

ENABLING THE CONDITIONS FOR FULL REALISATION OF THE SDGs IN CHALLENGING CONTEXTS (The Palestinian Independent Commission for Human Rights)

The 2030 Agenda calls for 'effective measures and actions to be taken, in conformity with international law, to remove the obstacles to the full realization of the right of self-determination of peoples living under colonial and foreign occupation, which continue to adversely affect their economic and social development as well as their environment'.¹⁴

Achieving the SDGs requires having access to the right resources, developing the necessary capacities, and building strategic partnerships. In challenging contexts including countries in conflict, post-conflict, and occupied territories, the most pressing needs and priorities of the people might be found in the context, which is not explicitly addressed in the general sustainable development framework. In such cases, it is necessary to adapt to context in order to enable the state's ability to plan, budget for and implement the SDGs.

NHRIs can play an important role in evaluating the impact of such contexts on the daily lives of the people, and in advocating for the improvement of the enabling environment for countries to pursue sustainable development and promote, protect and fulfil everyone's human rights.

As part of its efforts to localise and contextualise the SDGs, the Independent Commission for Human Rights (ICHR) (the Palestinian NHRI) developed an additional Goal that is unique to the Palestinian context, calling it SDG ZERO (SDG 0). SDG 0 emerges from the acknowledgement that the ongoing occupation of Palestinian territories is hindering its ability to access and utilize its resources and limiting people's right to move freely and conduct economic and social transactions internally and globally.

With SDG 0, the ICHR aims to raise awareness about Palestine's right to self-determination as intrinsically linked to its ability to develop its economy and protect the interests of the present and future generations. This requires, inter alia, increasing control of its land and financial and natural resources, as well as ensuring respect for people's rights and freedoms.

At the time of writing, SDG 0 has not been formally endorsed by the Palestinian State. Nonetheless, it provides an interesting example of how NHRIs can help analyse the conditions in their own country – whether in situation of occupation, armed conflict, climate change impacts or others – and shape the necessary framework to be taken into account for more effective, meaningful, and locally-relevant SDG planning.