



PRESS RELEASE

UN Coordinator for Humanitarian Aid and Development Activities calls for respect for Palestinians' Freedom of Movement

Jerusalem, 1 April 2016

Today, humanitarian and development actors, including UN agencies, are joining thousands of Palestinian and international runners in the annual Palestine Marathon, taking place in the city of Bethlehem in support of Palestinians' right to liberty of movement.

On this occasion, UN Coordinator for Humanitarian Aid and Development Activities, Robert Piper, stated: "As many of us join this celebratory event, we remain acutely aware of the many barriers to freedom of movement faced by Palestinians every day. I am sorry to hear that Gazan runners, including last year's Marathon winner Nader al Masri, have not been granted permits by the Israeli authorities to participate in today's event for example."

Freedom of movement is not only a right in itself, but is essential for the enjoyment of many other human rights. As detailed by the Secretary-General in his latest report dated 20 January 2016 (A/HRC/31/44), the restrictions on freedom of movement imposed by Israel on the occupied Palestinian territory permeate almost all facets of everyday life and continue to separate Palestinians and fragment the territory. In the West Bank, the nature of restrictions on the freedom of movement can be physical – the Barrier, checkpoints, roadblocks; as well as bureaucratic – such as permits and the closure of areas. In the Gaza Strip, the eight-year blockade continues to limit the movement of people and goods in and out of the Gaza Strip and between the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. Such restrictions impede access to basic services and justice, as well as essential infrastructure, and prevent access to land and resources. "Overall, these policies undermine opportunities for the development of a viable and contiguous Palestinian state," said Mr. Piper.

"Israel has legitimate security concerns and may take measures to address them," Mr. Piper stated, "but any such measures must comply with international law and meet strict tests of necessity and proportionality, without imposing wide-ranging restrictions on the population as a whole."

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Report of the Secretary-General to the United Nations Human Rights Council
http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/PS/SG_Report_FoM_Feb2016.pdf

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