



Tribunal Russell

sobre Palestina

[PRESS FILE · Russell Tribunal on Palestine]

The Russell Tribunal on Palestine is a public awareness tribunal set up by international civil society to investigate the violations of international law perpetrated against the Palestinian people. It will examine the extent to which international organizations and states can be held responsible for the failure to implement international law.

Although its rulings are non-binding, the Tribunal **is based on international law and composed of experts and jurists of world renown**. The **first session** of the Tribunal will be held from **1 to 3 March 2010 in Barcelona**. Its mandate is to examine the degree of **complicity of the European Union and its member states** in the ongoing occupation of the Palestinian Territories and in Israel's violations of the rights of the Palestinian people.

Barcelona, 1-3 March 2010

Timetable:

1 and 2 March: 9:30-14:00/15:30-19:00

3 March: 12:00-14:00

Location:

Barcelona Bar Association

Mallorca, 283

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What is the Russell Tribunal on Palestine?

The [first Russell Tribunal](#) met in 1967 to investigate war crimes committed in Vietnam and to adjudicate them on the basis of international law. It was set up by [Bertrand Russell](#), winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1950, and chaired by [Jean-Paul Sartre](#). Eminent intellectuals such as Lelio Basso, Julio Cortázar, Lázaro Cárdenas and Simone de Beauvoir took part in the Tribunal's proceedings. Although it lacked formal judicial status, the Tribunal acted as a public awareness forum, highlighting acts of injustice and impunity for violations of international law.

More than forty years later, the [Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation](#) is sponsoring the establishment of a [Russell Tribunal on Palestine](#) (RTP) to discuss a range of errors, omissions and complicity of third countries and international organizations which have resulted in the continued occupation of Palestinian territories and the impunity enjoyed by the Israeli state.

The RTP is composed of **eminent persons** from a wide range of countries, including Israel, and its legitimacy does not stem from any government or political party but from its members' prestige, professionalism and commitment to human rights.

The **international Support Committee** is composed of more than 100 personalities from all walks of life, such as [Boutros Boutros-Ghali](#) (former United Nations Secretary-General), [Mohammed Bedjaoui](#) (former President of the International Court of Justice), [Noam Chomsky](#) (Professor, MIT), [Ken Loach](#) (filmmaker) and [José Saramago](#) (Nobel Prize for Literature in 1998).¹

¹ See the Annex for a complete list. For an updated version, see:

http://www.russelltribunalonpalestine.net/pages/The_Support_Committee-1143887.html

Why is it necessary?¹

On 9 July 2004, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) issued [an Advisory Opinion](#) in which it ruled that the wall built by Israel in occupied Palestine is illegal. Eleven days later, the United Nations General Assembly adopted, by an overwhelming majority, Resolution ES-10/15, in which it acknowledged the ICJ Opinion and called on states members of the United Nations to comply with their legal obligations as mentioned in the Advisory Opinion: not to render aid or assistance for the construction of the wall or to recognize the illegal situation resulting therefore, and to ensure compliance by Israel with its obligations under international humanitarian law and the right of self-determination of the Palestinian people.

Yet all the states that voted in favor of Resolution ES-10/15 were subsequently content to issue mere condemnations and policy statements, thus permitting Israel to continue pursuing its policy of land confiscation and the creation of illegal settlements in occupied territory, and to continue violating the rights of the Palestinian people. The war launched by the Israeli Government and army in December 2008 in the Gaza Strip, which was already reeling under a brutal blockade, rendered Israel's contempt for international law more apparent than ever, and highlighted the responsibility and complicity of other countries – especially the United States and the European Union – in the ongoing injustice suffered by the Palestinian people. As the condemnations have not been accompanied by sanctions of any kind, Israel enjoys the tacit support of the international community.

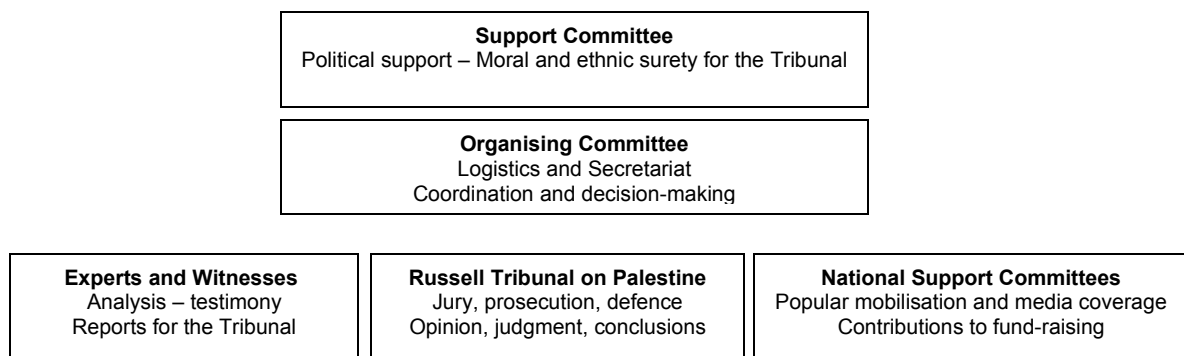
This is the context that led to the establishment of the Russell Tribunal on Palestine, **a civil initiative that seeks to promote international law as the key factor applicable to the conflict between Israel and Palestine**, and to mobilize international public opinion so that the United Nations and its member states can be persuaded to take the necessary steps to end the impunity of the State of Israel and to bring about a just and lasting solution to the conflict. Thus, aside from Israel's manifest responsibility, **the aim is to demonstrate the complicity of third-party states and international organizations** which, through their passive stance or active support, permit Israel to continue violating the rights of the Palestinian people and allow the situation to persist and deteriorate.

¹See the Annex for the “Legal framework and international law” on which the work of the various Committees of Experts and the Tribunal is based.

How does it operate?

The RTP was established in response to [a call](#) by [Ken Coates](#) (Chairperson of the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation), [Nurit Peled](#) (Israeli, Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Speech 2001) and [Leila Shahid](#) (General Delegate of Palestine to the European Union). Responsibility for organizing the Russell Tribunal on Palestine lies with the **International Organizing Committee (IOC)**, whose members are: Ken Coates, Pierre Galand, Stéphane Hessel, Marcel-Francis Kahn, Robert Kissous, François Maspero, Paulette Pierson-Mathy, Bernard Ravenel and Brahim Senouci.

International initiative for the establishment of a Russell Tribunal on Palestine



The following bodies also form part of the structure of the Tribunal:

- **The [international Support Committee](#)**, made up of individuals from the academic, scientific, cultural and political fields with an international reputation and no current political mandate (see annex).
- **The [National Support Committees](#)**, which contribute to fund-raising and ensure popular mobilization and media coverage. They may also assume responsibility for organizing a session in their country or help to organize others. National Support Committees have been established to date in the following countries: France, Belgium, United Kingdom, Ireland, Switzerland, Portugal, Germany, Italy, and Spain and Catalonia. National Committees are also in the process of being established in the Netherlands, Austria, Algeria, Lebanon, India and Chile.

- **The National Committee for Catalonia and Spain will host the first session** of the Russell Tribunal on Palestine to be held in Barcelona on 1, 2 and 3 March 2010. The Committee is run by the coordinating body [Amb Palestina al Cor](#), which brings together most Catalan organizations that are actively involved in the defense of human rights and international law in Palestine. They are: ACSUR-LAS SEGOVIAS, Alliance for Freedom and Dignity, Associació Catalana per la Pau, CIEMEN, Consell de la Joventut de Barcelona, Comunitat Palestina de Catalunya, Institut de Drets Humans de Catalunya, Moviment per la Pau, NEXES, NOVA - Centre per a la Innovació Social, Servei Civil Internacional, SODEPAU and Xarxa d'Enllaç amb Palestina.

- **The experts and witnesses.** The content of the Tribunal sessions is prepared with the assistance of dozens of experts and academics from different countries. Experts will present arguments at the Tribunal hearings and witnesses will also be present to testify on relevant aspects of the issues addressed.

- **The jury.** A jury composed of eminent personalities from the legal, academic, scientific, cultural or political fields will be present at each session of the Tribunal.

The Tribunal itself is the core element of the project. Once the hearings have been completed with the submission of the experts' reports and the witness statements, **the jury of the Tribunal will present its conclusions** in the light of its deliberations.

Barcelona session (1-3 March 2010)

The Russell Tribunal on Palestine has been planned as a **decentralized initiative** that will involve a number of sessions to be held in different cities between 2010 and 2012.² The first international session of the Russell Tribunal on Palestine will be held in **Barcelona on 1, 2 and 3 March 2010** in the **Barcelona Bar Association (ICAB)**. Its mandate will be to examine the extent to which the European Union and its member states are complicit in the ongoing occupation of the Palestinian Territories and in Israel's violations of the rights of the Palestinian people. The content of the Barcelona session is being prepared with the assistance of dozens of academic experts in public international law and Community legislation in the following countries: Spain, United Kingdom, France, Belgium, Portugal and Ireland.³ The **Jury of the Tribunal** is composed of nine persons of internationally recognised moral or legal prestige. The members of the jury for the Barcelona session are:

- [Mr. Michael Mansfield](#) (United Kingdom) - Barrister
 - [Ms. Gisèle Halimi](#) (France) – Lawyer and politician
 - [Mr. José Antonio Martín Pallín](#) (Spain) – Supreme Court judge
 - [Mr. Ronald Kasrils](#) (South Africa) – Anti-apartheid leader and former South African Minister
 - [Ms. Mairead Corrigan-Maguire](#) (Northern Ireland) – Nobel Peace laureate, 1976
 - [Ms. Cynthia McKinney](#) (United States of America) – Former United States Congresswoman and presidential candidate for the Green Party
 - [Ms. Aminata Traoré](#) (Mali) – Activist, writer and former Minister
 - [Mr. Alberto San Juan](#) (Spain) – Actor
- ** [Mr. Juan Guzmán Tapia](#) (Chile) – Retired judge. He will not be in Barcelona for the first session, but he will probably be part of the jury for next sessions.

² In addition to the first session in Barcelona in March 2010, a second session of the Tribunal is being organized in London in 2010 on the issue of complicity and omissions on the part of transnational corporations. Further sessions will be held subsequently in different continents to address other cases of complicity and omissions, especially those of the United States and the United Nations. The proceedings will close with a grand final session.

³ The members of the Committee of Experts for Spain and Catalonia are: David Bondia, Luciana Coconi, Rafael Escudero, Ignacio Álvarez-Ossorio, Margalida Capellà i Roig, Ferran Izquierdo Brichs, Jaume Saura, Alejandro Pozo, Antoni Pigrau Solém and Agnes Bertrand-Sanz.

***PROVISIONAL PROGRAMME:**

1 MARCH 2010

10 a.m. – Inaugural address on violations by the State of Israel of international law and United Nations resolutions

Stéphane Hessel (French Ambassador and a member of the Resistance during the Second World War)

12 noon – The right of self-determination of the Palestinian people

Expert and witness statements: David Bondia (Spain), Madrid Benchikh (Algeria), Alan Stoleroff (Portugal)

2 – 3.30 p.m. Lunch break

3.30 p.m. – The blockade of Gaza and “Operation Cast Lead”

Expert and witness statements: Desmond Travers (Ireland), Derek Summerfield (United Kingdom), Ewa Jasiewicz (United Kingdom)

5.45 p.m. – The settlements and the plundering of natural resources

Expert and witness statements: James Phillips (Ireland), Michael Sfard (Israel)

2 MARCH 2010

9.30 a.m. – The EU-Israel Association Agreement

Expert and witness statements: Agnes Bertrand (Belgium), Clare Short (United Kingdom), Phil Shiner (United Kingdom), Francis Wurtz (Belgium), Patrice Bouveret (France), Véronique De Keyser (Belgium)

2 – 3.30 p.m. – Lunch break

3.30 p.m. – The annexation of East Jerusalem

Expert and witness statements: Meir Margalit (Israel), Ghada Karma (Palestine)

5.45 p.m. – The construction of the Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Expert and witness statements: François Dubuisson (Belgium), Luisa Morgantini (Italy)

7 p.m. – The Jury withdraws for deliberations

3 MARCH 2010

12 noon – Press conference and public ceremony to present the Jury’s conclusions (views y recommendations)

Opportunities for the press

An advance press conference is to be held at 1 p.m. on 24 February 2010 at the [Col·legi de Periodistes de Catalunya](#) (venue to be confirmed). It will be attended by Pierre Galand (International Organizing Committee – former Belgium Senator), José Antonio Martín Pallín (member of the Jury of the Tribunal – Spanish Supreme Court judge), Icíar Bollaín (member of the Tribunal Support Committee – actress) and Paul Laverty (member of the Tribunal Support Committee – screenwriter). During the Barcelona session, the organizers of the Russell Tribunal **will have the use of a room** at Barcelona University for the press, with Internet access.

To ensure the smooth functioning of the press room facilities, all journalists who wish to make use of it are requested to **confirm their attendance** to:

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The issue of compliance with international law in the context of the Israel-Palestine conflict is usually presented in abstract terms, so that journalists wishing to convey the reality of the situation to the general public are faced with a major challenge. The Barcelona session of the Russell Tribunal **offers the press a unique opportunity** to talk to people who work in the area of international law or who have first-hand experience of the repercussions of non-compliance, and can therefore provide a human and personal perspective on the issue.

Some ideas:

An interview with [Mairead Maguire](#) about her work in support of human rights, which won her the Nobel Peace Prize, and her involvement in direct citizen action initiatives in support of international law, such as the boat trips organized by the [Free Gaza Movement](#).

An interview with the Chilean judge [Juan Guzmán Tapia](#) about his attempts to bring General Augusto Pinochet to justice and the relevance of international law to the definition of legal responsibilities.

An interview with [Ronald Kasrils](#), a former South African Minister and leader of the anti-apartheid movement about the important role played by pressure from the international community in toppling the segregationist regime in his country, and the similarities and differences between the former situation in South Africa and that prevailing in Palestine today.

An interview with [Colonel Desmond Travers](#), one of the members of the UN mission that prepared the [Goldstone report](#), about the war crimes perpetrated by Israel in Gaza and the outcome of the report.

Contact data

For the latest news on the Russell Tribunal on Palestine:

www.russelltribunalonpalestine.com

www.tribunalrussell.org

Barcelona session

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The Barcelona session of the Russell Tribunal on Palestine has been organized with the support of: Barcelona City Council, National Committees of Support for the Russell Tribunal on Palestine and donations from organizations and individuals.



ANNEX

Patrons and members of the international Support Committee

Patrons of the Support Committee:

| [Ken Coates](#) Chairman of the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation, United Kingdom | [Nurit Peled](#) Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Speech 2001, Israel | [Leila Shahid](#) General Delegate of Palestine to the European Union, Belgium and Luxembourg, Palestine

Members of the Support Committee:

| [Gilbert Achcar](#) Professor, United Kingdom | [Boutros Boutros-Ghali](#) Former United Nations Secretary-General, Egypt | [Madam Nguyễn Thị Bình](#) Former Vice-President, Vietnam | [Ahmed Ben Bella](#) First President, Algeria | [Djamel Bourras](#) Sportsman, France | [Milan Ku-can](#) Former President, Slovenia | [Andreas Van Agt](#) Former Prime Minister, Netherlands | [Tariq Ali](#) Writer, United Kingdom | [Henri Alleg](#) Journalist, France | [Martin Almada](#) Lawyer, writer and Right Livelihood Award 2002, Paraguay | [Kader Asmal](#) Professor, former Minister and Member of Parliament, South Africa | [Raymond Aubrac \(and Lucie Aubrac †\)](#) Former members of the French Resistance, France | [Etienne Balibar](#) Professor Emeritus, France | [Anna Balletbò](#) President of Fundación Internacional Olof Palme, Spain | [Russell Banks](#) Writer, United States | [Mohammed Bedjaoui](#) Former President of the International Court of Justice (The Hague) and former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Algeria | [Tony Benn](#) Peace activist, United Kingdom | [Amar Bentoumi](#) President Emeritus of the International Association of Democratic Lawyers, Algeria | [John Berger](#) Writer, United Kingdom | [Karl Blecha](#) Former Minister of the Interior, Austria | [Howard Brenton](#) Writer, United Kingdom | [Carmel Budiardjo](#) Right Livelihood Award 1995, United Kingdom | [Judith Butler](#) Professor, United States | [Eric Cantona](#) Actor and film producer, France | [Franco Cavalli](#) Former President of the International Union against Cancer, Switzerland | [Monique Chemillier-Gendreau](#) Professor Emeritus, France | [Noam Chomsky](#) Professor MIT, United States | [Vicenzo Consolo](#) Writer, Italy | [Jonathan Cook](#) Writer and journalist, United Kingdom | [Georges Corm](#) Writer and former Minister of Finance, Lebanon | [Mairead Corrigan Maguire](#) Nobel Peace Prize 1976, Northern Ireland | [Raymond Deane](#) Composer and writer, Ireland | [John Dugard](#) Former UN Special Rapporteur on Palestine, South Africa | [Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz](#) Writer, United States | [Salim El Hoss](#) Former Prime Minister, Lebanon | [Miguel Angel Estrella](#) Pianist and former Ambassador to UNESCO, Argentina | [Irene Fernandez](#) Right Livelihood Award 2005, Malaysia | [Norman Finkelstein](#) Writer, United States | [Cees Flinterman](#) Director of the Netherlands Institute of Human Rights, Netherlands | [Eduardo Galeano](#) Writer, Uruguay | [Johan Galtung](#) Founder and co-Director of Transcend, Right Livelihood Award 1987, Norway | [Costa Gavras](#) Filmmaker, France | [Susan George](#) Writer, France | [Geraud de Geouffre de la Pradelle](#) Professor Emeritus, France | [Neve Gordon](#) Political scientist, Israel | [Juan Goytisolo](#) Writer, Spain | [Trevor Griffiths](#) Writer, United Kingdom | [Juan Guzman Tapia](#) Judge, Chile | [Gisele Halimi](#) Lawyer and former Ambassador to UNESCO, France | [Denis Halliday](#) Former UN official, Ireland | [Jeff Halper](#) Coordinator of ICAHD, Israel | [Mohammed Harbi](#) Historian, Algeria | [Eric Hazan](#) Writer, France | [Stephane Hessel](#) Ambassador, France | [François Houtart](#) Professor Emeritus, Belgium | [Nouri Abdel Razzaql Hussein](#)

Secretary-General of the Afro-Asian Peoples Solidarity Organization, Egypt | **Sonallah Ibrahim Elorfally** Writer, Egypt | **Albert Jacquard** Professor, France | **Alain Joxe** Director of Studies at the EHESS, France | **Hatim Kanaaneh** Writer, Palestine | **Ghada Karmi** Professor and author, Palestine | **Ronnie Kasrils** Former Minister, writer and activist, South Africa | **Assaf Kfoury** Professor, United States | **Naomi Klein** Writer, United States | **Erwin Lanc** Former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Austria | **Felicia Langer** Lawyer and writer, Right Livelihood Award 1990, Germany | [Paul Laverty](#) Screenwriter, United Kingdom | **Mike Leigh** Filmmaker, United Kingdom | [Ken Loach](#) Filmmaker, United Kingdom | **Alice Mahon** Former Member of Parliament, United Kingdom | **José Antonio Martín Pallín** Judge Emeritus, Chamber II of the Supreme Court, Spain | **Nur Masalha** Director of the Centre for Religion and History, Palestine | **François Maspero** Writer, France | [Gustave Massiah](#) Chairperson of CRID, France | **Avi Mograbi** Filmmaker, Israel | **Luisa Morgantini** Activist, Italy | **Peter Mullan** Filmmaker and actor, United Kingdom | **Karma Nabulsi** Academic and author, Palestine | **Radhia Nasraoui** Human rights lawyer, Tunisia | **Susie Orbach** Professor, United Kingdom | **Willibald Pahr** Former Minister for Foreign Affairs, Austria | **Ilan Pappé** Professor, Israel | **Simone Paris de Bollardiére** Movement for Non-Violence Alternative, France | **Tamar Pelleg-Sryck** Human rights lawyer, Israel | [Arthur Pestana "Pepetela"](#) Writer, Angola | **Jeremy Pikser** Writer, United States | **John Pilger** Journalist, writer and filmmaker, Australia | **Harold Pinter** † Writer, Nobel Prize for Literature 2005, United Kingdom | **François Rigaux** Professor Emeritus, Belgium | **Jacqueline Rose** Professor, United Kingdom | **Eric Rouleau** Writer and former Ambassador, France | **François Roux** Lawyer, France | **Jean Salmon** Professor Emeritus ULB, Belgium | **Elias Sanbar** Writer, Palestine | **José Saramago** Nobel Prize for Literature 1998, Portugal | **Aharon Shabtai**, Poet, Israel | **Jitendra Sharma** Lawyer and President of the International Association of Democratic Lawyers, India | **Cindy Sheehan** Peace activist and author, United States | [Raji Surani](#) Vice-President of FIDH, Palestine | **Vandana Shiva** Right Livelihood Award 1993, India | **Sulak Sivaraksa** Professor and Right Livelihood Award 1995, Thailand | **Philippe Texier** Judge and member of the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, France | **Rt. Hon. E.W Thomas** Supreme Court, New Zealand | [Gerard Toulouse](#) Physicist, France | **Andy de la Tour** Actor and screenwriter, United Kingdom | **Sir Brian Urquhart** Former Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations, United Kingdom | **Puthan Veetil Rajagopal** President of Ekta Parishad, India | **Heikelina Verrijn Stuart** Lawyer and philosopher of law, Netherlands | **Itala Vivan** Professor, Italy | **Naomi Wallace** Playwright and screenwriter, United States | [Michel Warschawski](#) Activist, Israel | **Francisco Whitaker** Right Livelihood Award 2006, Brazil | **Betty Williams** Nobel Peace Prize 1976, Northern Ireland | **Jody Williams** Nobel Peace Prize 1997, United States | [Jean Ziegler](#) Sociologist, Switzerland | **Howard Zinn** Author, United States.

Legal framework and international law

The Russell Tribunal on Palestine has been set up to address the failure of states and the international community to implement the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice of 9 July 2004, and Resolution ES-10/15 adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 20 July 2004.

The following treaties, resolutions and international legal norms constitute the legal frame of reference for the work of the Committees of Experts set up in different countries and for the Tribunal:

International treaties (to which Israel is a party):

- * Charter of the United Nations, 26 June 1945
- * Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, 9 December 1948
- * Geneva Convention (IV) relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, 12 August 1949
- * International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, 21 December 1965
- * International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 16 December 1966
- * International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 16 December 1966
- * International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid, 1973
- * Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts, 1977
- * Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, 1984
- * Convention on the Rights of the Child, 20 November 1989

Relevant United Nations resolutions on Palestine:

Security Council:

- * Resolution 242 (obligation to withdraw from the occupied territories)
- * Resolution 338 (obligation to withdraw from the occupied territories)
- * Resolution 446 (illegality of Israeli settlements)
- * Resolution 478 (nullity of the annexation of Jerusalem)

General Assembly:

- * Resolution 181 (Partition Plan)
- * Resolution 194 (return of the refugees)
- * Resolution ES 10/15 (illegality of the Wall, Israel's obligation to dismantle, states' obligation to ensure compliance with the Fourth Geneva Convention)

Norms of customary international law (norms established through practice, including the application of treaties to which Israel is not a party):

- * Legal principles governing occupation contained in The Hague Regulations concerning the Laws and Customs of War on Land, 18 October 1907

- * Principle of the non-acquisition of territory through the threat or use of force (United Nations General Assembly resolution 2625)
- * Principle of the right of peoples to self-determination – Right of the Palestinian people to self-determination
- * Principle of the permanent sovereignty of peoples under foreign occupation over their natural resources
- * Universal Declaration of Human Rights, United Nations General Assembly resolution of 10 December 1948 (non-binding instrument that has acquired customary status)