

# GICJ Report

May 2019



## **Summary of 2018 Annual Report** Geneva International Centre for Justice

## Geneva International Centre for Justice

### 2018 Annual Report

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# 2018 by the Numbers



4 Sessions



Human  
Rights  
Council

3 UPRs



6 Side Events



67  
Oral Statements



35  
Written Statements



3 Training  
Sessions



Other  
Activities



18  
Appeals



32  
International Day  
Articles



2  
Special Reports

## Participation in the United Nations Human Rights Council

37<sup>th</sup> Session – 26 February to 23 March 2018

GICJ participated in the 37<sup>th</sup> session of the Human Rights Council delivering 24 joint oral statements, submitting 18 written statements and co-hosting two side events on “The Role of Foreign Actors” focused on foreign actors increasingly transforming the Middle East and “15th Commemoration of the Invasion and Occupation of Iraq” on the consequences of the US-led invasion in 2003.

### Oral Statements

- [High-Level Segment – 8<sup>th</sup> meeting](#)

The Oral Statement alarmed the Council that institutional racism and racial discrimination is continuously widespread in all regions of the globe. Hate crimes are on the rise, and political leaders and people of influence use hate-speech which leads to stereotypes that de-humanize victims, which potentially lead to the most serious crimes such as ethnic cleansing or genocide. In addition, there are still numerous discriminatory laws currently in force under which particularly indigenous communities and civilians in the occupied Palestinian territories suffer. The Council should develop and adopt a multi-year program in support of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action (DDPA).

- [Item 3: Interactive Dialogue with the ‘Special Rapporteur on the Sale of Children, child prostitution and child pornography’](#)

The oral statement expressed concern about commercial international surrogacy arrangements because they encourage the exploitation of children and surrogate mothers living in poverty.

- [General Debate on Item 3: Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, and the right to development](#)

The first statement alerted the Council on the humanitarian situation in Iraq. 8.7 million people find themselves in need of humanitarian assistance 15 years after the invasion of Iraq by a US-led coalition. The bombing of IS strongholds by the US-led coalition has further destroyed Iraqi infrastructure while the justice system is ruled by corruption and brutality. The second statement stressed the role of water scarcity in armed conflict in the Middle East, particularly in Syria where water scarcity has aggravated the humanitarian situation. The deprivation of freshwater may be used as a “means of oppression”, as in the case of Israel, which impedes Palestinians from having access to their water sources. The third statement expressed concern about the protection of civilians in armed conflict. In inter-alia Syria, Yemen, Iraq, Sudan and Myanmar, the most atrocious crimes against humanity occur before the eyes of the international community, failing to protect uncountable civilians from persecution, untold suffering, and death. After seven years of conflict the suffering of civilians in Syria persists. The international community has the responsibility to act as a united front to prevent atrocity crimes wherever they occur.

- [Item 4: Clustered Interactive Dialogue with the Independent international fact-finding mission on Myanmar and the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar’](#)

The oral statement accentuated that the Rohingya refugees will only return to Myanmar if their safety was assured by the international community, and if they are no longer subjected to discrimination and persecution. These conditions are not met. Refoulement is an absolute prohibition under International Human Rights and Refugee Law. The repatriation deal will lead to further human rights violations against the Rohingya minority. Eventual voluntary

repatriation should take place under the supervision of international human rights monitors and relevant UN agencies, in safe, dignified, and sustainable conditions.

- [High-Level Panel Discussion on: Human Rights Violations of Children in Syria](#)

The oral statement addressed the most basic rights of children that are in peril focusing on health aspects. The destruction of the medical infrastructure and the lack of access for humanitarian assistance has led to malnutrition, forced recruitment by different parties and excessive violence all of which having an impact on the children's mental and physical well-being. Compliance with international human rights law and international humanitarian law must be ensured.

- [Interactive Dialogue with the Commission for Human Rights in South Sudan](#)

The oral statement highlighted the dire situation in South Sudan and called upon the international community to pay a close attention to violent attacks and human rights abuses. Further investigation into the root causes and into the external forces that contribute to the armed conflict is necessary. Humanitarian support for victims and refugees should be enhanced.

- [General Debate on Item 4: Human rights situations that require the Council's attention](#)

The people of Iraq commemorate 15 years since the illegal invasion by the U.S. which resulted in the destruction of the country as well as the loss of civilian lives. Many of the current problems faced by Iraqi citizens can be traced back to the 2003 invasion. Numerous human rights violations occur under the pretext of combating terrorism. After 15 years, it is time that the perpetrators of the crime of aggression are held accountable. The UN must improve their reporting practices on the human rights abuses and provide Iraqi citizens with necessary protection. A Special Rapporteur for Iraq must be appointed. The second statement addressed the failure of the international community to investigate and prosecute international crimes committed in Iraq since the illegal invasion and occupation 15 years ago. The large-scale systematic violations of international human rights and humanitarian law by various actors qualify as international crimes under the Rome Statute. Thus, the situation of Iraq must, in the absence of a credible national judiciary, be referred to the International Criminal Court or an ad-hoc international tribunal.

- [General Debate on Item 5: Human rights bodies and mechanisms](#)

The statement drew attention to the convoluted and complicated system of the OHCHR which prohibits actors of civil society to participate equally. The continuous reduction of civil society space at the Human Rights Council and the difficulties in the process of registration and accreditation for the Human Rights Council sessions lead to unequal opportunities for civil society organization, especially from developing countries, to attend the Council sessions. NGOs face several barriers which keep them from attending the HRC Sessions such as the registration via Internet. More transparency is also needed in the NGO oral statement online registration process. Communication between the Council and civil society in all UN languages should be enhanced in order to work towards collective and practical solutions together.

- [General Debate on Item 6: Universal Periodic Review](#)

The oral statement called the Council's attention to the lack of adherence to UPR recommendations by Iraq and Israel. Iraq has not shown any action in abolishing the death penalty, ceasing spread torture and ratifying the Second Optional Protocol to the ICCPR and the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture. Israel has failed to ratify the Protocols and enacted laws further discriminating against the rights of Palestinian citizens.

- [General Debate on Item 7: Human Rights situation in Palestine and other occupied Arab territories](#)

The oral statement underlined the grave human rights violations the Palestinian people are confronted with since 1967. It further highlights the recent development that Palestinians in East Jerusalem are arbitrarily deprived of their nationality. This does not only change the demographic composition of the occupied Palestinian territory but affects the Palestinians' basic human rights. The statement urged the Council to investigate whether Israel is committing genocide against the people of Palestine.

- [General Debate on Item 8: Follow-up to and implementation of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action](#)

The first statement reminded the Council of the importance of the protection of the free press, it being an integral part of the right to freedom of expression. The UN itself should also encourage journalists to publish critical report about the institution. The second statement pointed to the importance to support persons with disabilities because they continue to be disproportionately affected by conflict and humanitarian emergencies, especially in Iraq and Palestine.

- [General Debate on Item 9: Racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related forms of intolerance, follow-up to and implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action](#)

The statements called for the full and effective implementation of the Durban Declaration by all Member States and urge the OHCHR to clarify why funds that are intended for promoting the DDPA have been employed elsewhere contrary to the General Assembly's decision. In the face of an increase in intolerance, hate speech and armed conflicts fueled by racial and ethnical reasons it is more urgent than ever to promote the DDPA.

- [General Debate on Item 2: Annual report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and reports of the Office of the High Commissioner](#)

The first statement stressed the importance of early warning efforts involving systemic exclusion of discrimination and violence against minorities through the OHCHR's cooperation with affected groups, civil society, national and international stakeholders. The lack of respect of minority rights can create a dual system that subverts democracy and social cohesion. Minorities might even fall victim to atrocity crimes such as ethnic cleansing or even genocide because of hate speech. The second statement emphasized that in the current political narrative culture is often a tool for *Othering* and gives room for xenophobia to grow.

- [General Debate on Item 10: Technical assistance and capacity-building](#)

The first oral statement called for enhancing international cooperation and joint technical assistance to the people in Yemen in order to secure their safety, their access to humanitarian aid and their human rights. The second statement focused on grave situation of health and children, the main victims of the armed conflict in Yemen. Malnutrition and diseases such as diphtheria put hundreds of children on the verge of death.

## Written Statements

### [Democratic Space, Civil Society and Political Crisis in Burundi](#)

The democratic space in Burundi has continuously shrunk since 2013 and the political crisis has continued to worsen. Since Burundian President Pierre Nkurunziza in 2015 took a third term in office Burundi fell into political and civil turmoil that escalated to serious human rights abuses and violations. In addition, the current government has left several critical international bodies such as the Rome Statute, has weakened its cooperation with the Human

Rights Council in so far as denying the Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in Burundi access into the country, and has also taken several legal and non-legal steps to silence any opposition.

### Libya – Human Trafficking and Slavery

On 14th of November 2017, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights expressed deep dismay regarding the appalling conditions of detention facilities in Libya and concern over the plight of African migrants detained in these facilities. The victims are African migrants who were captured, trafficked, and/or tricked into slavery. This statement emphasizes the need to address the root causes of the human slave auctions in Libya including a serious investigation by a specialized UN mission guided by the UN Human Rights Council. Respect, dignity, and security for the human rights of African migrants *en route* to and under captivity in Libya must be protected. This statement also gave alternatives to detention and looked into international norms and customs on slavery, notable responses that warrant tackling root causes.

### United Nations Response to Iraq’s Humanitarian Crisis

The US-led invasion in 2003 increased armed violence and worsened the overall situation in Iraq. The security environment in the country is deteriorating day by day. Continuous armed conflict had a negative impact on every person and every aspect of life within the Iraqi society. Serious widespread and systematic human rights violations are reported in the conduct of armed groups, the U.S.-led coalition forces and the Iraqi government. Sectarianism and the danger of disintegration remain. Terrorism and criminal violence have become part of daily life in many parts of the country.

### Fighting terrorism in Iraq

Fifteen years after the invasion in Iraq, the so-called “war on terror” has led to severe numbers of Iraqi casualties, both civilian and combat troops, as a consequence of the indiscriminate and brutal ways in which this war has been fought. The Iraqi security forces and militias are committing brutal abuses and are ultimately contributing to an already very poor human rights situation. These abuses, in combination with anti-terrorism measures built into Iraqi law, and extreme war tactics, are responsible for a broad array of human rights violations. GICJ recommended that the UN investigate the legality and application of the Iraqi Anti-Terrorism Law, as well as establish an independent investigation committee to ensure accountability of all parties to the conflict that committed widespread and massive violations of international humanitarian and human rights law.

### Children and Armed Conflict in Iraq

The so-called ‘war on terror’ in Iraq is conducted in indiscriminate and brutal ways. The imperative of the Iraqi government, supported by the pro-governmental militias and international coalitions, worsens the situation on the ground by allowing security forces and militias to commit brutal abuses. As always, civilians are disproportionately affected by the conflict. Moreover, in Iraq children have a lot to endure. GICJ recommended to the UN to prosecute perpetrators of violations against children and to allocate the adequate resources to reintegrate children, with specific attention to psychological support. Further, GICJ urged the UN Office in Iraq to investigate the recruitment of children for training camps organized by the various parties to the conflict.

### Mosul: Rebuilding after Destruction and Bringing Accountability

Months after the end of the so-called “liberation” campaign conducted by Iraqi forces with the support of the international coalition that was led by the United States of America, many civilians in Mosul are still under the threat of Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) as well as the Iraqi Federal Police. Reports alleged that civilians are being indiscriminately abducted under the



suspicion that they may have been with or had ties with ISIS. As well, innocent civilians who have, or had relatives associated with ISIS are also under threat. The paramilitaries, primarily the Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) who are mostly backed by Iran, have also committed grave violations under the pretext of liberating Mosul. Mosul is in desperate need of humanitarian assistance to restore stability, security, and peace. This statement looked at steps towards moving forward and the barriers it entails as well as accountability of perpetrators and ensuring justice for victims.

### [War Crimes Committed During the War and Occupation of Iraq](#)

This statement focused on Coalition war crimes which warrant the establishment of an independent international tribunal that can investigate and prosecute such crimes. In an international armed conflict like the initial Iraq War, war crimes include all grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions, including: willful killing, torture or inhuman treatment, unlawful detention, deportation or transfer of a civilian, denying civilians or prisoners of war of fair trial rights, hostage-taking, and wanton destruction of and appropriation of property. An independent international tribunal for Iraq would strengthen international humanitarian law, provide victims an opportunity to voice the horrors they witnessed and experienced, would bring justice to the persons responsible for them, and would contribute to restoring and maintaining peace.

### [Holding the United States-Led Coalition that Invaded Iraq Responsible for the Crime of Aggression](#)

This statement focused on the troubling lack of accountability for the crime of aggression committed through the invasion of the Republic of Iraq in March 2003 by the United States. The failure to hold former government leaders accountable for this invasion is a grave threat to international law. Like previous international criminal tribunals, an independent international criminal tribunal for the crimes committed in the lead up to the Iraq War will further the cause of justice, enforce and uphold the rule of law, and further international accountability.

### [No Safe Haven: Palestinian Children under Israeli Military Occupation](#)

This statement highlighted that Palestinian children are among those whose most fundamental rights are violated on a consistent basis, as a result of Israel's prolonged belligerent occupation. Those rights, namely the right to life and safety, are continuously infringed as a result of Israel's daily military activities and settler violence, as well as due to destructive military campaigns. These have a cumulative effect on children, often leaving those that survive with lifelong injuries and psychological illnesses. The statement therefore recommended the international community to demand Israeli authorities to abide scrupulously by the State's obligations under the CRC in all territories under its control and to comply with the Fourth Geneva Convention.

### [Born into Injustice: The Impact of Institutionalized Discrimination on Palestinian Children](#)

Palestinian children fall victim to a discriminatory system, under which fundamental rights such as a healthy upbringing in a stable home and family environment are gravely obstructed. It discussed the detrimental impact on their right to home, family life, and residency; deprivation of liberty; and the right to health and stressed that the full enjoyment of Palestinian children's human rights will only be possible if Israel's occupation and institutionalized discrimination against Palestinians are ended.

### [Obstruction of Human Rights: US Recognition of Jerusalem as Capital of Israel](#)

The statement underlined that the US decision to officially recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel can be viewed as an attempt to legitimize Israeli control over the remaining Palestinian territory and to undermine Palestinians' legitimate historic, national, and legal

rights in Jerusalem. It does not change the internationally recognized status of Jerusalem, according to which East Jerusalem is illegally occupied and is the future capital of Palestine.

### [Exploitation and Control of Palestinian Natural Resources as Tools of Domination](#)

Numerous UN resolutions reaffirm permanent sovereignty by the Palestinian people over their natural resources, which is an essential element of the right of self-determination. However, Palestinian sovereignty is undermined by Israel's exploitation, damage and depletion of their natural resources, destruction of agricultural lands and orchards, as well as destruction, forced diversion or seizure of vital infrastructure. Such activities exacerbate the already critical socioeconomic and human rights situation of Palestinians. Natural resources are another tool to dominate and dehumanize Palestinians and to further undermine their prospects for self-determination. The statement recommended the relevant UN bodies to, inter alia, pressure Israel to end its policies of illegal appropriation and exploitation of Palestinian natural resources.

### [Forcible Repatriation of Rohingya: Disregard to the International Prohibition of Refoulement](#)

As a result of army crackdowns in Myanmar's northern Rakhine state in 2016 and 2017, approximately 750,000 Rohingya fled to Bangladesh. The atrocity crimes committed against Rohingya with an obvious intent to destroy this group may amount to the international crime of genocide. On 16 November 2017, the governments of Bangladesh and Myanmar signed a repatriation agreement. GICJ insisted that the repatriation deal between Bangladesh and Myanmar is extremely immature and that it will lead to more human rights violations against the Rohingya minority. The main conditions that must be met before any repatriation plan is implemented are an unconditional end to the violence and guarantees of non-recurrence.

### [South Sudan: The Urgent Need to Resolve the Current Conflict](#)

In South Sudan the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) and the Sudan People's Liberation Army in-Opposition (SPLA-IO) remain in conflict and continue to commit grave human rights violations against innocent civilians. It appears that the government is taking positive steps to alleviate the human rights violations committed, such as the recent introduction of registering SPLA soldiers into a biometric system. However, much more needs to be done to bring justice, healing and reconciliation to the victims. This statement investigated the humanitarian situation of children and the youth, testimonies of victims who experienced or fled the conflict, and the environment of impunity with regards to the armed conflict in South Sudan.

### [Attacks on Public Health Workers in the Syrian Arab Republic](#)

What began as anti-government protests in Syria's capital, Damascus, in March 2011 has spiraled into a devastating civil war. It is estimated that 400,000 Syrians are reportedly dead or missing since the beginning of the war. According to the UN and the Arab League Envoy to Syria, over 5 million Syrians have fled the country and 12 million people are internally displaced. According to the WHO, Syria is among the most dangerous countries for a health worker. Since the beginning of the conflict, 770 health care workers have been killed in Syria. In the same period, 147 humanitarian aid workers have been killed. Not only is this a grave loss of innocent lives, it also prohibits those in need of medical attention from receiving proper care.

### [Syria: UN Response to the Crisis](#)

It is estimated that more than half a million killed out of total population of 24.5 million since the beginning of the Syrian humanitarian crisis in March of 2011. In 2017, the Humanitarian Response Team of Whole Syria assessed that 13.5 million people need humanitarian assistance, including 4.9 million people, trapped in besieged and hard-to-reach areas. Over half of the population has been forced to leave their homes, and many people have been

displaced multiple times. Children and youth, millions of whom have known nothing but conflict, comprise more than half of the displaced as well as half of those in need of humanitarian assistance. Horrendous large-scale systematic human rights violations were and are being committed by the governmental forces, coalition military forces, ISIS and other non-state armed groups. These widespread and systematic violations could be qualified as international crimes.

### Yemen: The Failure to Protect

This statement called for a response to the Yemeni crisis through the UN and advocated for more effective UN actions to alleviate the suffering and to increase the protection of civilians. The transition process after the coup d'état in Yemen led to the civil war that continues to these days. Grave violations of the provisions of the 1949 Geneva Conventions by armed groups, Houthis and the Saudi-led armed forces amount to crimes against humanity and war crimes. The perpetrators of international humanitarian law and human rights violations should be brought to justice. Those crimes should be investigated promptly, thoroughly and impartially.

### Yemen: Women and Girls in Conflict

Yemenis have been experiencing an ongoing civil war since 2014 when the Houthis, an anti-government force, took control of the city of Sana'a. The conflict has quickly escalated into a dire humanitarian crisis. During these years of war, the Yemeni population has been witnessing multiple violations of international human rights and humanitarian law, such as enforced displacements, enforced disappearances, abductions, indiscriminate killings and attacks directed against civilians. In this context, the statement considered discrimination against women and the rights to education and healthcare as well as child marriage.

## Side events co-organized by GICJ

### “The Role of Foreign Actors”

On 8 March 2018 GICJ co-hosted the side event “The Role of Foreign Actors” with *Ius Primi Viri* (IPV). It focused on foreign actors who are increasingly transforming the Middle East and the historical fault lines. Simmering conflicts between local communities are exacerbated by outside actors. These State actors pitch segments of the same society against each other, often dividing societies into proxy militias prolonging the conflict. Three panelists offered their insight into this specific emergency.

### "15<sup>th</sup> Commemoration of the Invasion and Occupation of Iraq"

GICJ co-hosted the second side event "Invasion and Occupation of Iraq" with the International Organisation for the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (EAFORD), International Lawyers.Org and other organizations on 15 March 2018. It commemorated the consequences of the war of aggression which lacked the support of the Security Council. Although millions of lives were lost, even 15 years after the invasion, no one was held accountable.

### 38<sup>th</sup> Session – 18 June to 6 July 2018

GICJ participated in the 38<sup>th</sup> session of the Human Rights Council delivering 20 joint oral statements, submitting eight joint written statements and co-organizing two side-events.

The joint oral statements were delivered under items 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 of the agenda of the Human Rights Council as well as during the annual full-day discussion on the human rights of women. They are summarized in the next section and can be watched online.

The joint written statements addressed alarming human rights violations inter alia in Iraq, Myanmar, Yemen and Europe.

Finally, GICJ co-hosted two side events. The first side event “Health of Syrian refugees in Lebanon” focused on the difficulty for Syrian refugees to access health care services and goods. The second side event “Human Rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territory: Systemic Violation with Impunity” stressed Israel’s prolonged occupation of the Palestinian territory and aimed to bring to light the numerous human rights violations.

## Oral Statements

- [Item 2: Annual Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and Reports of the Office of the High Commissioner and the Secretary-General](#)

The oral statement expressed deep concern about human rights violations in Europe. Increasing numbers of asylum-seekers in south-eastern Europe find themselves trapped, constantly facing the threat of being deported back to their country of origin. While waiting for the outcome of their asylum applications, they face very poor living conditions. The statement stressed the increase in racism and xenophobia and called upon the international community to work towards a hospital ambient for asylum-seekers in Europe.

- [Annual Full-Day Discussion on the Human Rights of Women – Panel 2: Advancing Women’s Rights in the Economic Sphere through Access and Participation in Information and Communication Technologies \(ICTs\)](#)

The oral statement in Panel 2 underlined the significance of fighting for equality in digital spaces. Since ICTs become increasingly important, it is central to advocate for the role of women in this field. The statement raises the concern that the access to the Internet as well as ICTs in many countries is limited and draws the Council’s attention to those women and girls who are in need of basic education to access ICTs.

- [Item 3: Promotion and Protection of all Human Rights, Civil, Political, Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, including the Right to Development](#)

In response to the report of the Special Rapporteur the oral statement drew the Council’s attention to the acute public health challenges faced by refugees. It addressed specifically Lebanon’s policy adopted in 2015, whereby an annual fee of 200 USD must be paid by refugees to maintain their legal status. This stripped more than 60 % of the refugees from their legal status and constitutes, thus, a de facto deprivation of liberty. The statement called upon the Lebanese government to abolish the annual fee and upon the Special Rapporteur to further investigate into health concerns faced by refugees.

- [General Debate on Item 3: Promotion and Protection of all Human Rights, Civil, Political, Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, including the Right to Development](#)

The oral statement addressed the vulnerability of children in Yemen. They are affected by violations of international humanitarian law and face several violations of their most basic human rights, such as the rights to water and education. It further stressed the urgency to establish a ceasefire agreement and called upon the parties to respect their human rights and international humanitarian law obligations. The second oral statement addressed the rights of migrants and stated that the failure of states to provide protection for people fleeing from harm constitutes a serious violation of international law. It further called upon the countries to treat migrants humanely and upon the Council to condemn those countries that refuse to offer protection.

- [Item 4: Human Rights situations that require the Council's attention – Interactive Dialogue with the Commission of Inquiry on Burundi](#)

The oral statement expressed regret that Burundi refused to fully cooperate with the CoI. It further stressed the remaining concern regarding the overall humanitarian situation, especially the deadly massacre in May and grave human rights violations including torture, extrajudicial killings and forced detention. Further, the statement asked the CoI for an update on the status of Burundi with the International Criminal Court as well as what measure are being taken to address root causes.

- [Item 4: Human Rights situations that require the Council's attention – Interactive Dialogue with: Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Myanmar](#)

The oral statement stressed the repercussions of climate change on the fulfillment of human rights in Myanmar which is one of the three most vulnerable countries in the world in this regard. Those threats include the spread of infectious diseases as well as food and water insecurity. This is an additional impediment to the return of the Rohingya. GICJ urged the Council to ensure that Myanmar will adopt protection measures regarding climate change and to ensure basic human right for population including all ethnicities.

- [General Debate on Item 4: Human Rights situations that require the Council's attention](#)

The oral statement highlighted the consequences of the illegal invasion of Iraq and occupation of 2003. Regarding the recent national and parliamentary elections in Iraq, we noted that they brought along reports of fraud, societal confusion about the electoral results, and acts of intimidation for voters. The statement urged the Council to ensure a fair and transparent electoral process in Iraq. The oral statement criticized the infringement of human rights under the pretext of combating terrorism around the globe. In Iraq specifically, systematic and grave human rights violations are committed against civilians including arbitrary arrest and the retrieval of confessions under torture. The fight against terrorism is tremendously important but it will be impossible to succeed if the governments themselves disregard international human rights standards.

- [General Debate on Item 5: Human Rights Bodies and Mechanisms](#)

The oral statement expressed grave concern about the protection of the right to health as well as the impact of climate change on the realization of human rights around the globe. It further expressed regret regarding the insufficient action by the international community and urged the Council to appoint a Special Rapporteur on human rights and climate change.

- [Item 5: Human Rights Bodies and Mechanisms – Report of the Working Group on Business and Human Rights](#)

The oral statement welcomed the discussion on an international legally binding agreement and on civil liability in home countries of transnational companies. It stressed that international human rights law must remain above economic and business law. To this end, an international legally binding agreement to end corporate impunity is needed.

- [Item 6: Universal Periodic Review – Consideration of the Universal Periodic Review Outcome of Mali](#)

The oral statement encouraged the continuous action to combat impunity, child labor and women's participation in conflict management. However, there are concerns about allegations of human rights abuses related to the Joint Force of Five. Investigation is needed in this regard as well as the compliance with international law by the military courts.



- [Item 6: Universal Periodic Review – Consideration of the Universal Periodic Review Outcome of the United Arab Emirates](#)

The oral statement called upon the UAE to ratify the ICCPR and ICESCR and to establish a moratorium on the death penalty, as a step towards the complete abolition of this practice. It particularly emphasized the importance of ensuring the freedom of expression.

- [General Debate on Item 6: Universal Periodic Review](#)

The oral statement pointed the Council's attention to the absence of Israel and to the human rights violations in Palestine. Moreover, the cooperation of the UAE and its acceptance of most of the recommendations was pointed out.

- [General Debate on Item 7: Human Rights Situation in Palestine and Other Occupied Arab Territories](#)

The oral statement reminded the international community that Israel has failed to implement all relevant UN resolutions that seek to protect the basic rights of Palestinian people. There has been no other example in recent history where a people had been placed in such an inhumane situation for such an extended period. The statement called upon the Council to initiate an investigation into the continuing violations of human rights and whether the State of Israel is committing the international crime of genocide and to pressure the State Israel to comply with international law. The second oral statement concerned the relocation of the US embassy from Tel-Aviv to Jerusalem. The practice of the US is a direct violation of several UN resolutions about the City of Jerusalem. Israel maintains discriminatory systems and systematic abuses of human rights against the Palestinian population. The statement urged the UN to ensure protection and to take all necessary measures to finally end the occupation of Palestine.

- [General Debate on Item 8: Follow-up and implementation of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action](#)

The oral statement expressed concern about the shrinking NGO space with the UN system and emphasized the importance of civil society in the process of implementing human rights.

- [General Debate on Item 9: Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Forms of Intolerance, Follow-up to and Implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action](#)

The oral statement urged the Council to reiterate its commitment to the Durban Declaration in its words and deeds. An effective implementation into national legislation of each state is crucial for continuing to combat all forms of discrimination in order to realize human rights for

- [Item 10: Technical Assistance and Capacity-Building - Interactive Dialogue with the Independent Expert on the Situation of Human Rights in Central African Republic](#)

The oral statement particularly denounced incitement to violence which has provoked numerous instances of violence against groups based on their ethnicity and religion. In light of the deteriorating situation in Central African Republic GICJ asked the Independent Expert what specific measures towards combating hate speech would be effective and what assistance the international community could provide towards achieving this result.

- [General Debate on Item 10: Technical Assistance and Capacity-Building](#)

The first statement highlighted on the one hand the need for financial and technical assistance in Mali and the Central African Republic. On the other hand, it pointed to the threat of rising

sea-levels affecting many Pacific Island states. These states depend on larger countries to implement reforms that might prevent more drastic warming of the Earth's atmosphere.

## Written Statements

### Children in Yemen: the future of a whole generation is under threat

This statement focused on children as one of the most vulnerable categories of the population which is most affected by the ongoing conflict in Yemen. They face both violations of their most basic rights such as the right to education and health. They are equally directly or indirectly affected by numerous violations of international humanitarian law committed by all parties of the conflict. GICJ pointed to the worrisome practices of child marriages and child recruitment.

### Cancer: The Public Health Challenge for Syrian Refugees in Lebanon

The large influx of refugees in Lebanon has exacerbated the political, economic and security challenges of the country, such as those faced by Syrian refugees in terms of accessing to health care, such as no access to legal status and financial hardship.

### Death Penalty and Summary Executions in Iraq

The statement emphasized that the increasing number of executions in Iraq, where death penalty and extrajudicial executions are tools of political repression to eliminate political opponents and maintain a reign of terror over the Iraqi population under the pretext of combating terrorism.

### Freedom of Expression and Association in Iraq

The statement expressed concern about the violations of freedom of expression and association in Iraq with numerous cases of violence used against peaceful protestors and kidnapping of activists and journalists and a climate of impunity surrounding these illegal practices.

### South-Eastern Mediterranean: The incorporation of the EU Asylum Directives in the South-Eastern EU Countries

The joined written statement focused on the incorporation of the EU Asylum Directives in Greece, Italy, Malta and Cyprus, namely the countries which constitute the main points of entry of asylum seekers in Europe. The full and correct incorporation of the Directives in the national legal orders of the South-Eastern EU Member States constitutes an imperative need.

### Myanmar: Freedom of the Press should be Urgently Restored

The written statement focused on the issue of freedom of the press in Myanmar. The Myanmar government maintains tight control over the media sector using harsh defamation laws. GICJ submitted that the prosecution and threats against journalists hampers the unveiling of the truth regarding the Rohingya crisis and the transition of Myanmar to democracy.

### Occupied Palestinian Territory Occupation – No End in Sight

This written statement put emphasis on the ongoing occupation of the Palestinian Territories by the state of Israel as a whole and on the resulting serious human rights situation. It deserves the full attention of the Human Rights Council and the international community at large.

### Growing Racism and Xenophobia in Europe

The statement focused on the rise of racism and xenophobia during the last decade in Europe. Extremists have unjustly put the blame for the economic and political crises on the increasing

influx of migrants. Politicians and the media have a crucial part to play in combating racism and xenophobia as emphasized by several existing conventions and resolutions.

### **Side events co-organized by GICJ**

#### **“Health of Syrian refugees in Lebanon”**

Jointly organized in June 2018 by GICJ, EAFORD and International-Lawyers.Org, this side event focused on the current situation and health challenges of Syrian refugees in Lebanon and welcomed as speakers Kelsi Kriitmaa (IOM), Dr. Melanie Samson (UICC) and Nour Hamada (Pharmacist and Researcher).

#### **“Human Rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territory: Systemic Violations with Impunity”**

This side event focused on Israel’s prolonged occupation of the Palestinian territory including systematic human rights abuses and illegal settlements. Co-sponsored by GICJ, EAFORD, International-Lawyers.Org, and Euro-Med Monitor, GICJ was honored by welcoming among the speakers Mr. Michael Lynk, Special Rapporteur on the situation of Human Rights in the Palestinian Territory Occupied since 1967.



### 39<sup>th</sup> Session – 10 September to 28 September 2018

GICJ participated in the 39<sup>th</sup> session of the Human Rights Council delivering 20 joint oral statements, submitting nine joint written statements and co-sponsoring two side events.

The joint oral statements were delivered under items 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 of the agenda of the Human Rights Council. They are summarized in the next section and can be watched online. The joint written statements addressed alarming violations of human rights in, inter alia, South Sudan, Israel, Iraq and Myanmar. GICJ co-hosted two side events entitled “Toward Peace in Yemen – Human Rights Violations: Root Causes” and “The Case of Iraq: The Human Rights Council and Mass Human Rights Violations”.

## Oral Statements

- [Item 2: Annual report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and reports of the Office of the High Commissioner and the Secretary-General](#)

The statement welcomed the new High Commissioner Michelle Bachelet and her focus on women’s and children’s rights to health care and development. GICJ emphasized that equal protection and resources should be provided for the protection of both civil and political as well as economic and social rights. GICJ also called for a greater expert capacity in human rights and climate change in the OHCHR. On the right to privacy in the digital age GICJ emphasized that a digital personality, which is not necessarily identical to our real personality, enjoys the same freedoms and rights. Effective national legal frameworks are necessary to protect individuals against unlawful or arbitrary interference from surveillance measures.

- [Item 3: Promotion and Protection of all Human Rights, Civil, Political, Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, including the Right to Development – Interactive Dialogue with Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Slavery](#)

The oral statement underlined that migrant domestic workers and especially women domestic workers face slavery-like conditions and serious human rights abuses such as sexual violence. It asked the Special Rapporteur to elaborate on whether bi-lateral migrant workers agreements are effective and whether similar bilateral agreements concerning foreign domestic workers would be possible. The Member State should ensure access to justice and effective remedies for domestic migrant workers.

- [Item 3: Promotion and Protection of all Human Rights, Civil, Political, Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, including the Right to Development – Interactive Dialogue with Special Rapporteur on Safe Drinking Water and Sanitation](#)

The oral statement underlined the deteriorating availability and quality of water in Basra, Iraq. The invasion and occupation of Iraq destroyed water purifying systems and other infrastructure. Further, corruption within Iraq results in a lack of leadership which was identified as an obstacle to safe drinking water and sanitation by the Special Rapporteur’s report.

- [General Debate on Item 3: Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development](#)

The statement focused on the dire human rights situation in Iraq fifteen years after the illegal war by stressing the abhorrent situation of detention and prisons in Iraq; hundreds of thousands are arbitrarily detained, and the prisons are consequently overcrowded. It is on the international community to address the situation that was initially created by foreign intervention.

- [General Debate on Item 4: Human Rights Situations that Require the Council's Attention](#)

These statements denounce the human rights situation in Iraq including the wide use of the death penalty by the government and the desperate situation of prisoners in detention centers. In Basra, as the High Commissioner mentioned in her opening statement, the police completely disregarded the freedom of expression and association by using violence against civilians protesting against water shortages and water pollution. The silence of the Council on human rights violations in Iraq has exacerbated the situation. Arbitrary arrests, mass executions, and torture take place under the pretext of terrorism. There is neither an effective education system nor a health system nor an independent judiciary. The UN and many states are responsible for the slow deaths of thousands of Iraqis and that all perpetrators should be brought to justice.

- [Item 4: Human Rights Situations that Require the Council's Attention – Interactive Dialogue with the Commission of Human Rights in South Sudan](#)

The joint oral statement drew the Council's attention to the recent development that in 2018, South Sudan tops the list of violence against humanitarian operations for the third year straight. Further, civilians and particularly children face horrible violent attacks and statelessness persists due to administrative challenges and continuous poverty. The statement therefore asked the Commission to explain their way of addressing statelessness and what steps they take to ensure safety of aid workers and reintegration of child soldiers into society.

- [General Debate on Item 5: Human Rights Bodies and Mechanisms](#)

The oral statement expressed deep concern about the shrinking civil society space as well as the heavy budget cut decided on earlier in 2018. Meanwhile the total workload of this Council more than doubled. This will lead to less efficiency, less data and a reduction of expertise. Further, GICJ informed about acts of intimidation, personal attacks and other behavior of that nature against NGO representatives by members of the Human Rights Council.

- [General Debate on Intergovernmental Working Group on Rights of Peasants under Item 5: Human Rights Bodies and Mechanisms](#)

The oral statement supported the experts' suggestion of including food sovereignty and the term "Mother Earth" in the Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and emphasized the importance of having a voice in shaping the food supply and agricultural system.

- [Item 7: Human Rights Situation in Palestine and Other Occupied Arab Territories – Interactive Dialogue with the Commission of Inquiry on Occupied Palestinian Territories](#)

The joint oral statement points to the clear responsibilities of an occupying power set out in international law which Israel clearly fails to comply with. Confronted with consistent and recurring violations of human rights, it is no surprise that Palestinians subjected to such conditions protest. The Commission should examine the links between the March protest and the ongoing occupation and isolation of Palestinian territory.

- [General Debate on Item 7: Human Rights Situation in Palestine and Other Occupied Arab Territories](#)

The first oral statement particularly underlined the recent intent of demolition of the village Khan al Ahmar that will result in the forced relocation of its 188 citizens. This action of forced displacement is a war crime under international law and will further the illegal expansion of Israel. The Council and the concerned bodies must act to put an end to the Israeli occupation of Palestine. The second oral statement during the General Debate on Item 7 called upon the international community to dedicate resources to improve the daily situation of Palestinians. As the ICJ has reasoned in its advisory opinion on the wall constructed by Israel, all states are under an obligation not to recognize or assist in the illegal situation

resulting from the construction of the wall. Therefore, the international community should work together to end the belligerent occupation of the Palestinian territories.

- [General Debate on Item 8: Follow-up to and implementation of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action](#)

The oral statement highlighted the shrinking civil society space giving the example of the limitations of invitations for interested people outside the UN to attend side events. From this session, it has been limited to only five persons. Further, GICJ criticized the accreditation process as being inconvenient particularly for people with limited internet access.

- [General Debate on Item 9: Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Forms of Intolerance, Follow-up to and Implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action](#)

The first oral statement called for all members of the Council to adopt and implement the DDPA. Urgent action is needed regarding the trend across the globe toward closing borders and blaming migrants and racial minorities for crimes and other social ills. The second oral statement emphasized that nowadays political parties and persons in positions of power continue to spread disinformation as well as inaccurate portrayals of migrants and people with different ethnic backgrounds. The intended result is to instill fear of vulnerable groups among the population. GICJ expressed concern that this form of manipulation can lead to the enactment of discriminatory and racist laws.

- [General Debate on Item 10: Technical Assistance and Capacity-building](#)

The statement emphasized the need to address the conflict in Yemen effectively by investigating and recognizing the main root causes of the actual situation and by encouraging and supporting the National Dialogue. The international community must take actions against all parties that are supporting the Houthis with the supply of arms and weapons. The second oral statement reminded the Council of the resolutions of the Security Council, which have demanded an end to the fighting and outlawed the arming of the Houthis and other destabilizing militia groups. The UN must have a consistent approach towards ending the conflict because that is the only lasting solution for Yemeni civilians.

## Written Statements

### [A Look into Modern Day Slavery](#)

Countries have implemented numerous laws to prohibit any forms of slavery practices, however, new forms of contemporary slavery have appeared, and countries have failed to prevent them. GICJ called on the international community to boycott campaigns against products made by enslaved persons, those produced by children and to strengthen the security with regards to human trafficking. States should implement economic reforms prohibiting any forms of exploitation in the workplace with the focus on child labor and slavery, ensuring transparency in the business environment (including the whole supply chains).

### [Aid Workers, Children in Armed Conflict, and Statelessness in South Sudan](#)

For the third year straight, South Sudan tops the global list of violence against humanitarian operations. Since the beginning of the civil war in 2015 over 19,000 children were recruited and used by both warring parties and other government security forces and armed groups. Numerous incidents have been documented and reported of horrible violent attacks that killed and maimed hundreds of children and cases of sexual violence against girls are also on record. The Human Rights Council should urge the international community to reinforce and enhance security measures towards humanitarian aid operations in South Sudan, especially the most vulnerable and remote areas.

### Basic Law: Israel as a Nation-State of the Jewish People

On 19 July 2018, the government of Israel further deepened the concerns of the international community regarding its institutionalized discrimination against national minorities, notably Palestinian and Arab populations within its territory, by adopting a divisive new nation-state law. By nature, this law automatically excludes and discriminates against Palestinians and other minorities. Inter alia, GICJ urged the Security Council as the main promoter and protector of peace to take initiatives along with the General Assembly and other relevant bodies to remedy this decades-long tragedy by condemning the discriminatory measures taken by Israel.

### Burundi – Acts of Violence, Intimidation, and Threats by Imbonerakure

In 2017, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein acknowledged the dangerous threat of the Imbonerakure, the youth wing of the current ruling party CNDD-FD. He strongly condemned their “grotesque rape chants” during rallies in Burundi where they made repeated calls to impregnate or kill party opponents. In 2018, reports have revealed numerous instances where certain groups of people were forced by the Imbonerakure to attend rallies and events of the current ruling party. In order to bring a halt to the abuses committed by the Imbonerakure, GICJ called on the government of Burundi to hold the Imbonerakure accountable and provide them with human rights training.

### Crimes Committed During the War and Occupation of Iraq

The written statement underlined that the extent of Coalition crimes in Iraq warrants the establishment of an independent international tribunal that can investigate and prosecute such crimes. This tribunal should also investigate whether the crimes committed during the Iraq War amount to genocide under international law. An independent international tribunal for Iraq would provide an opportunity for victims to voice the horrors they witnessed and experienced and would contribute to restoring and maintaining peace.

### Myanmar – The Continued Struggle of Rohingya for Citizenship

In January 2018, the governments of Bangladesh and Myanmar signed an agreement to allow the repatriation of Rohingya refugees that fled to Bangladesh after the violence broke out in Rakhine State. In June 2018, the agreement between the government of Myanmar, UNHCR, and UNDP entered into force. Despite this, the Rohingya have not returned to Myanmar. The government of Myanmar has failed to dismantle any discriminatory laws, policies and practices against the Rohingya which makes it hard or rather impossible for the refugees to return to their homes soon. GICJ urged the government of Myanmar to dismantle the discriminatory laws and to work with the UN Fact-Finding Mission. Access to Rakhine State should be provided to the High Commissioner, the Special Rapporteur, and the Commission of Inquiry.

### The Context of the Conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

The humanitarian crisis in the DRC has gravely affected civilians. Violence and human rights abuses continue to intensify and spread. Recent reports have also revealed that aid workers and asylum seekers have been the victims of shootings by Congolese soldiers in South Kivu. The DRC government should comply with its obligations under IHL and IHRL and ensure that the training of the National Security Forces is efficient and effective and that it is extended to any authority officer. Inter alia, GICJ urged the Human Rights Council to closely monitor the human rights situation prior to and after the December 2018 elections.

### Truth and Justice with Respect to the Iraq War

This statement focused on the troubling lack of accountability for the crime of aggression committed through the invasion of the Republic of Iraq in March 2003 by the United States of

America. The lack of accountability sets a dangerous precedent. Since the domestic judicial mechanisms of the United States, other Coalition countries or the victim country (Iraq) may be ineffective in prosecuting or otherwise examining the issue of aggression, there is a need for an alternative and international judicial platform. GICJ recommended that the Human Rights Council should urgently endorse an international independent investigation and an international tribunal to look into these allegations.

### [Systematic Grave Violations Against Peaceful Demonstrators in Iraq](#)

On 8 July 2018, the Iraqi population began a series of new demonstrations in the cities of Basra, Wasit, Maysan, Diwaniyah, Samawah, Dhi Qar, Najaf, Karbala and the capital Baghdad. Demonstrators expressed their frustration about the lack of jobs and basic services, including water and electricity. Concurrently, there was a very high security alert by government authorities who used threats and intimidation tactics with the help of associated militias, security forces, and party leaders against many of the activists. The freedom of assembly and association as well as the freedom of expression are guaranteed by the ICCPR to which Iraq is a party. Among other recommendations, GICJ urged the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression to make a country visit to Iraq.

## **Side events co-organized by GICJ**

### [Toward Peace in Yemen – Human Rights Violations: Root Causes](#)

In September 2018, GICJ co-hosted a side event on the root causes of the civil war in Yemen. The side event examined the impact of the report of the Independent Experts and how the Security Council resolutions had been implemented by the parties, member states and the UN.

### [The Case of Iraq: The Human Rights Council and Mass Human Rights Violations](#)

On 25 September 2018, GICJ co-hosted its second side event on the failure of the UN to act in relation with the human rights violations in Iraq. Two former UN officials who served in Iraq suggested that the whole UN presence in Iraq can be better replaced by appointing a Special Rapporteur. The third panelist focused on accountability in Iraq including how to proceed with the crime of aggression against Iraq.

## **Participation in the Universal Periodic Review**

### [Israel](#)

On 23 January 2018, the third national report of the UPR of Israel was presented by Ambassador Aviva Raz Shechter, Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations, and Ms. Emi Palmor, Director General of the Ministry of Justice. In her opening remarks, Ambassador Schechter accused the UN Human Rights Council of issuing “biased resolutions” against Israel. Nevertheless, the delegation expressed its strong commitment to UN human rights mechanisms – despite its “unique security situation, regional instability and incitement against its right to exist”. She emphasized new initiatives and measures taken with respect to women, the LGBT community and people with disabilities. The situations of Palestinians in the occupied territories was not examined. Several UN Member States criticized Israel for failing to abide by its international human rights obligations and UN resolutions, particularly by rejecting the applicability of the Geneva Conventions to the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Most Member States further called on Israel to end the occupation and annexation of Palestinian land, the construction and expansion of Israeli settlements, the demolition of Palestinian homes and structures, and the forcible transfer of Palestinians. Some referred to the need to end the blockade of the Gaza Strip.



## China

On 6 November 2018, the third national report of the UPR of China was presented by Mr. Le Yucheng, China's Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs. The Vice Minister talked about individual rights and ethnic groups. Freedom of expression and religious belief is protected according to the law. China has the largest number of internet users in the world at over 800 million, thus demonstrating how freely people can express themselves. China has advanced women's rights, enhanced the protection of children, developed an elderly care system, and created a living allowance system for persons with disabilities. All fifty-five ethnic minority groups are represented at the National People's Congress. States praised China's effort in reducing poverty levels and enhancing South-South cooperation. However, concern was expressed regarding China's failure to ratify the ICCPR, its continued use of the death penalty and about the treatment of certain minorities especially Muslims, Tibetans and Uyghurs including forced labor and re-education camps.

## Participation in other UN Meetings and Conferences

### 28<sup>th</sup> Special Session of the Human Rights Council on Human Rights Situation in Palestine

GICJ participated in the twenty-eighth Special Session of the Human Rights Council on the deteriorating human rights situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territories including East Jerusalem, which was convened on 18 May 2018 due to the rapid escalation in violent attacks against Palestinian protesters during the Great March of Return demonstrations and specifically the excessive use of lethal force by Israeli's army against the demonstrators.

### Business and Human Rights

In November 2018 the United Nations Office in Geneva hosted the 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Forum on Business and Human Rights (Forum) with this year's central theme being '*Business respect for human rights – building on what works.*' The Forum is the foremost event to network, share experiences and learn about the latest initiatives to promote corporate respect for human rights.

### Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

On the 97<sup>th</sup> session of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, GICJ contributed to the review on racial discrimination in Iraq, met with members of the Committee to discuss several areas of concern and provide recommendations on actions Iraq should take to end racial discrimination. GICJ provided a background on Iraq and its historical lack of racial discrimination, compared to the current situation.

## Human Rights Training Courses in 2018

In 2018, GICJ organized and carried out three Human Rights Training Courses in order to contribute to the promotion of human rights all around the world. They took place in January, March and November. During the workshops, participants get an overview of the history and the mandate of the UN human rights bodies, receive detailed information on the mandate of the Council, the permanent agenda, the membership, the regular and special sessions and the decision-making process, attended official sessions of the UPR or the Human Rights Council.

## GICJ Appeals for Action

In 2018, GICJ issued 18 appeals for actions focusing, among others, on the following issues: Protests in Iran and the Violent Response of the Authorities, 27 Years Waiting Accountability for the Victims in Iraq, Never Forget: The Right of Return of Palestinian Refugees, the

Memorandum of Understanding between the UN Agencies and the Government of Myanmar, Iran's continuous practice of mass executions without any guarantees of fair trial, Human rights violations against Sudanese protesters.

## **GICJ Reports**

### **Arriving in EU: Renewed Hope or New Threats?**

On 14 June 2018, GICJ published a report about the EU's policy regarding asylum procedures and reception of asylum seekers. It focused particularly on the EU directives 2013/32/EU and 2013/33/EU. For the time being, the transposition of the directives can be claimed to mirror the unequal legislative and policy situation in EU Member States. The full and correct implementation of the directives in the national legal orders is imperative.

### **Working Toward Peace in Yemen: Building on the Security Council Framework**

In September 2018, GICJ published a report on the devastating situation in Yemen in order to highlight the need for the UN and the international community to work toward peace and to end the ongoing conflict. Without an honest examination of the main causes, whether they be sectarian in nature, economic, or otherwise, there will be no peace and likely no end to the human rights violations resulting from the ongoing conflict.

## **International Days Reports 2018**

In 2018, GICJ published 31 articles in order to explain its position on several international issues celebrated by the UN International Days such as the Zero Discrimination Day, the International World Water Day, the World Press Freedom Day, the World Refugee Day, the World Day against Child Labor, the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, the International Holocaust Remembrance Day, and the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

# **Geneva International Centre for Justice**

*Independent, non-profit, non-governmental organization*

GICJ is an independent, non-profit, non-governmental organization dedicated to the promotion and reinforcement of commitments to the principles and norms of human rights. GICJ is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland and is governed by the Swiss Civil Code and its statutes. Basing its work on the rules and principles of International Law, International Humanitarian Law and International Human Rights Law, GICJ observes and documents human rights violations and seeks justice for victims through all legal means available.

## **Mission**

GICJ's mission is to improve lives by tackling violations and all forms of violence and degrading or inhumane treatment through the strengthening of respect for human rights; reinforcing the independence of lawyers and judiciaries; consolidating the principles of equity and non-discrimination; ensuring that rule of law is upheld; promoting a culture of awareness on human rights; and combating impunity.

## **Work**

GICJ has been tackling issues of justice and accountability since it was established. GICJ maintains a partnership with various NGOs, lawyers and a vast civil society network around the world. Through these channels, GICJ is able to receive documentation and evidence of human rights violations and abuses as they occur in several countries. GICJ continues to bring this information to the attention of relevant UN bodies in order to gain justice for all victims.



