**Abstract**

It might be relevant, in the light of Palestine’s initiative aimed at securing membership of the United Nations (UN), to start thinking of the obligations of this projected State towards the people under its jurisdiction and *vis-à-vis* the international community. On joining the UN, Palestine would have a set of rights under various branches of international law. It could become a member of regional and international organizations and courts, a party to treaties, establish full-fledged diplomatic relations, enter into alliances, enact its nationality law, issue passports and protect its citizens abroad. Palestinian officials and scholars tend to be excited about the prospect of such rights. What has been absent so far, however, is a discussion of the State’s obligations in its international relations. This study attempts to fill in one aspect of this gap by focusing on the obligations arising from the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which was adopted by the UN General Assembly on 16 December 1966.

Article 26(1) of ICESCR provides that the ‘present Covenant is open for signature by any State Member of the United Nations or member of any of its specialized agencies . . . .’ Palestine’s admission as a State to membership in the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), a UN specialized agency, on 31 October 2011, has opened up the possibility for Palestine to accede to the Covenant.

This study tackles the obligations of Palestine based on ICESCR as a key human rights instrument on the global stage. It explores Palestine’s obligations with regard to the applicable legislation in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, the territory of the projected State. It evaluates such legislation and suggests measures that would bring domestic legislation into conformity with the following rights under this instrument: work, social security, food, housing, health, education and cultural life. The role of institutions and policies and Palestine’s administrative or procedural obligations under the Covenant are beyond the scope of the study.