



Human Rights Council - 25th session

Item 6 - Adoption of the report on the UPR of Israel

Oral statement

Mr. President,

We deplore Israel's position that human rights conventions to which it is a party do not apply in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Israel is bound not only by obligations under the law of military occupation, but also by extraterritorial obligations stemming from instruments which it has ratified. Israel's rejection of a large number of recommendations on the grounds that they fall outside the scope of the UPR process is therefore fundamentally flawed.

Mr. President,

FIDH is deeply concerned about activities of business enterprises in Israeli settlements located in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Corporations operating within settlements can be involved in direct and indirect violations of international law. For example, Ahava Dead Sea Laboratories Ltd., an Israeli cosmetics company located in the Mitzpe Shalem settlement on the western shore of the Dead Sea, can be considered a primary perpetrator of the war crime of pillage as it directly profits from the appropriation and exploitation of Palestinian land and natural resources. Ahava's activity in the OPT creates a direct obstacle for the realization of Palestinians' right to self-determination and to permanent sovereignty over their natural resources. Israel should swiftly act on the recommendations made in this regard by eight states.

Israel has failed to prevent, stop, investigate and prosecute the ongoing pillaging in the OPT, and has in fact actively assisted in the pillage by licensing companies and granting substantial financial benefits to the settlers living in the area. The cumulative effect of substantive and procedural legal barriers bars victims from access to and effective remedy through the Israeli judicial system. We urge Israel to remove these obstacles as a matter of urgency.

FIDH welcomes Israel's acceptance of the recommendation made by Austria on ensuring a secure and free environment for HRDs. As a first step towards implementing it, the Government should immediately withdraw the bill adopted in February 2011 by the Knesset restricting funding from abroad for Israeli NGOs and stating that in all their public speeches and public documents, NGOs concerned are required to declare that they receive funding from a foreign political entity. Non observance of this provision is punishable by fines and imprisonment.

Thank you for your attention.