

# Realizing the 2030 Agenda in Palestine

## The Role of the Independent Commission for Human Rights



By Ammar Dwaik

The 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are universal, comprehensive, inclusive, and transformative. The feature that distinguishes the 2030 Agenda from its predecessor, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), is that the SDGs are human rights based. Human rights are well integrated into the 17 goals and 169 targets of the SDGs, as 92 percent of these targets and associated indicators are enshrined in the basic international treaties on human rights – to which the State of Palestine is a party.

Given the convergence between the SDGs and human rights standards, the Palestinian Independent Commission for Human Rights (ICHR) plays a key role at the national level in the realization of the SDGs. In fact, its existence as the official national human rights institution serves as an indicator to the SDGs. The ICHR has a broad mandate of monitoring and reporting on human rights in Palestine. It receives complaints on human rights violations and acts as an ombudsman in handling them. Its mandate allows it to engage with international human rights mechanisms and to conduct public education and awareness programs. In addition, it plays an advisory role to and engages constructively with the Palestinian legislative council and government in order to ensure the harmony of laws and policies with international human rights standards and obligations.

Along with its traditional role of monitoring the human rights situation, ICHR has taken on the role of monitoring at the local level the implementation of the SDGs by duty bearers. Thus, it has adopted many of the SDG indicators, to be addressed in its annual report on the status of human rights in Palestine. In addition, through its ombudsman capacity, ICHR will follow up on grievances to ensure that they are properly rectified, thus strengthening the accountability of the duty bearers to the SDGs.

Furthermore, ICHR can play a valuable bridging role in bringing together government officials, civil society, and the private sector to discuss policies and legislation necessary for the implementation of the SDGs. The commission has a policy of engagement with all stakeholders, aiming to raise awareness, build trust, promote dialogue, and encourage concerted efforts to ensure a human rights-based approach in the implementation and monitoring of state policies. In this context, ICHR will work to promote a human rights-based approach in the implementation and progress measuring of the Agenda; it will assess the impact of laws, policies, programs, national development plans, administrative practices, and budgets on the realization of all human rights for all.

**ICHR has integrated the targets and indicators of the 2030 Agenda in its strategic plan and in the work of its various departments. It uses the SDGs as an additional tool to hold the government and duty bearers accountable for the fulfillment of human rights for all Palestinians.**

and Palestinians are deprived of their basic human rights, including the right to self-determination. Ending the longest ongoing military occupation in the world is indeed a main indicator to assess the seriousness of the world's commitment to the 2030 Agenda.



The ceiling of the UN Human Rights Council hall.

We should not overlook, however, the fact that the state of Palestine is under military occupation, and that the occupying power is undertaking a vicious enterprise of colonization that undermines the preconditions for sustainable development. The main motto of the 2030 Agenda asserts the intention to “leave no one behind.” It is unimaginable to achieve sustainable development without fulfilling human rights. It is equally unimaginable to achieve human rights or sustainable development under military occupation. Since the 2030 Agenda is an action plan for the world to act in collaborative partnership towards its implementation, it is important to remind the world that Palestine is still under occupation,

*Ammar Dwaik is the director general of the Palestinian Independent Commission for Human Rights (ICHR), the national and leading Palestinian human rights organization. He holds a PhD in social policy and management from Brandeis University, a master's degree in law and government from American University in Washington, DC, and a bachelor's degree in law from Al-Yarmouk University in Jordan. He has a long and diverse experience in elections management, human rights, good governance, and access to justice.*