraq

GICJ and its partners delivered four joint statements concerning the human rights situation in Iraq. These statements highlighted the problems of enforced disappearance, corruption, violence against women, lack of clean water, the need for transitional justice, and reiterated the need to appoint a special rapporteur for Iraq.

Myanmar

GICJ joined with International-Lawyers.org to deliver two joint statements concerning the human rights situation in Myanmar. The first statement focused particularly on the situation of displaced persons, children, and minority ethnic groups, drawing attention to the conditions of detention of the Rohingya subject to torture on the one hand, and the difficulty of access of refugees to healthcare and education on the other.

The second statement focused on the detention conditions of the Rohingya, urging the Council to encourage the Myanmar government to send commanders responsible for the genocide to the ICC to face charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Norway

GICJ recommended that Norway cease and desist with greenhouse gas producing activities, work with other countries to limit warming to 1.5 degrees by 2100, provide technology on a cost-free basis to poor and developing countries who will be most hit by climate change, and finally, lead on a just transition strategy to compensate and support poor countries for the unfair burden of climate change that countries like Norway have placed on them.

Occupied Palestinian Territories

GICJ jointly submitted 3 oral statements concerning the excessive use of force by Israeli military and security forces, the violations of children's human rights, and decried the recent support from certain countries for the illegal annexation of territory by Israel. The Organization called for better access to health care for the numerous victims of the conflict, for the Council to pressure Israel to cease all annexation plans. GICJ finally called on the OHCHR to publish and update a database of businesses operating in illegal Israeli settlements.

Qatar

GICJ delivered a joint statement with International-Lawyers.org concerning the UPR review of Qatar. The statement addressed the rights of women, especially the need to take more actions to combat domestic violence and provide assistance to victims of domestic violence.

South Sudan

GICJ delivered a joint statement with EAFORD concerning the human rights situation in South Sudan. The statement voiced concern about the targeting of health care facilities by warring parties and violence against minority women and girls.

Written Statements

GICJ submitted 6 joint written statements with other NGOs, covering specific country situations prior to the 42nd Regular Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council (HRC).

Indigenous Peoples

Due to the drastic increase of acts of violence against indigenous peoples, GICJ recommended the investigation of violations, criminal law reform, and full recognition of indigenous peoples through constitutional or other legal means.

Iraq

In its first of two written statement concerning Iraq, GICJ and its partners recommended that the Iraqi government properly investigate disappearances and the many cases of arbitrary detention that often lead to forced disappearance, as well as stop the mass burial of unidentified bodies. It also recommended that the Human Rights Council appoint a Special Rapporteur, as well as send an independent commission to Iraq to investigate the violations.

The organization also submitted a second written statement calling for Iraq to ratify the Rome Statute, for the United States to prosecute those responsible for the 2003 invasion and subsequent occupation. The statement further called for the UN Human Rights Council to create a Special Rapporteur for Iraq focusing on human rights violations having occurred since 2003, as well as calling for the UN Security Council to create a Sanction Committee to investigate the same.

Myanmar

As the legal conditions for repatriation of Rohingya seem to be far from acceptable, it is imperative to grant the latter citizenship and full enjoyment of their rights. GICJ further recommended that the international community interrupt all financial and economic relations and any other form of support to Myanmar's military until responsible commanders are brought before the ICC.

Occupied Palestinian Territories

Despite Israeli military law, children as young as the age of four have been summoned and interrogated. Moreover, a 2016 law allows the State "to imprison a minor convicted of serious crimes such as murder, attempted murder or manslaughter even if he or she is under the age of 14". GICJ called upon the Human Rights Council and the Committee on the Right of the Child to ensure Israel's respect of the minimal age of criminal responsibility. In addition, the international community must continue to pressure Israel into respecting UN resolutions and its international obligations. The Special Representative of the

Secretary General must add Israel to the “list of shame” from the Annual Report of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict.

Side Events Co-sponsored by the GICJ

GICJ, EAFORD, and International-Lawyers.org hosted an event on enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings in Iraq. This event featured Ali Arkady, a noted photojournalist and war reporter from Iraq, who presented six war crimes he witnessed and documented between 18 October and 22 December 2016.

GICJ's Human Rights Training

During the three-week Council session, GICJ conducted a human rights training workshop that covered a wide range of issues and incorporated a variety of experiences. Trainees were provided with background information on international law, human rights law, the UN system and its human rights mechanisms. They met with UN officials and human rights experts and attended numerous sessions and side events on topics related to the trainees' interests.

2. Universal Periodic Reviews

UPR 32: Third Cycle of North Macedonia's Periodic Human Rights Review

On 24 January 2019, the Working Group of the UN Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review mechanism (UPR) conducted its third review of the human rights situation in North Macedonia. The Working Group adopted the report on North Macedonia on January 29 2019, containing a total of 169 recommendations.

UPR 33: Third Cycle of Qatar's Periodic Human Rights Review

The review began with a presentation of the National Report by H.E. Mr. Soltan Bin Saad Al-Muraikhi, State Minister for Foreign Affairs of Qatar, stating that interesting achievements had been made for the protection of the rights of migrant workers and domestic workers, in accordance with the provision of the International Labour Organization (ILO) Domestic Workers Convention.

At its meeting on 17 May 2019, the Working Group adopted the report on Qatar. The recommendations will be examined by Qatar, which will provide responses in due time.

UPR 34: Third Cycle of Iraq's Periodic Human Rights Review

On 11 November 2019, the UPR conducted its third review of the human rights situation in Iraq. Iraq's delegation began by presenting the human rights developments since the last review in November 2014 and the general human rights situation in the country.

GICJ has contributed significantly to Iraq's 3rd cycle UPR review, in order to ensure that interested parties are made aware of matters of particular concern for the organisation – particularly in light of the recent protests.

UPR 34: Third Cycle of Iran's Periodic Human Rights Review

The review of the Islamic Republic of Iran was held at the 9th meeting, on 8 November 2019. The Iranian delegation stated that since the previous cycle its government had adopted a number of major policies, laws and regulations, but faced serious challenges, such as the economic sanctions, in the implementation of the recommendations and on the general improvement of human rights. The Working Group adopted the report containing a total of 329 recommendations.

GICJ's Report on Iraq

The Organization submitted a report to highlight the issues of importance for the organisation in anticipation of the UPR's 3rd review of the human rights situation in Iraq. The report centred around three key issues: the death penalty, torture and ill-treatment, and the destruction of cities in recent conflict.

The report also presented the human rights situation in Iran with regard to the correlation between the gender and minority discrimination on the one hand, and the Ja'fari doctrine on the other.

GICJ's Report on Iran

GICJ submitted a report ahead of Iran's UPR. A lot of focus placed on discrimination. On the one hand the report pointed out the plight of numerous ethnic and religious minorities such as the Baha'i, the Baloch, the Azeris, and Arabs. On the other, our Organization denounced the discriminatory legislation towards Women.

Other topics included the death penalty, the independence and efficiency of the judiciary, as well as detention and torture. The report finally urged the government of Iran to cooperate with UN Special Procedures and use good faith or accede to the multiple human rights instruments.

Side event on the UPR process in Iran and Iraq

In collaboration with International-Lawyers.Org and EAFORD, on 7 November 2019, GICJ organised an information meeting on the UPR process in Iraq and Iran at the UN headquarters in Geneva.

The event featured Christopher Gawronski, Senior Human Rights Officer at GICJ, and Mr. Tahar Boumedra, former UN Human Rights Chief of the UN mission to Bagdad. Mr. Gawronski spoke of the persistent abuse with regards to enforced disappearances, arbitrary detention, and torture. Mr. Boumedra on the other hand, presented the issue of discrimination in Iran in light of the Ja'fari doctrine.

3. UN Committees and Other Meetings

UN Conference on the Question of Jerusalem

The conference was an important opportunity to address the issue of Israel's policies and measures aimed at the forcible change of the character of Jerusalem.

GICJ believes that the Conference was an important opportunity to highlight new developments in the complicated issue of Jerusalem and maintains that prompt actions are needed by the international community in order to prevent Israel's plans to change the character of the city. GICJ urged the international community to stop US actions that actively and indiscriminately support Israel in its violation of international law.

99th Session of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD)

The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination held its 99th Session on 8 September 2019. During this meeting, it conducted its first review of the State of Palestine.

After hearing the presentation from the Palestinian delegation and the country Rapporteur, the Committee, while recognizing the difficult conditions within the State of Palestine due to the occupation and settlements, reminded the delegation that the State should nonetheless take all possible measure to implement the Convention.

8th United Nations Forum on Business and Human Rights (25 to 27 November 2019)

In three days, 70 meetings took place under this year's theme, "Time to act: Governments as catalysts for business respect for human rights". GICJ attended 30 meetings of the Forum, and one side event. During these, and under the guidance of the three UNGPs' pillars, panellists looked at the role of governments and businesses in the access to remedies, the fight against corruption and for accountability, as well as the impact of businesses on issues such as peace and climate change.

4. Human Rights Training

In 2019, GICJ conducted six Human Rights Training Courses in order to promote human rights values around the world. Two took place in Istanbul in April, the others took place in Geneva in April, June, September, and November.

One two-day training course in Istanbul dealt with Business and Human Right. The five others consisted in workshops on International Human Rights Law and Human Rights mechanisms.

5. GICJ Statements and Appeals

GICJ Urges States and UN Bodies to End Human Trafficking

During the 22 February 2019 CEDAW discussion on trafficking of women and girls in the context of global migration, GICJ submitted a joint report with Advocating Opportunities, focusing on the cases of three countries, offering broadly applicable insights that could help other states satisfy their obligation to suppress all forms of trafficking of women and girls.

GICJ Seeks Action on Continuing Human Rights Abuses in Iraq

On 19 June 2019, GICJ urged the High Commissioner to take immediate action to address weak governance and high levels of corruption in Iraq, and to work with UN agencies and the international community to ban the militias.

Israel Destroys Palestinian Homes and Causes Massive Damage

Following demolition of several buildings in the Palestinian community of Sur Bahir, affecting the livelihoods of 6,300 Palestinians, GICJ called on the international community

to hold Israel accountable for its daily violations of human rights, and exert pressure on Israel to stop these policies and its illegal occupation.

GICJ Appeals to Stop Grave Violations against Demonstrators

GICJ repeated its appeals to the international community to put pressure on the government of Iraq to stop using violence against protesters. The organization also asked the government to respond directly to the request of the Organising Committee of the Demonstrations in Iraq, and called on the UN concerned bodies to dispatch an international, independent investigation commission to investigate all the human rights violations in the country.

GICJ appeals for Iraq to Respect the People's Demands

GICJ once again condemned the actions taken by the Iraqi government and called on the international community to take a firm stand. The continuation of human rights violations without clear international condemnation marked a serious imbalance in the international justice system. Failing to act deepens the United Nations' double standard toward Iraq and sends a negative message that undermines the credibility of the United Nations everywhere in the world.

Mr. Pompeo, Israeli Settlements in the OPT Are Still Unlawful

Following US Secretary of State Pompeo regretful statement that the establishment of Israeli civil settlements in the West Bank were not per se inconsistent with international, GICJ called on all States to abide by international law and work toward its strengthening. The UN Member States should avoid making declarations that go against the rule of law, the respect of international law, and the UN Charter.

6. GICJ Special Reports

CESCR Review of Estonia - 19 and 20 February 2019

The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights conducted its third periodic review of Estonia's human rights situation pertaining to the issues falling under the Committee's mandate. GICJ pointed out the serious differences in the educational systems of different ethnic groups in the country. GICJ supports Estonia's efforts to address these inequalities and all its other efforts to ensure the full enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights by all residents of the country.

GICJ reports to the UN Committee against Torture (CAT) – May 2019

GICJ contributed to a review on torture and ill-treatment of detainees held overseas by the military forces of the United Kingdom (UK) and met with members of the Committee to discuss several areas of concern. GICJ urged the UK to carry out a full inquiry into alleged acts of torture and other ill-treatment committed by, at the instigation of, or with the consent or acquiescence of, British officials.

The Path towards Accountability for Human Rights Abuses by Transnational Corporations

This report explores the background of the human rights context of TNCs and the current global debate around the creation of binding rules to govern TNCs in their international activities for the purpose of protecting and promoting human rights.



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