

# **MEDIA STATEMENT**



## **Israel's lack of cooperation leads to cancelled visit by UN rights expert to the occupied Palestinian territory**

GENEVA (16 January 2015) – *An official information-gathering visit to the occupied Palestinian territory by a United Nations human rights expert was cancelled today until further notice for lack of cooperation of the Government of Israel.*

*The UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, Rashida Manjoo, was scheduled to visit the occupied Palestinian territory at the invitation of the Palestinian Authority from 19 to 29 January 2015 to obtain first-hand understanding of issues related to violence against women.*

“For the past six weeks, I have repeatedly sought the cooperation of the Government of Israel to facilitate access to the occupied Palestinian territory for me to undertake this visit. Regrettably, I did not receive the necessary support, including a visa by the Government of Israel, ahead of my travel, which is scheduled for tomorrow.

It is unfortunate that I have been denied the opportunity to engage directly with women survivors of violence, and that the exercise of my mandate has been hindered by the unwillingness of the Government of Israel, as the occupying power, to facilitate access to the occupied Palestinian territory.

My intention, as per practice during my country visits, was to support the Palestinian Authority to strengthen its capacity to protect and promote women’s rights and to meet its international human rights obligations.

The programme of the visit included meetings with Palestinian officials, law enforcement agents, representatives of civil society organisations and survivors of violence in different locations. It also included visits to prisons, refugee camps and shelters for women survivors of violence, among others.

I wish to express my gratitude to all those who have been involved in supporting the organization of this visit, in particular to the Palestinian Authority, representatives of civil society organizations, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the United Nations Country Team.

I remain interested in visiting the occupied Palestinian territory, and call on the Government of Israel, as the occupying power, to facilitate access to the territory.”

ENDS

*Ms. **Rashida Manjoo** (South Africa) was appointed Special Rapporteur on Violence against women, its causes and consequences in June 2009 by the UN Human Rights Council. Ms. Manjoo is a Professor in the Department of Public Law of the University of Cape Town. Learn more, visit: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Women/SRWomen/Pages/SRWomenIndex.aspx>*

*The Special Rapporteurs are part of what is known as the Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council. Special Procedures, the largest body of independent experts in the UN Human Rights system, is the general name of the independent fact-finding and monitoring mechanisms of the Human Rights Council that address either specific country situations or thematic issues in all parts of the world. Special Procedures experts work on a voluntary basis; they are not UN staff and do not receive a salary for their work. They are independent from any government or organization and serve in their individual capacity.*

*UN Human Rights, country pages:*

**Occupied Palestinian Territories:** <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/countries/MENARegion/Pages/PSIndex.aspx>

**Israel:** <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Countries/MENARegion/Pages/ILIndex.aspx>

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