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**QUESTION OF THE VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE OCCUPIED ARAB
TERRITORIES, INCLUDING PALESTINE**

**Joint written statement* submitted by the World Young Women's Christian Association
(World YWCA), World Alliance of Young Men's Christian Associations (YMCA),
Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), non-governmental
organizations in special consultative status**

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[13 February 2006]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

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The construction of the Separation Wall on the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT) by the Government of Israel is violating UN Resolutions and International Law. In addition, Israeli settlements in the OPT (including East Jerusalem) was clearly condemned by the International Court of Justice ICJ when it concluded, “the Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (including East Jerusalem) have been established in breach of International Law.”

We are disappointed by the International Communities’ lack of political will to apply diplomatic pressure on the Government of Israel to implement the ICJ ruling, passed on 9 July 2004, calling on the Government of Israel to dismantle the wall and reminding the international community of their own legal requirement to intervene to halt the building of this wall on the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

Despite existing UN resolutions, “Palestinians (again) woke up to a new year of siege and expulsion as occupation forces continue to confiscate the lands, demolish the houses and destroy the sources of livelihood. The experience is enforcing, on a daily basis how dignity, life and the future are intimately linked to the end of the occupation of Palestine” and the establishment of a just peace.

Israel continues the construction of the so-called security wall, annexing large areas of Palestinian land, thus destroying the livelihood of Palestinian farmers, separating families undermining Palestinian community life. It steals from Palestinians rich agricultural land and water resources and expands still further into the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. All this Israel carries out with impunity, against the advisory opinion the International Court of Justice gave in July 2004 at the request of the UN General Assembly: that the construction of the wall on Palestinian territory is contrary to international law and therefore should be stopped and dismantled and that Israel pay the Palestinians compensation for the harm done to them.

In statements we have issued since 2004, we asserted that the sole motivation of the Separation Barrier is not security, but land annexation by Israel and its political attempt to force the final status of any territorial agreement with the Palestinians. “Security” has been used as a pretext for getting more land from Palestinians... to force people to leave, declaring a zone as a “closed military zone”, prohibiting Palestinians from building new houses...destroying olive trees that are hundreds of years old which have been an intimate part of Palestinian people’s history. In short, destroying the very essence of Palestinian identity, history and culture.

In many areas, people have continued to resist and we, as non-governmental organizations committed to peace in the Middle East have supported numerous initiatives and ongoing projects oriented towards non-violent and peaceful resistance strategies such as the Palestine YWCA and YMCA joint advocacy initiative on the Olive Tree Campaign and the continuing education of its members through the Journey for Justice for Young People to witness for themselves the reality of life in the region.

On this basis, we appeal for action:

- The NGO Working Group on the Middle East believes that the international community (citizens as well as organizations and governments) have an obligation to implement international law and work for the non-violent struggle to dismantle the Separation Wall before it is fully established. If this does not happen and Israel is allowed to continue to act unchecked, the credibility of the rule of law will no longer exist.

- We also appeal for “a safe and secure Israel and a sovereign, independent, viable, democratic and territorially contiguous Palestine, living side by side in peace and security...” (UN International Meeting on the Question of Palestine, 8 and 9 March 2005)

The new hope for peace in the region must not be disappointed but be built upon. We are convinced that the achievement of peace in the region depends on the respect by all of international law and its application. It depends on the respect for and implementation of the many United Nations resolutions on the question of Palestine. They stand for the right of Israel to exist and for the right of the Palestinians to self-determination including the establishment of an independent state on the land that has been occupied since 1967, and for the two states to live alongside in peace. The international community must assert pressure to achieve this goal.

This statement is supported by the following organization:

General Arab Women’s League (GAWL)
