



**National Statement delivered by Ambassador Khalil Hashmi, Permanent Representative, during the Interactive Dialogue with the Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel**

**53<sup>rd</sup> HRC Session**

20 June 2023

**Madam Vice President,**

We align with the OIC statement and reiterate our support for the Commission's valuable work. We reject efforts aimed to undermine its mandate.

We appreciate focus of the current report on civil society space, given that their advisory role has special salience in situations of foreign occupation.

However, we are concerned over the apparent impression of parity in terms of obligations of the occupying power Israel, occupied state of Palestine and people of Gaza living under blockade and dire humanitarian situation, may not be very helpful. It may further entrench the culture of impunity by diluting focus on occupying authorities.

We condemn Israeli actions to declare Palestinian civil society organizations as "terrorist organizations", thereby seeking to delegitimize their work.

We share the Commission's concerns over increasing reports and testimonies from some states, indicating a shrinking space for freedom of expression in relation to "criticization of Israeli authorities' human rights conduct and speaking up for Palestinian rights". In this regard, we reiterate our call for abandoning the policy of appeasement.

We express our deep concern over grave human rights violations and abuses in the Occupied Palestinian Territory including in East Jerusalem. Killing of innocent civilians including children, storming of Al-Aqsa Mosque, expansion of illegal settlements, settlers' violence, administrative detentions and airstrikes on populated Gaza Strip are reminder of the callous disregard for human rights and rule of law.

We suggest the Commission to intensify its focus on spotlighting the underlying root-causes of recurrent tensions and protracted occupation as well as recommending steps aimed at ending impunity, ensuring accountability and justice.

I thank you.