



***Oral Submission by Al-Haq to the Human Rights Committee
on the occasion of Israel's fourth periodic review***

Thank you Mr. Chair, Distinguished members of the Committee,

Israeli policies and practices continue to undermine Palestinian sovereignty over land and natural resources in the Occupied Palestinian Territory in violation of Article 1 of the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

For example, Israel's latest and widely condemned annexation of almost 1,000 acres of land on the 31st of August this year, will prevent the Palestinian community of Wadi Fukin and residents of the surrounding villages near Bethlehem from accessing their land and natural resources. In particular, the access of the affected villages to water springs and water-wells located in the area will be increasingly restricted.

On the other hand, surrounding settlements will enjoy further access to land and water sources available in the area. In fact, Israeli officials have openly expressed that this annexed territory is intended for the development of the Gush Etzion settlement bloc, despite the unlawfulness of the annexation and the illegality of settlements under international law.

Mr. Chair, Palestinian access to oil has also been restricted in the Occupied Territory. Oil fields near the village of Rantis in Area C became inaccessible after Israel built the Wall around the village in 2004. Also in 2004, Israel leased the oil field to the Israeli company Givot Olam for a period of *30 years*.

In 2011, the Israeli Ministry of National Infrastructure unilaterally authorised the exploitation of natural gas reserves in the geologically contiguous Noa South gas field, which extends into Palestinian territorial waters off the Gaza coast.

Israel not only enjoys unrestricted access to this gas field, Mr. Chair, but it also prevents Palestinians from accessing this source of natural gas by continuing to impose a three-mile limit in the Gaza territorial water -- in violation of Article 1 and Article 12 of the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Despite internationally brokered political agreements, Israel has failed to transfer its control over sovereign Palestinian land and natural resources to the Palestinian Authority. Such failure severely undermines a two-state solution that is both sustainable and just.

As such, we urge the distinguished members of the Committee to underline the issue of *permanent* Palestinian sovereignty over land and natural resources in the Occupied Territory during Israel's review session on Monday. Particularly, we ask that you highlight Israel's obligation under Article 1 of the Covenant to respect, protect and fulfil the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination.

Thank you

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