

## **Abstract**

The 'Special Procedures' is an important UN protection mechanism. It can be used directly by the victims of human rights violations themselves or by human rights activists by addressing the 'special rapporteurs' through written complaints.

The 'Special Procedures' is particularly relevant for ensuring their protection, for two reasons at least: first, the lack of an independent Palestinian state capable of ratifying international human rights conventions; second, Israel denial of the applicability of its conventional obligations on the Palestinians of the occupied territory. The relevans is also related to the fact that Palestinians continue to suffer from Israeli violations of their basic rights and freedoms since decades.

This study aims at bridging the gap related to the lack of information, especially in Arabic language, about 'Special Procedures'. This study shows how 'Special Procedures' are important, the way they function, their effectiveness and their positive effects on minimizing human rights' violations in various parts of the world, and in particular in the Occupied Palestinian territory. This study also shows how the 'Special Procedures' can be implemented on the Palestinian case and to what extent do the Palestinian human rights organizations use them. This study will also deal with the status of occupied Palestinian territory under international law and the obstacles that hinder the application of conventional protection mechanisms on the Palestinians.

This study is divided in three parts. The first deals with the theoretical framework of the 'Special Procedures'. It shows their origin and the different kinds of procedures available and the way they work. It also shows the importance of these procedures, their effects, the obstacles to their implementation, and the relationship they have with United Nations' agencies, like the Council of Human Rights and the Office of High Commissioner of Human Rights.

The second part discusses the legal status of the occupied Palestinian territory from the perspective of human rights law and humanitarian international law. The study shows that these conventions can be applied on the Palestinian territories. The study also presents the various kinds of violations committed by Israel and shows the importance of the 'Special Procedures'.

In the third part, the study outlines that there is a kind of lack of sufficient knowledge in the 'Special Procedures'. This knowledge varied from organization to another; it varied even between persons working in the same organization.

The study is based on an inquiry on a sample of Palestinian human rights organizations that were chosen according to predetermined criteria. The inquiry reveals that those organizations rarely use 'Special Procedures' to deal with cases of Israeli violations of human rights by Israeli authorities.

The limited recourse to 'Special Procedures' may be related to the limited or lack of knowledge in the way 'Special Procedures' functions. Some of the interviewed outlined general mistrust Palestinians

have towards international protection mechanisms generally, and the UN in particular. Despite these pretexts, the study shows that the 'Special Procedures' has positive impact in that it provide on the long term more accountability for human rights violations in the occupied Palestinian territory.

This study prepares the ground for future studies related to the way information on 'Special Procedures' can be disseminated and to the way human rights culture can extend to reach, not only human rights activists, but also the general public.