

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The COVID-19 pandemic has given rise to unparalleled challenges across the globe. In the occupied Palestinian territories (oPt), these challenges are compounded by the pre-existing situation of prolonged occupation.

The Israeli Occupying Power is systematically violating the rules of international law and human rights that notably require it to ensure and maintain public health in the OPT, including by adopting the necessary measures to combat the spread of epidemics. Israel ignores its legal duties to purchase and provide vaccines and distribute them among the Palestinians.

More than 4.5 million Palestinians in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip, lack vaccines against the virus.

The State of Palestine strives to provide the anti-virus vaccines from various sources despite the Occupation's restrictions on its potentials to conclude relevant agreements to purchase the vaccines. In case it succeeds in purchasing the vaccine, it must be subjected to Israeli's registration procedures and obtain its approvals to enter the Territories. Being under the Israeli occupation and lacking independent purchase options, weakens the State of Palestine's ability to confront Covid-19 and ensure the right of Palestinians to receive the vaccine.

ICHR calls on the UNHRC and international community to exercise the necessary pressure to put an end to Israel's violations of international law, with a renewed sense of urgency during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Occupying power must shoulder its responsibilities, so that the Palestinian people receive more equitable health care.