

For Immediate Release

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**Negotiations Affairs Department
Palestine Liberation Organization**

Dr. Erakat on new military orders enabling Israel to more easily imprison and expel Palestinians

Chief Palestinian Negotiator, Dr Saeb Erakat today condemned new military orders to be introduced by Israel, as reported in the media today, that make it easier for Israel to imprison and expel Palestinians from the West Bank under the pretext of ‘infiltration’.

“These military orders belong in an apartheid state. Extensive in scope, they make it infinitely easier for Israel to imprison and expel Palestinians from the West Bank. They are an assault on ordinary Palestinians, and an affront to the most fundamental principles of human rights,” Dr Erakat said.

Under the new orders, anyone found without a designated permit, including Palestinians living in areas governed by the Palestinian Authority, can be imprisoned for up to seven years as well as expelled from the West Bank.

“These orders have the effect of turning Palestinians into criminals in their own homes, while directly undermining the efforts of Palestinians to run their own internal affairs. They also open the flood gate for Israel to target foreign-born spouses, foreign workers, and even Israeli citizens as ‘infiltrators’, as well as anyone participating in demonstrations in support of Palestinian rights and against Israel’s occupation,” Dr Erakat said.

“Most of all, they reveal the invidious design behind Israel’s settlement policy. The fewer Palestinians there are in the West Bank, including in occupied East Jerusalem, the more settlers there will be. Israel’s endgame is not peace. It is the colonization of the West Bank.”

“By systematically violating past agreements, as for example in its refusal to freeze settlements, and undermining international efforts to resume negotiations, Israel is turning the Palestinian-Israeli conflict into a zero sum game. At a time when the international community is trying to create an environment conducive to negotiations, these military orders achieve the exact opposite result.”

Dr Erakat called on the international community to intervene.

“Palestine has long been a litmus test of the international community’s commitment to international law and its defense of basic rights and liberties. The international community must live up to its responsibility and protect the rights of Palestinians. Peace demands nothing less.”

“Israel will argue that expulsions are justified because Palestinians are breaking the law. But this argument counts for nothing when that law belongs to a system of apartheid and only serves to strengthen Israel’s 43-year long illegal occupation,” Dr Erakat concluded.

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