Urgent Press Release

Representatives of Civil Society call upon the Palestinian Authority to halt the serious deterioration of Palestinian Human Rights

Date: 10/08/2017

On Wednesday, 09/08/2017, Representatives of coalitions of Palestinian Civil Society Organizations, trade Unions including Political parties met together in response of the urgent call by Al-Haq organization-Law for Human Rights, in order to consult regarding the expansion of exceptional legislation and it major violations of fundamental rights and basic freedoms, and the attendant serious deterioration in Palestinian human rights situation.

Participants discussed the Palestinian Authority latest measures and actions taken against the Gaza Strip and the serious repercussions on the Palestinian living in the Gaza Strip, they also discussed the recent developments that revolve around the independence of the judiciary, the interference of the executive branch in the judiciary and the continuing work of the Constitutional Court and the attendant concern of its work. Participants also discussed the expansion of the issuance of special legislation, including the electronic criminal law, also the re-launch a draft law on the Criminal Court that disregarded the Palestinian Civil Society critical and crucial remarks. Moreover they discussed the increased interference of Palestinian Security Authorities against Palestinians lives, the increase of issuance of new laws and procedurals that aim to shrink the space of Palestinian Civil Society, increase of political arrests, enforcement of restrictions that violate freedom of opinion and freedom of expression and finally the detention of Palestinian Journalists in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

<u>Representatives of Civil Society agreed on the following points:</u>

-The participants agreed that this serious deterioration constitutes a serious violation of Palestinian Freedoms and Human Rights that are guaranteed by international charters to which the State of Palestine and the relevant Palestinian Legislation have been acceded, this leads to devastating consequences for the Palestinian national cause and the Palestinian struggle for salvation from the Israeli colonial occupation.

-The participants also agreed on series of steps towards widening the scope of the discussion among the various scope of Palestinian Civil Society, and taking social and professional steps aimed to stop this stream of exceptional legislation and restoring the Palestinian judiciary system and respect for the principle of the rule of law.

The meeting was attended by Representatives of:

Palestinian Non-Governmental Organizations Network (PNGO), Palestinian Bar Association, Union of Journalists, Independent Commission for Human Rights (ICRC), Palestinian Human Rights Organizations Council (PHROC), The Coalition for Accountability and Integrity (AMAN), Social and Economic Policies Monitor, Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association (ADDAMEER), Jerusalem Legal Aid and Human Rights Center (JLAC), Palestinian Center for Development & Media Freedoms (MADA), The Center for Defense of Liberties and Civil Rights "Hurryyat", Palestinian People's Party, Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, The Palestinian Center for the Independence Judiciary and the Legal Profession (MUSAWA), Women's Studies Centre and Al Haq Defending Human Rights.