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Middle East

* On 23 October, Al-Haq published a new briefing paper “70 Years On: Palestinians Retain Sovereignty Over East and West Jerusalem”. The paper examines Israel’s unlawful annexation of Jerusalem, its continued forcible transfer of Palestinian residents, and the failure of the international community to uphold Palestinian rights to the city. Al-Haq called on the international community to recognize and remedy all past injustices, and ensure that international law, including the right of Palestinians to return to west Jerusalem, and other villages and cities, were upheld.
* On 22 October, BADIL published a position paper on the Nation State Law, passed by the Israeli Knesset on 19 July. BADIL argues that the law has embedded ‘apartheid’ in the legal foundation of the State of Israel. As a constitutional law, it authorizes and requires all State institutions and decision-makers to operate within the framework of a now intrinsically discriminatory state structure. More significantly, it lays the ground for the formal annexation of the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT) by creating a constitutional foundation for an Israeli claim to the land of the OPT, and a legal basis to address the demographic threat posed by the addition of the Palestinian population to Israel’s population.
* On 18 October 2018, Al-Haq presented a paper on “Corporate Accountability for Natural Resource Exploitation in the Draft Principles on the Protection of the Environment during Occupation” at a seminar on “Protection of the Environment in Relation to Armed Conflict” held at United Nations Headquarters in New York. Al-Haq underscored that a central feature of Israel’s belligerent occupation of Palestine was the permanent nature of the settlement construction, sustained by Israeli and international corporations. Much of the environmental damage in the OPT was caused by corporations operating unconstrained in industrial and agricultural settlements.

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* On 22-23 October, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian Territory occupied since 1967, Michael Lynk briefed the Third Committee of the General Assembly, the Bureau of the UN Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of Palestinian People, a side-event on “Annexation, Self-Determination and Discrimination: The Case of the Palestinian People” as well as the Israel/Palestine Working Group on his latest report to the General Assembly. He stressed that Israel’s de facto annexation of large parts of the West Bank, including Jerusalem, through settlement expansion and legislative initiatives violated international law, and failure by the international community to stop this trend would likely prompt Israel to formalise annexation into domestic law. He noted that the elements which constitute annexation: effective control over territory; exercising sovereignty; expression of intent and disobeying international law were all present in the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territory.