

15 July 2020

Ms. Michelle Bachelet  
High Commissioner for Human Rights  
Palais Wilson – United Nations  
Geneva, Switzerland

**Re: Annual Updates of the Database under the UN Human Rights Council Resolution 31/36**

Dear Madam High Commissioner,

We are writing to you in our capacities as General Director of Al-Haq, a Palestinian human rights organisation based in Ramallah and as Managing Director of SOMO, the Centre for Research on Multinational Corporations. In particular, we are writing regarding the recently released *United Nations database of businesses engaged in activities related to Israeli settlements (the database) in the occupied Palestinian territory (OPT)*. As dictated by the mandate given by the HR Council, the OHCHR is bound to provide annual updates of the database. The first update should be ready by February 2021. In this light, we are making a concrete suggestion.

Our organisations commend you and your Office on release of the database. The database demonstrates the commitment to upholding human rights standards and the rule of law in pursuit of justice and accountability for oppressed persons, groups and peoples around the world. We reaffirm our continued support to the independent work of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and a willingness to provide you with data and information on business activities in illegal Israeli settlement enterprise as detailed in paragraph 96 of the International Fact-Finding Mission report (A/HRC/22/63). We look forward to the annual update of the database, in fulfillment of HRC resolution 31/36 mandate in its entirety, and as a tool to enhance corporate accountability in situations of conflict and occupation.

In light of the recognition of the importance of the database for corporate accountability for human rights violations during the recent HRC sessions, including the 43<sup>rd</sup> and 44<sup>th</sup>, and support for the regular annual updates expressed by numerous Member States and civil society from around the world. We would like to submit the attached report “**Violations set in stone. HeidelbergCement in the Occupied Palestinian Territory**” for your consideration, detailing the involvement of the German multinational company in Israel’s illegal settlement enterprise and system of occupation. As such, German HeidelbergCement must be included in the upcoming and updated database.

The enclosed report is based on thorough research on human rights violations in the OPT resulting from **HeidelbergCement**'s activities and its Israeli subsidiary **Hanson Israel**, such as quarrying, manufacturing of materials in the *Nahal Raba* quarry located in Salfit, in the West Bank, and selling its products to illegal Israeli settlements. For more than 13 years, the activities of HeidelbergCement and Hanson Israel in the *Nahal Raba* quarry, compounded with the Occupying Power's military rules and arbitrary policies, have denied Palestinian communities' access to their lands and sources of livelihoods. Moreover, the German multinational also pays royalties to the Israeli Civil Administration, the body administering the occupied Palestinian territory.

To conclude, HeidelbergCement's activities in the OPT are a clear example of multinational corporations' involvement in Israel's prolonged occupation, systemic human rights abuses and the denial of the fundamental right to self-determination and sovereignty over natural resources.

Please note that Al-Haq and SOMO are specifically recommending to include Heidelberg in the next update of the database. Other companies are now missing too. Al-Haq, SOMO as well as other organisations intend to contact you in the coming months with additional suggestions.

We are happy to discuss this further with you and your office and to provide you with more information for this year's annual update of the database of business activities in the illegal settlements in the OPT.

Your Sincerely,



**Ronald Gijsbertsen**  
Managing Director of SOMO

Your Sincerely,



**Shawan Jabarin**  
Director General of Al-Haq