



UNITED NATIONS

Press Release

"TEAR DOWN THAT WALL, MR. NETANYAHU", SAYS UNITED NATIONS EXPERT ON KEY ANNIVERSARY

"There will be no peace between these two peoples (Israelis and Palestinians) until Israel shows respect for Palestinian rights under international law, and a good place to start would be with the wall", stressed the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, Richard Falk, speaking from The Hague, in the Netherlands today.

The United Nations expert asked the world for renewed attention to the Advisory Opinion on the security wall being built by Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, issued five years ago by the International Court of Justice (ICJ), which stated that "... the construction of a wall ... [is] contrary to international law. Israel is under an obligation ... to cease forthwith the works of construction ... to dismantle the structures therein situated ... to make reparations for all the damage caused by the construction of the wall."

During an international conference held in The Hague on the fifth anniversary of the Advisory Opinion, the Special Rapporteur pointed out that "despite this clear determination of unlawfulness, the wall remains, and continues to be built; and despite this Israeli refusal to comply, the United States, the European Union, and the United Nations have totally ignored Israel's defiant behavior, which has resulted in a major encroachment on Palestinian rights, as well as sending the cynical message that power trumps law."

"This rejection of the rule of law with respect to the wall", said Mr. Falk at the opening of the conference, "is part of a broader pattern of unlawful conduct on Israel's part that includes the expansion of the settlements, a gradual engagement in ethnic displacement in East Jerusalem, and the imposition of a severe regime of collective punishment on the entire population of Gaza."

The Special Rapporteur asked the world not to treat the ICJ's Advisory Opinion on the Wall as "discretionary", as it is technically known. "This is profoundly misleading as the 15 judges, distinguished jurists from the world's major legal systems, were pronouncing upon the legal issues in a manner that they intended to be definitive, and when, as here, there is such a high level of agreement as to what the law requires, then the findings are authoritative, and deserve to be respected by every Government," said the United Nations expert.