



May 16, 2018

## Statement by the Palestinian Performing Arts Network

We, active civil society organizations of the Palestinian cultural sector, condemn the Israeli occupation's blatant and random killing and wounding of thousands of peaceful Palestinian protestors in Gaza during the "Great March of Return". The Israeli occupation violates the Fourth Geneva Convention, human rights and humanitarian laws, falsely rationalizes its unjustified and unlawful killing of unarmed peaceful demonstrators and continues to act as a state above international law.

The United States is complicit with Israeli war crimes and provides a cover for Israel to continue its aggression against the Palestinian people. By opposing a UN Security Council statement supporting the right of Palestinians to "demonstrate peacefully" and call for an independent investigation in Gaza, the United States continues its bias and double standard position of legitimizing Israeli occupation, liquidating the Palestinian cause for freedom and justice, and shielding it from international censure.

We, active civil society organizations of the Palestinian cultural sector, also condemn the US administration's decision to move its embassy to Jerusalem. Moreover, this decision to relocate the embassy, coincides with the 70th anniversary of al-Nakba, a day Palestinians mourn the ethnic cleansing and theft of their land. The opening of the US embassy in Jerusalem is a provocative, illegal decision and is a clear and flagrant violation of United Nations Resolutions and international law and further legitimizes Israel's continued, oppressive and illegal colonial occupation of Palestine and its repressive measures in the city of Jerusalem against its original inhabitants.

We in the Palestinian Performing Arts Network believe in the role of culture and arts as a tool for mobilizing people, confronting all forms of political and social repression, and promoting human rights. We call upon the international community to no longer allow for such carnage to be perpetrated against our people with impunity. The level of death and injury caused by the Israeli occupying forces to Palestinian civilians in the Gaza Strip constitutes war crimes and crimes against humanity, for which Israel must be fully held accountable. We also call upon the international community to lift the 11 year embargo blockade on the Gaza Strip which has created a prison for 1.8 million Palestinians and a humanitarian disaster.

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