



Oral Statement

Based on QADER's report on

**The Initial Report of the State of Palestine related to the List of Issues about the
Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**

Presented during the CRPD Committee' session

(33rd Session, Geneva – 13 August 2025)

Distinguished Chair of the Committee, Distinguished Members,

We would like to express our sincere appreciation for the opportunity afforded to QADER for Community Development in Palestine to present our independent and comprehensive human rights perspective on all matters raised in the List of Issues in relation to the initial report of the State of Palestine. Our contribution is firmly grounded in the detailed analysis previously submitted to the Committee.

We take this opportunity to reaffirm our deep appreciation for our field team in Gaza, who have continued their vital work advocating for the rights of persons with disabilities amidst bombardment, starvation, and ongoing genocide. Their dedication has enabled the collection of credible, evidence-based testimonies and data that provide a detailed understanding of the issues currently under the Committee's review.

Distinguished Members of the Committee,

While we hold the Israeli colonial occupying authorities primarily responsible for the unprecedented humanitarian catastrophe unfolding in the Occupied Palestinian Territory—particularly in the Gaza Strip—where acts of genocide, starvation, forced displacement, and silent extermination occur, inflicting severe implications on persons with disabilities, we at QADER for Community Development affirm, with courage and a sense of responsibility, that this escalating catastrophic reality does not absolve the State of Palestine of its obligations under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Regrettably, no substantial progress has been recorded since the release of the List of Issues by your esteemed Committee on 25 April 2023. Accordingly, our analytical report submitted to the Committee seeks to address all issues raised and offers practical, specific, and concise recommendations for each item.

We sincerely hope that the State of Palestine will respond in detail to these recommendations, accompanied by clear timelines and effective implementation mechanisms, and in a manner that ensures the genuine participation of organizations representing persons with disabilities in all phases of planning, implementation, monitoring, and accountability.

The following are the key findings highlighted in our report submitted to the Committee:

1. The Optional Protocol to the Convention, which the State of Palestine acceded to on 10 April 2019, has not yet been published in the Official Gazette. This constitutes a breach of the State's legal obligations and effectively denies victims with disabilities their right to submit individual communications.

2. The draft Disability Rights Law of 2019 remained unenacted for six years, with no clear timeframe for its adoption. Meanwhile, the outdated 1999 Law continues to govern, rooted in a charitable and medical approach, lacking amendments or effective implementation mechanisms on the ground.
3. No specialized national survey on persons with disabilities has been conducted since 2011. Furthermore, no comprehensive national disability strategy has been adopted, despite the ongoing genocide in the Gaza Strip and its catastrophic impact on persons with disabilities. Disability continues to be excluded as a cross-sectoral issue in national planning.
4. No tangible progress has been made by the Legislative Harmonization Committee, established by the government in 2017 to align domestic laws with international treaties, particularly regarding the 2019 draft Disability Rights Law, personal status legislation, criminal laws, judicial procedures, and labor and economic empowerment laws. Moreover, organizations representing persons with disabilities are not represented in the Committee, in violation of Article 4(3) of the Convention.
5. The State of Palestine has recently drafted a new Personal Status Law (2025), which contains numerous provisions that discriminate based on gender and disability, particularly with respect to marriage, divorce, guardianship, legal capacity, and custody. The draft denies persons with disabilities, especially those with intellectual disabilities, their legal capacity and lacks any reference to reasonable accommodation or inclusion requirements, in clear contradiction to the Convention.

Distinguished Members of the Committee,

6. No measures have been adopted to criminalize any form of discrimination based on disability or to impose effective deterrent penalties, despite the widespread and persistent occurrence of such discrimination in practice. This includes intersectional discrimination based on both gender and disability, which undermines access to effective remedies and redress mechanisms.
7. There are no effective measures in place to protect persons with disabilities in situations of emergency and armed conflict, particularly in the Gaza Strip, despite the ongoing genocide and its catastrophic and compounded effects. This situation necessitates the activation of Article (6) of the Optional Protocol and the establishment of a Commission of Inquiry by the Committee.
8. While the 2004 Executive Regulation of the Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities affirmed the State's obligation to issue regulations to protect persons

with disabilities from violence, exploitation, and discrimination, no such regulations have been adopted to date.

9. Inclusive education continues to face chronic structural challenges. Although the government adopted an inclusive education policy in 2015 and codified it in the 2017 General Education Law, there remains a significant gap in practice; the vast majority of schools lack reasonable accommodation and accessibility measures.
10. Despite the adoption of the Public Health Insurance System for Persons with Disabilities in 2021, there has been a clear failure to implement most of its provisions. These include eligibility criteria, diagnostic, treatment, and rehabilitation services, training of medical personnel, provision of sign language interpreters, the establishment of a disaggregated database, an inclusive complaints mechanism, and the publication of monitoring reports as required by the system.
11. The cash assistance program, including its database and financial allocations, was transferred from the Ministry of Social Development to the Palestine Economic Empowerment Institution under Law-by-Decree No. (1) of 2019 and its amendments. This law, which entirely removes government oversight of the program, is inconsistent with the CRPD, the Palestinian Basic Law, and the principles of good governance and transparency. It fails to incorporate disability inclusion requirements and has exacerbated the suffering of persons with disabilities, especially during the ongoing genocide.
12. Despite the dramatic decline in international cooperation to support the disability sector—particularly since the onset of the aggression and genocide in Gaza—the government still lacks a clear plan to guide international aid and resources in accordance with the priorities and needs of persons with disabilities. Moreover, there is no mechanism to ensure the effective participation of organizations of persons with disabilities (OPDs) in identifying priorities, designing interventions, or overseeing implementation. This undermines transparency and accountability and threatens the effectiveness of the response.

In conclusion,

As we deliver this briefing, within the comfort of an air-conditioned room, thousands of persons with disabilities in the Gaza Strip continue to die in silence, buried under the rubble, without food, without medicine, without wheelchairs, and without hope.

They are not asking for the impossible, but for the most basic human rights: the right to life, to dignity, to recognition of their suffering, and to justice.

When human lives are violated on this scale, silence is no longer an option.

We present these facts to your esteemed Committee with professionalism, responsibility, and a clear conscience—so that it may never be said: “*We knew, but did nothing.*”

When justice falls silent, injustice rules, and victims are left alone.

Thank you.