

**Report on a panel discussion organised by the Graduate Institute in Geneva
and the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights**

On Monday, 13 November 2017, the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva held a panel discussion titled "Accountability at 50 years: Pursuing Justice in the Occupied Palestinian Territory", which was organized in cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. The speakers of the panel were Issam Aruri, Board Member of the Palestinian Independent Commission for Human Rights, Hagai El-Ad, Executive Director of B'Tselem and Prof. Robert Roth, Director of the Geneva Academy. The Panel was moderated by Prof. Paola Gaeta.

Among the main issues discussed by the panelists were allegations of impunity on the part of the Israeli authorities, Palestinian house demolitions in the West Bank and the triggering the International Criminal Court's jurisdiction by the Palestinian Authority. In particular, Hagai El-Ad referred to the need to hold Israeli officials accountable for actions committed against the Palestinian population which constitute war crimes in order to end the impunity. When asked about the Israeli policy concerning house demolitions in the West Bank, El-Ad noted that the illegality of the acts have been thoroughly established in legal writings, and that in spite of the large amount of applications submitted by Palestinian individuals to the Israeli High Court of Justice, the applicants remained unremedied. Issam Aruri noted that the State of Israel is protected by "super powers", and its leadership therefore enjoys impunity. Further questions raised by the public referred to Israel's alleged "apartheid" policy.

Prof. Gaeta mentioned the possibility of triggering the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court with respect to the situation in Palestine by different State Parties to the Rome Statute, and requested that Aruri elaborate on the reasons preventing the Palestinian Authority from pushing forward the proceedings it initiated before the Court. Aruri replied that the Palestinian Authority has refrained from doing so due to political and economic pressures faced by its leadership.

Prof. Robert Roth concluded the discussion by emphasizing the complexity of the conflict. He further noted with appreciation the admirable work conducted by non-governmental organizations in Israel in this context.

It should be noted that while the description of the panel discussion stated it "examines violations of International Humanitarian Law and International Human Rights Law, looking at both the Israeli and Palestinian legal systems", no official Israeli position was provided throughout the event.

