

Discussion Paper

On

**International Protection
in Palestine**

AL-HAQ

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Al-Haq

Al-Haq, West Bank Affiliate of the International Commission of Jurists-Geneva, is a Palestinian human rights organization located in Ramallah, West Bank, in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations "ECOSOC". Al-Haq was established in 1979 with the goal of protecting and promoting Palestinian human rights and respect for the rule of law in the Palestinian Territories.

Al-Haq conducts and disseminates legal and human rights research based on international and humanitarian law as well as on human rights principles and standards. In addition, the organisation documents and exposes human rights violations. Al-Haq offers to the public an extensive database of documented human rights violations. Al-Haq also carries out interventions with UN organs and is active both locally and internationally through alerts, appeals and press releases. The organisation provides to the public a specialised library collection that includes legal, human rights and international law texts. Furthermore, Al-Haq maintains its tradition of providing free legal services to the community. Al-Haq was a recipient of the Carter Award for Human Rights in 1989 and received a human rights award from the French government in 1994.

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Preface

The following paper was originally constructed as a concept paper for Palestinian organizations working to put together an international solidarity campaign in follow up to the World Conference Against Racism held in 2001. In the proceeding year changes both on the ground in the Occupied Palestinian Territories and internationally have impeded efforts to organize a solidarity campaign, but have not decreased the need to move forward with efforts to push for a just solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Both before and after this paper was written repeated calls were issued requesting that the international community intervene in the Occupied Territories to provide protection for the civilian Palestinian population. Despite these repeated requests for assistance and protection, little if any serious debate has occurred regarding what form international protection might take. Al-Haq has chosen to publish this paper at this time as part of an effort to begin to open debate on the idea of international protection, and to further the push for international action to protect Palestinians from ongoing Israeli human rights abuses. As one of the central purposes of this paper is to open debate, it does not attempt to address the issues of international protection comprehensively, nor does it answer all of the questions that it lays down. However, it is Al-Haq's hope that it can be used as a starting point from which to move forward.

Introduction

At the NGO Forum of the World Conference Against Racism NGOs from around the world came together to discuss, debate and produce a declaration against racism. Included within the final conference declaration was a "Plan of Action" that laid out steps that should be taken to combat and bring an end to ongoing racist practices throughout the world. Included in the "Plan of Action" was a call for the immediate deployment of an "independent, effective international protection force for Palestinian civilians". This paper begins to build from this call and similar requests made over the course of the intifada by asking the critical question, what is meant by international protection? Although most requests for protection made over the last year have specifically asked for the deployment of a "protection force", the following paper explores the idea of protection from a variety of angles in an effort to give an overview of international protection and its multiple implications within the context of Al-Haq's ongoing efforts to push for a program aimed at enforcing Palestinians' human rights as delineated under international law.

This paper is divided into three sections. The first section briefly explores the concept of international protection. Questions concerning the nature and source of a protection force's mandate, what existent mechanisms for providing protection are available and what new sources of protection might be utilized are addressed here. The second section looks at several possible forms that a protection force might take. Finally, the last section of the paper briefly looks to the future and explores some of the tasks that will need to be undertaken if we are to move beyond debate of international protection to implementation.

What is International Protection?

Since the outbreak of the second Intifada on September 29, 2000 Palestinian organizations have repeatedly called upon the international community to send a force to the Occupied Palestinian Territories to provide protection for the civilian Palestinian population. These calls have primarily been aimed at the United Nations General Assembly and Security Council, although calls have also gone out to various individual governments and international bodies including the European Union and the International Committee for the Red Cross (ICRC). Despite all of these requests for assistance, to date no clear examination of what forms protection can or should take has been completed.

The authority of the international community to send a protection force to intervene in the Occupied Palestinian Territories to restore peace and to end Israel's systematic human rights violations is primarily derived from Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter. Under International Law States are to refrain from the use of force in their international relations. However, Chapter VII lays out a number of exceptions to the prohibition on the use of force. Article 41 of Chapter VII lays out non-military actions that can be taken against a state that fails to comply with Security Council decisions, and Article 42 gives the Security Council the power to authorize military action "as may be necessary to maintain or restore international peace and security". The United Nations or States acting under its authority have taken action under the auspices of Chapter VII (with varied success) in such locations as Somalia, Rwanda, Yugoslavia, Haiti and

Iraq by providing both armed and unarmed peacekeeping or monitoring forces.

In the event that a threat to international peace and security should arise that the UN Security Council fails to address, in accordance with UNGA Res. 377 (V) "Uniting for Peace" the UN General Assembly also has both the right and responsibility to uphold the UN Charter by authorizing action to end the threat.

"If the Security Council, because of lack of unanimity of the permanent members, fails to exercise its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security in any case where there appears to be threat to the peace, breach of the peace, or act of aggression, the General Assembly shall consider the matter immediately with a view to making appropriate recommendations to Members for collective measures, including in the case of a breach of the peace or act of aggression the use of armed force when necessary, to maintain or restore international peace and security."¹

The General Assembly has taken action under Res. 377 on several occasions, including in Egypt, Korea and the Congo.

Alternately, under the Fourth Geneva Convention States Parties to the Convention are obligated by its first article to "respect and ensure respect" for the convention in all circumstances. In an official ICRC position paper on humanitarian intervention states' Article 1 obligations are described as follows,

"under Article 1 common to the Geneva Conventions, there is an individual and collective obligation to "respect and ensure respect" for international humanitarian law. If grave violations of the law are committed, the states are obliged to take action jointly or separately, in cooperation with the United Nations and in accordance with the UN Charter (Protocol I additional to the Geneva Conventions, Article 89). The question of what measures are to be taken by the States and the United Nations in order to put an end to those breaches is not dealt with by humanitarian

¹ A/Res/377(V) A of 3 November 1950. "Uniting for Peace" Section A(1)

² Ryniker, Anne, The ICRC's Position on "humanitarian intervention", IRRIC, June 2001 Vol. 83 No. 842, pp. 527-532

law, but rather by the UN Charter (Chapters VII or VIII)."²

In accordance with the ICRC and the official Commentaries on the Fourth Geneva Conventions' interpretations of states' Article 1 obligations. States Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention can take action unilaterally to ensure respect for the convention through the use of sanctions, political isolation or any other methods that they deem necessary, excluding armed intervention. Armed intervention should only be undertaken with the approval of the United Nations.

However, while it is through the UN that any large-scale intervention force would receive its mandate, other mechanisms are in place that can be utilized to provide a degree of protection for the civilian Palestinian population. States' obligations pursuant to Article 1 of the Fourth Geneva Convention are not diminished by limitations on their ability to unilaterally use force. States Parties are obligated to take it upon themselves to ensure respect for the convention in other ways. One of the most effective means of doing this is by taking upon themselves the role of a "Protecting Power" as delineated in the convention.

Under the Fourth Geneva Convention Israel is supposed to set up a Protecting Power mechanism in the Occupied Territories by accepting the de jure applicability of the Convention to the Occupied Palestinian Territories. According to Article 9 of the Convention, the convention should be enforced "with the cooperation and under the scrutiny of the Protection Powers whose duty it is to safeguard the interests of the Parties to the conflict." In the absence of an appointed Protecting Power the ICRC or an equivalent body is mandated under Article 11 of the convention to act in the place of a Protecting Power, although the ICRC as a non-state body is limited in its ability to fulfill all of the duties of a protecting power.³

Due to Israel's refusal to recognize the de jure applicability of the Fourth Geneva Convention to its occupation of the Palestinian Territories, no pro-

³ For more information see: Welchman, Lynn. "International Protection and International Diplomacy: Policy Choices for Third-Party States in the Occupied Palestinian Territories", Al-Haq, 2001

protecting power has been appointed to ensure respect for the convention in the Occupied Territories. The ICRC made a formal offer to act as the official substitute for a Protecting Power in its humanitarian functions, but its offer was rejected by Israel in 1972. In the absence of a Protecting Power or a formal substitute as proscribed in the Convention, the High Contracting Parties themselves retain the duty, individually and collectively, to ensure that the conduct of the occupying power is reviewed, that violations are detected, and that the well being of the protected population is monitored. In this case, due to Israel's non-recognition of the Convention's applicability in the Occupied Territories, representatives of the high contracting parties in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories have a clear mandate to undertake protection functions in the Occupied Territories. Article 143 of the Convention states that,

“Representatives or delegates of the Protecting powers shall have permission to go to all places where protected persons are, particularly to places of internment, detention and work.

They shall have access to all premises occupied by protected persons and shall be able to interview the latter without witnesses, personally or through an interpreter.

Such visits may not be prohibited except for reasons of imperative military necessity, and then only as an exceptional and temporary measure”

While such investigative, monitoring and reporting activities do not have the direct impact of a "protection force", the presence of international governmental observers could have a direct deterrent effect on Israeli violations.

Another group that could take on a protective function is the ICRC. Although the ICRC has been blocked from taking on its Article 11 role, it can still provide a modicum of protection for Palestinians, albeit limited. The ICRC has no enforcement capabilities, and according to its agreements with Israel it is only allowed to operate in Israel and the Occupied Territories so long as it limits its focus to "humanitarian" issues as defined by Israel. Addi-

tionally, the ICRC's policy of confidentiality effectively limits its ability to cooperate with both NGOs and governments. However, the ICRC can carry out a monitoring and reporting role, is mandated to visit prisoners, and can call upon Israel to respect the rights of the Palestinian population.

Forms of Protection

This next section briefly looks at five forms of protection that can be provided by the international community, detailing both their advantages and disadvantages, and outlining how each type of protection could be enforced. The five forms of protection addressed here are: direct international intervention through the deployment of a "protection force", direct international intervention through the deployment of a "monitoring force", direct governmental/consular intervention, indirect intervention through government imposed political or economic sanctions against Israel, and monitoring under the auspices of the ICRC or a similar international body that is already operating in the Occupied Territories.

A. Direct International Protection Through the Deployment of a "Protection Force"

More often than no, when calls for international protection have been made during the Intifada what has been envisioned is an armed force that can be deployed throughout the Occupied Territories to physically stop Israeli actions and to bring an end to the Occupation. While this option is the most emotively attractive, it is also the most problematic.

As discussed above, states do not have a right to unilaterally intervene using military force in situations of conflict, even to stop gross human rights violations. (The exception being in cases of Genocide when all states are legally obligated to intervene to bring a halt to all genocidal acts) Bodies such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the European Union (EU) or the Organization of American States (OAS) that function outside of the purview of the UN also retain only a limited right to take action internationally. Although in particular cases these bodies have intervened in cases of conflict, (most notably Nato's intervention in Kosovo) their right

to do so has been questioned. By and large these bodies are limited by the same restrictions regulating the use of force outside of their spheres of influence that limit the actions of individual states. Additionally, through their constitutions these bodies have without exception determined that the use of force to resolve disputes is illegitimate, that they should defer to the UN in the resolution of disputes, and that collectively or individually they should only take action to protect the security of member states. It is to the UN that Palestinians then must turn if a protection force is to be sent to the Occupied Territories.

However, at the UN level decisions on whether or not to intervene tend to be highly politicized and limited by individual states' interests. The UN does retain the right to send forces to an area of conflict to maintain international peace and security, but its decisions in this regard tend not to be made based on legal and humanitarian considerations as much as on considerations of state influence, politics and economics. A "protection force" deployed under UN auspices might be a possibility, but the likelihood that universal support for such a force will ever be gained among the five veto powers is slim.

Problems also begin to arise with this option when attempting to determine the exact mandate of any "protection force" that would be sent to the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Without a final solution to the current conflict or a plan for how to end the occupation, the placement of a protection force in the Occupied Territories could risk prolonging or legitimizing the Israeli occupation. A protection force deployed to maintain calm, to stop both Israeli and Palestinian human rights violations and to bring the situation back to where it was prior to the Intifada, which seems to be the goal of the international community at this time, is problematic. There is a risk that such a force could effectively bring the situation back to where it was prior to the current Intifada, while taking away Palestinians' right to protest that situation and leaving no guarantee that Israel will end its occupation. A protection force could serve to maintain the status quo on the ground while allowing no recourse for protest to the Palestinian population who would remain under occupation. Palestinian aspirations could become subject to the political desires of the powers controlling the intervention force. Additionally, although Palestinian organizations would argue that

the group requiring protection is the civilian Palestinian population, it is likely that a protection force would also be used to protect Israeli settlers and possibly Israeli soldiers, thus consolidating their presence in the Occupied Territories.

In this respect a number of questions must be asked. Will a protection force stop Israeli settlement? Will a protection force stop assassinations? Will a protection force end the closures and curfew? Etc. If the answer to any of these questions is yes, then the next question is how? A protection force must also receive universal Palestinian support before being deployed, and all political factions must agree to defer to its authority and to the peace dictates of the international community. Otherwise there is a risk of open conflict with the protection force. Finally, unless the international community is willing to risk open conflict with Israel it is unlikely to approve of such a force, whose deployment would require Israeli authorization.

Due to these considerations this type of protection does not look very attractive. If Palestinian organizations choose to lobby for a protection force careful and detailed planning must be carried out prior to taking action. It will not be enough to merely ask that a force be deployed. When requests for a protection force are made it must be clear what the mandate of such a force should be in order that it does not legitimize the occupation. The deployment of a force must also be accompanied by a revival of an advocacy strategy grounded in international law.

B. Direct International Protection Through the Deployment of a "Monitoring Force"

While not as problematic as a protection force, the potential effectiveness of an international monitoring force must be questioned. Without a clear human rights and humanitarian law mandate that obligates states to act when violations are pointed out to them, an international monitoring force's direct impact will be minimal. The Temporary International Presence in Hebron (TIPH) is a prime example of the limitations a monitoring force could face due to politics and poor planning. The constraints imposed upon TIPH's actions due to the political compromises that had to be made to gain Israel's permission to place observers in Hebron have meant that the

TIPH observers have no enforcement powers. TIPH's mandate also included no external enforcement mechanisms that obligate states to act upon TIPH's reports. Despite well-documented cases of abuse by settlers and Israeli military personnel directed at the local Palestinian population no actions have been taken to change the situation in Hebron. TIPH's reports are filed and reviewed by governments, but because no enforcement mechanisms were set up when the force was mandated, very few tangible benefits have accrued to the local community from their presence.

However, despite the ineffectiveness of TIPH and other monitoring missions carried out in the Occupied Territories to date, a monitoring force is not nearly as problematic as a protection force and, if carefully set up, could be made effective. If a monitoring force is set up with specific guidelines for action that delineate enforcement mechanisms or other procedures that are set up in tandem with the monitoring force to allow states or the UN to take action to halt ongoing Israeli violations of Palestinians' rights, this enforcement power would make a monitoring force worth pushing for. If the information gathered by a monitoring force could be used effectively by a secondary body to push for sanctions, to encourage states to place political pressure on Israel, or to take other actions aimed at ending Israeli human rights abuses then a monitoring force could be quite effective.

In attempting to push for the deployment of a monitoring force Palestinian Organizations should again focus attention on the United Nations. Pressure should be exerted upon the UN Security Council as well as the secretary general, who should be pushed to carry out his obligations under Paragraph 7 of UN Security Council Resolution 681 (1990), which reads,

"7. Also requests the Secretary-General to monitor and observe the situation regarding Palestinian Civilians under Israeli Occupation, making new efforts in this regard on an urgent basis, and to utilize and designate or draw upon the United Nations and Other personnel and resources present there, in the area and elsewhere, needed to accomplish this task and to keep the Security Council regularly informed".

C. Direct Governmental/Consular Intervention

States Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention have frequently been called upon to take action against Israeli violations of the Convention. In this regard, states with consular representatives in East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Territories can undertake functions of monitoring and investigating violations in the Occupied Territories. As addressed above, because of Israel's refusal to appoint a Protecting Power or to allow the Palestinian population to appoint a Protecting Power for the Occupied Territories as mandated by the Fourth Geneva Convention, States Parties representatives become the de facto Protecting Power. This power is important because it expands upon the diplomatic authority held by consular representatives, giving them the right under international humanitarian law to demand that they be allowed into all areas of the Occupied Territories to monitor and ensure that Israel is fulfilling its obligations under the Fourth Geneva Convention. Without needing to either negotiate with the Israeli authorities or gain the support of the UN, consulates can place staff members in the Occupied Territories as monitors at any time.

As with an international monitoring force, government monitors would not have the ability to intervene directly to immediately stop violations. However, indirectly the witnessing of Israel's systematic human rights violations by governments and the development of effective governmental reporting mechanisms would go a long way towards helping to push for the implementation of other measures aimed at ending Israel's violations, including sanctions and international boycotts. Many governments already have potential enforcement mechanisms in place that can be used to sanction Israel for its actions. It is now just a matter of effectively lobbying to have those mechanisms activated. However,

“The potential effect of such efforts is curtailed by the fact that the governments involved have so far asserted the jurisdiction of their consular representatives in such matters as a right rather than recognizing it also as a duty in the given circumstances. Furthermore, their willingness to engage in physical interventions of this kind varies according to their perception of the potential effect on ongoing political processes and the narrowly defined interests of their own state vis--vis Israel

Moreover, although the consulates are an important source of information for their respective governments on events in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, the reports they make to their departments are not, as a matter of routine, made publicly available, whether to their national constituency in the particular state or to the local and international human rights organizations monitoring the situation in the Occupied Territories. This increases bureaucratic latitude in assessing the likely political costs of taking action on any particular violation⁴

Unfortunately, the lack of openness in consular and governmental circles limits awareness of the populations in Consulates home countries to violations, and thereby limits outside pressure on governments to act. If Consular or governmental monitoring is to be effective an effort must be made to secure promises from governments stating that they will make public information gathered in the Occupied Territories. Governments must not only gather information, but must publicly report their findings and hold Israel accountable for their efforts to be effective. Government monitoring and reporting that raises international public awareness of the situation in the Occupied Territories can be effective. However, effectiveness is based on publicity of information and public action against Israeli human rights violations.

Despite these limitations, this option if carried out seems to be the best option for providing immediate protection to the Palestinian people living under occupation. The mechanisms necessary for governments to carry out a monitoring role are already in place. Consular human rights officers could take on much of the responsibility for this work. What is now necessary is an advocacy campaign to the international public that informs them of the monitoring role their governments should play and calling upon them to demand that their governments take action. Governments would also need to be pressured to make their findings and reports public. Even more than the UN or regional coalitions, individual states have the power to immediately sanction Israel for its actions. It is now Palestinian organizations' task to impel states to act to fulfill their obligations under international law.

⁴ Welchman, Lynn. "International Protection and International Diplomacy: Policy Choices for Third-Party States in the Occupied Palestinian Territories", pp. 62-3, *Al-Haq*, 2001

D. Indirect Intervention Through Government Imposed Economic or Political Sanctions Against Israel

Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter authorizes the UN Security Council to impose economic sanctions upon states that refuse to comply with its resolutions and that pose a threat to international security. Under their Article 1 obligations, States Parties to the Fourth Geneva convention are also authorized to take action against states that violate the Convention. Actions that should be taken against violating states are not delineated in the Convention, but could include sanctions. Other agreements such as the EU Association Agreements and national laws in the US and other areas also place limits on trade with nations that systematically violate human rights and these pieces of legislation can be used to place pressure on Israel to respect Palestinians' rights.

As was seen during the 1980's when the international community effectively used sanctions and divestment campaigns to isolate South Africa, economic sanctions and international isolation can be an effective way to induce states to respect human rights and international law. The downfall of sanctions is that their impact is not immediate and they do not fulfill the protective role of immediately stopping ongoing violations resulting from the current intifada. Any sanctions or related campaign would be most effective if implemented at a number of levels. The highest level would be at the UN. The approval and support of the UN General Assembly would greatly increase the likelihood of success of an international boycott. Second, individual states would need to take up the campaign, and third the international public would need to support such actions. The development of an international boycott of Israeli products by the citizens of the Middle East, the United States, Europe or other areas of the world would need to be carefully organized and coordinated. Pressure from the international public could build into support for economic action against Israel and increased calls for Israel's withdrawal from the Occupied Territories by governments.

E. Monitoring Under the auspices of the ICRC or a Similar International Body that is Already Operating inside the Occupied Territories

Despite limitations placed over the functioning of the ICRC by Israel, the ICRC has carried out a limited monitoring role in the past by visiting prisons and following up on cases of abuse. However, the ICRC is tightly restricted by internal regulations that do not allow it to effectively take on a major role in providing protection for the Palestinian population. Its ability to share information and to take action is minimal, and its sphere of influence is quite limited. At the same time, the ICRC's status as the "guardian" of the Geneva Conventions and as an internationally recognized humanitarian aid organization in theory gives it some room to act in the Occupied Territories. The organization could theoretically take on a more active role in monitoring prisons and other areas under its jurisdiction, and could take a more forceful stance in condemning Israeli violations and calling for change. Its long record of impartial service and commitment to humanitarian aid would make the organization a credible voice that wouldn't be ignored.

Other organizations functioning in the Occupied Territories that might take on a limited protection role such as the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) or the United Nations High Commission for Human Rights (UNHCHR) are also limited by their mandates. In 1988 UNRWA implemented a program that became known as the "program of general assistance and protection". Through this program approximately twenty observers known as Refugee Affairs Officers (RAO) were posted in the Occupied Territories with the purpose of observing and reporting on events in the field. The RAOs were able to effectively monitor events and produce reports on human rights violations they documented, but a lack of political will and international commitment meant that nothing came of the reports they produced, and no steps were taken to end violations. The program was appreciated locally, and could again provide a means for effective monitoring and reporting on violations to the international community. However, as with all other suggested means of protection there would need to be action taken by state to make this form of monitoring an effective protection tool.

The United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights has never taken on either a monitoring or protective role in the Occupied Territories. According to its mandate the organization's work in the Occu-

occupied Territories is limited to providing assistance to local human rights organizations and training in human rights to the local community. Despite this limitation both local staff and visiting international missions from UNHCHR offices abroad have expressed interest in having the organization take on a more proactive role in the future. A willingness to expand the local UNHCHR Office's mandates has also been expressed. Unfortunately the local offices mandate only comes under review every few years, limiting the ability of local staff to turn desires into reality.

In the end, while targeting such organizations may provide protection for specific portions of the Palestinian population, it is unlikely that these organizations can have a significant impact on changing the situation on the ground. Other international governmental or quasi-governmental bodies operating in the Occupied Territories are likely to face similar restrictions as are faced by the ICRC, UNHCHR and UNRWA due to restrictive mandates. At the same time, any assistance no matter how limited should be taken advantage of, and it would be worth approaching these organizations to ask that they take on a more proactive role in providing protection for the civilian Palestinian population.

Moving Forward

In deciding how to move forward it is first important to discuss the legal foundations upon which calls for protection can be built. It is of the utmost importance that any push for protection is built upon established public international law. This means that if the push for an international protection force gains momentum, Palestinian organizations must simultaneously begin to work to change the current discourse on the Palestinian/Israeli conflict so that discussions of protection and a solution are all carried out within a legal and rights framework rather than a political one.

The Palestinian Authority, Israel and the International Community must be pushed to both claim and stick to the legal narrative as the basis for any solution to the Palestinian/Israeli conflict. Under the Oslo framework Palestinians' rights became political issues that could be negotiated away. A protection campaign should work to provide Palestinians not only with immediate physical protection from human rights violation, but should also provide them with long-term protection by safeguarding their rights under

international law. Palestinian organizations must therefore work to get the international community to provide protection for the Palestinian people by forcing Israel to uphold international law until a final settlement.

Unfortunately, the international community and the PA have both moved away from using international law as the basis for a solution, making implementing international law difficult because of the alleged harmful effects it would have on the "political process". Moving away from international law takes away the most effective protective mechanisms available to the Palestinian people. An attempt must now be made to move discussion out of the realm of politics and into the realm of rights. As a part of this effort it will be necessary to push beyond the Oslo framework by pointing out the roots of the intifada in Oslo's failure to change the situation on the ground and bring an end to Israeli human rights abuses. If the current narrative is successfully changed protection will be gained for the civilian Palestinian population by getting the international community to press Israel to adhere to international law. This discussion is important within this context, as beyond immediate protection the ultimate aim of all actions must remain the just resolution of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.⁵

However, before pressure can be exerted in this direction, or in any other direction for that matter, an effort should be made to coordinate between PA Institutions and NGOs in the Occupied Territories, and also between local Palestinian NGOs and international solidarity organizations to decide on a unified plan of action for how to proceed effectively in a push for protection. The push for protection will move forward much more quickly if it is heard as a single request coming from a variety of directions rather than as a multitude of unfocused requests.

This is not to say that immediate efforts to secure protection should not be undertaken. Work to provide protection for the civilian Palestinian population could begin moving forward in a number of areas. Pressuring individual governments and their consulates to take on a monitoring role in the

⁵ Within the context of pushing states to respect international law and hold Israel accountable for its actions, a campaign for the prosecution of war crimes and grave breaches of the Fourth Geneva Convention committed in the Occupied territories should be built. The enforcement of international law in this respect will help to force Israel to cease its ongoing violations, thus providing protection to the Palestinian people.

Occupied Territories is a good possible first step. Beginning to push for the provision of a carefully mandated monitoring force could also commence, as could sanctions or boycott campaigns and discussions with international bodies in the Occupied Territories on how they could take on a more proactive protection role. However, each of these actions should be undertaken with an eye towards garnering broad based support that is unified with a single voice. Language and context must therefore be carefully considered. In all of these activities efforts should be made to expand beyond an NGO base to include academics, celebrities and political figures, gaining their support for a protection campaign and asking them to appeal to the UN and Governments on behalf of the Palestinian people.

Moving away from short and mid-term goals to look briefly at the long-term, work should focus on changing the international discourse on Palestine so that there is recognition and understanding by the international public of the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. If shown the reality of life in the Occupied Territories individuals tend to be supportive of Palestinian efforts to secure their rights, but much of the international public remains uninformed. The international public must be made to understand the reality of the Occupation and aware of the continued violation of Palestinians rights.

While this task may appear overwhelming, in the end the best protection that the Palestinian people can receive will come through international recognition of their rights as laid out under international law, a change in international opinion, and redirected peace efforts that focus on law.