



CIVIL SOCIETY AND THE DIVISION FOR PALESTINIAN RIGHTS

The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People has a mandate from the United Nations General Assembly “to extend its cooperation and support to Palestinian and other civil society organizations”. In keeping with this mandate, a network of more than 1,000 civil society organizations from all regions of the world, active on the question of Palestine, has been established over the years. National and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs), organizations involved in political and humanitarian work, NGOs promoting human rights or economic and social development, solidarity-, charity- or action-oriented groups, churches, academic institutions, trade unions and professional associations, and organizations that focus on women, children, refugees and detainees, are all part of the network.

How to join our network of civil society partners

To join our network of civil society organizations on the question of Palestine, groups need to become accredited to the Committee. The criteria for accreditation are as follows:

“The civil society organization should:

“(a) be a recognized local, national or international non-profit organization;

“(b) support the Charter of the United Nations, the principles of international law and the achievement of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, primarily its right to self-determination;

“(c) have demonstrated that it has concrete programmes or the serious intent to establish such programmes in support of the achievement of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

“Organizations whose mandates preclude advocacy but whose work encompasses humanitarian ends and programmes, including development, benefiting the Palestinian people, are welcome to participate.”

Interested civil society organizations are requested to submit an application form (available at: <http://unispal.un.org/feedback.nsf/profile>) to the Division for Palestinian Rights of the United Nations Secretariat, which will submit it for approval to the Committee.

Organizations that, for one reason or another, feel they cannot subscribe to the accreditation criteria, but have expressed interest in the activities of the Committee can request to be recognized as observers.

Civil society organizations in observer status will be invited to attend events held under the auspices of the Committee. They may speak at civil society meetings and conferences held under the auspices of the Committee, and will be included in the mailing list of the Division. Civil society organizations in observer status have the responsibility to respect the United Nations rules of procedure, as well as the guidelines, procedures and practice established by the Committee and to report informally to the Committee (through the Division) on their planned and accomplished activities.

The benefits and responsibilities associated with membership

Accredited civil society organizations will be invited to attend all relevant international meetings and conferences held under the auspices of the Committee and participate in the discussions and to make statements, either orally or in written form. They may submit reports, written statements and other relevant documents for circulation among Committee Members and Observers. They will have the opportunity to display, after prior screening by the Secretariat, their own publications at such meetings. Accredited civil society organizations are also invited to make suggestions regarding the preparation and conduct of civil society events held under the auspices of the Committee.

Accredited civil society organizations can use these international meetings as a platform to discuss their own initiatives, campaigns, views and ideas. They can network with each other, in order to coordinate action, and meet representatives of Governments and intergovernmental organizations. They can attend panel discussions, where experts from around the world, including the Occupied Palestinian Territory and Israel, provide information and analyses on their own work, as well as on current political and humanitarian developments.

The reports of the international meetings and conferences are issued as publications of the Division. They are widely disseminated, not only to the network of accredited civil society organizations, but also to Governments, intergovernmental and United Nations system entities, experts who have participated in these events and others interested in the issue. They are also posted on the “Question of Palestine” website administered by the Division.

Whenever appropriate, Members of the Committee and/or staff of the Division will consult with accredited civil society organizations on issues related to the question of Palestine. Civil society organizations will also receive all publications issued by the Division and other relevant information material.

Accredited civil society organizations have the responsibility to support the work and objectives of the Committee and to respect the Committee’s mandate as defined by United Nations General Assembly resolutions. They shall respect the United Nations rules of procedure, as well as the guidelines, procedures and practice established by the Committee. Finally, they shall provide regular feedback to the Committee (through the Division) on their planned and accomplished activities; and submit to the Committee once every four years a formal report detailing their activities on the question of Palestine.

Our web sites

Our main web site for civil society: <http://unispal.un.org/unispal.nsf/ngo.htm>

NGO Action News (our periodic publication that highlights what civil society groups are doing throughout the world to help the Palestinian people): <http://unispal.un.org/unispal.nsf/add2.htm>

Our Facebook page: <http://www.facebook.com/UN.palestinianrights>

United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine (UNISPAL):
<http://unispal.un.org/unispal.nsf/udc.htm>

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