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UN human rights experts welcome resumption of power supplies to Gaza, caution more needs to be done

Gaza power

10 January 2018

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STATEMENTS

[Statement by Ms. Leilani Farha, Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing as a component of the right to and Adequate standard of living, and on the right to non-discrimination in this context at the 69th session of the General Assembly - Third Committee, Item 68 \(b & c\)](#)

GENEVA (10 January 2018) – UN human rights experts have welcomed the announcement that power cuts imposed on Gaza for the past six months were being lifted, but cautioned much more must be done to alleviate the human-caused suffering in Gaza.

On 7 January 2018, Israel began to resupply Gaza with 50 megawatts (MW) of power, which it had suspended last June at the request of the Palestinian Authority.

“This restoration of the pre-June 2017 levels of electricity will ease the suffering of the two million inhabitants of Gaza,” said the UN Special Rapporteur for the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, Mr. Michael Lynk. “Over the past six months, Gazans have had access to power for only approximately four hours daily, and often less.

“However, much more is required,” he said. “We call upon all the responsible parties – Israel, the Palestinian Authority, as well the authorities in Gaza – to restore the conditions to allow a full supply of electricity to all Gazans. We also urge Israel, the occupying power, to end its decade-long blockade of Gaza.”

The electricity cut left homes without power to run basic appliances; workplaces were closed or reduced their productive hours; hospitals were shuttered and health care services were significantly reduced, with operating theatres dependent on generators; and Gaza’s sewerage plant could not operate resulting in over 100 million litres of raw sewage being dumped daily into the Mediterranean.

“Deprivation of electricity and other basic services essential to a life of dignity and wellbeing violates the right to housing,” said Leilani Farha, the

Special Rapporteur on the right to housing. "This deprivation of power amounts to collective punishment of the Gazan population. This is illegal under international law."

The Special Rapporteurs noted that Gaza requires between 450 and 500 MWs of electricity daily for a fully functioning economy and society. Even with the restoration of pre-June 2017 electrical power levels, Gaza will only receive or generate about 210 MWs of power daily, less than half of the daily required electrical power.

ENDS

Mr. Michael Lynk was designated by the UN Human Rights Council in 2016 as the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967. The mandate was originally established in 1993 by the then UN Commission on Human Rights. Professor Lynk is Associate Professor of Law at Western University in London, Ontario, where he teaches labour law, constitutional law and human rights law. Before becoming an academic, he practiced labour law and refugee law for a decade in Ottawa and Toronto. He also worked for the United Nations on human rights and refugee issues in Jerusalem.

Ms. Leilani Farha is the UN Special Rapporteur on the right to adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, and on the right to non-discrimination in this context. She took up her mandate in June 2014. Ms. Farha is the Executive Director of the NGO Canada without Poverty, based in Ottawa, Canada. A lawyer by training, for the past 20 years Ms. Farha has worked both internationally and domestically on the implementation of the right to adequate housing for the most marginalized groups and on the situation of people living in poverty. Follow the Special Rapporteur on twitter at: @adequatehousing, #Right2Housing #MakeTheShift

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 Council's independent fact-finding and monitoring mechanisms 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.

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