

What impact is the Israeli boycott of the Gaza Strip having on human rights there? To discuss this question, the FES together with its partner, the National Society for Democracy and Law (NSDL), organized a conference on April 24 at Rafah, in the south of the Gaza Strip.

Participants included representatives of human rights organizations from the Palestinian territories and Egypt, numerous intellectuals, and correspondents from the local press.



*Conference participants during a panel discussion*

In his speech, Mukhlis Qutb, representing the National Council for Human Rights in Cairo, highlighted the need to defend human rights in the Gaza Strip using all available peaceful means. The participants in the event emphasized the importance of opening the Rafah border crossing. However, they said, this must be done with the agreement of all those involved, and must not jeopardize Egypt's sovereignty over its border. In addition, they called for the

Gaza Strip to be declared a disaster area, and for human rights violations to be documented by national and international human rights organizations.

At the beginning of April, the NSDL organized a demonstration in the city of Rafah to protest against the constant price rises of basic foodstuffs.

The organizers warned that the continuation of the comprehensive economic blockade and the related rises in the price of basic foodstuffs will have serious consequences for the humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip. They demanded punishment for the people who smuggle food into the Gaza Strip and sell it at exorbitant prices. More than 1,000 people took part in the protest march.



*Demonstrators in Rafah protesting against high food prices*