

Excellencies, dear colleagues,

Thank you so much for the opportunity to address you in this important meeting.

My name is Ahmed Abofoul and I am Al-Haq's representative to the ICC. Al-Haq is a Palestinian Human Rights Non-Governmental Organisation, based in Ramallah, Palestine. Along with other five Palestinian organisations, Al-Haq was criminalised by the Israeli apartheid regime and designated as a "terrorist organisation" because of our cooperation with the International Criminal Court (ICC) Office of the Prosecutor (OTP).

As the Committee on Budget and Finance (CBF) considers various prosecutorial, judicial, and organizational requirements as well as the ICC's obligations to defendants and victims to prepare its recommendations to the Assembly of States Parties (ASP), Al-Haq wishes to express its concerns regarding any possible budget restraints that might affect some ongoing investigations, especially the investigation in the situation in Palestine.

Al-Haq wishes to also remind you that Palestinian victims in the occupied Palestinian Territory (in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip) continue to suffer from the Israeli occupation and the apartheid regime's violations and crimes. As a Court of last resort, the ICC represents their last hope for justice.

Since 2018, the judges have ordered the court to start its outreach activities in Palestine. Yet, no outreach activities with the victims in Palestine have taken place. The Court always uses the lack of budget as the excuse for that. It is important the court has a sufficient budget for outreach to victims, especially in situation countries. Victims, who are losing their faith in the court because of the lack of progress in the investigation, need to feel that they are seen and talked to by the court.

The court also refers to the lack of financial resources as the reason for the court's lack of translation for important resources into languages of situation countries, which is a very

worrying phenomenon that prevents guaranteeing equal access to justice for all victims in all situations. This is greatly affecting the victim's perception of the Court's integrity and impartiality.

Al-Haq joins colleagues in urging you to ensure that the ICC and the OTP have sufficient resources to continue their crucial work and expedite the ongoing investigations, especially in the situation in Palestine, to move forward and issue arrest warrants against perpetrators of atrocity crimes committed in Palestine.

Thank you once again for this opportunity,

Ahmed Abofoul

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**AL-HAQ**  
Defending Human Rights

