



DIVISION FOR
PALESTINIAN RIGHTS

Bulletin

on action by the United Nations system and
intergovernmental organizations
relevant to the question of Palestine

July 2018
Volume XLI, Bulletin No. 7

Contents

	<i>Page</i>
I. Human Rights Council debates the Human Rights Situation in Palestine and Other Occupied Arab Territories	1
II. UNRWA, OHCHR and UNSCO officials call for an end to West Bank demolitions and respect for international law	3
III. UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process expresses concern about new restrictions at Kerem Shalom crossing	4
IV. UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in OPT calls on Israel to reverse decision on closure of Gaza commercial crossing	4
V. EU High Representative Mogherini's statement on Palestinian Bedouin community of Khan al-Ahmar	5
VI. UN responds to the Israeli Nationality Law	6
VII. Secretary-General urges all parties to stop violent escalation in Gaza	6
VIII. UN Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices issues its end of mission statement	7
IX. Palestinian Rights Committee elects new chair and receives briefing from UN High Commissioner for Human Rights	9

X.	Economic and Social Council adopts resolution on living conditions of Palestinian people, rejects Israeli amendment calling for release of civilians and soldiers held by Hamas	10
XI.	UN Special Coordinator for Middle East Peace Process warns Security Council new Israel-Hamas conflict “almost a certainty”	19
XII.	Chairman of the Palestinian Rights Committee addresses Security Council at its open debate	23
XIII.	President of Human Rights Council appoints members of Commission of Inquiry on 2018 killings during Gaza protests	25
XIV.	UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process encouraged World Bank’s allocation of US \$90 million in support of Palestinian economy	27
XV.	UNRWA deplores threats against its management and staff	27

The Bulletin can be found in the United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine (UNISPAL) on the Internet at:

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I. HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL DEBATES THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN PALESTINE AND OTHER OCCUPIED ARAB TERRITORIES

On 2 July, the Human Rights Council held a general debate on the situation of human rights in Palestine and other occupied Arab territories. A press release ([HRC18/104E](#)), providing details of the debate is excerpted below.

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The Human Rights Council this morning held a general debate on the situation of human rights in Palestine and other occupied Arab territories, after hearing statements by concerned countries.

Israel was not present in the room to take the floor as a concerned country.

State of Palestine, speaking as a concerned country, stressed that Israel continued to refuse to cooperate with the Human Rights Council and other human rights mechanisms. The occupying power continued to target civilians, impose sieges, carry out land theft, attack religious places and destroy infrastructure.

Syria, speaking as a concerned country, said the debate on the situation of human rights in Palestine and other occupied Arab territories was of great importance as human rights violations in the occupied lands continued. The rights of Palestinians and people in the Golan were violated on a daily basis. The theft of resources and displacement resulting from settlements amounted to war crimes.

In the ensuing debate, speakers condemned the disproportionate use of force by Israeli forces against Palestinian protestors. Delegations urged the Human Rights Council to keep agenda item 7 as a standing item. Marginalising the discussion would only serve to embolden Israel. Speakers called on Israel to grant access to relevant Special Procedures in order to properly assess the human rights situation in the occupied territories. There must be a political solution to the crisis that would result in an independent Palestinian State living peacefully next to Israel and based on the 1967 borders.

Speaking were the delegations of Pakistan on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, Venezuela on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, Togo on behalf of the African Group, United Arab Emirates on behalf of the League of Arab States, Kuwait on behalf of the Gulf Cooperation Council, Bolivia on behalf of a group of countries, Brazil, Pakistan, Egypt, Iraq, Qatar, Senegal, United Arab Emirates, Chile, Saudi Arabia, Venezuela, South Africa, China, Afghanistan, Cuba, Ecuador, Nigeria, Tunisia, Kuwait, Namibia, Jordan, Maldives, Libya, Djibouti, Sudan, Iran, Democratic Peoples' Republic of Korea, Indonesia, Bahrain, Malaysia, Algeria, Russian Federation, Zimbabwe, Bangladesh, Bolivia, Turkey, Yemen, Oman, Lebanon, Mauritania, and Morocco.

Also taking the floor were the following non-governmental organizations: The Palestinian Return Centre Ltd; World Jewish Congress; European Union of Jewish Students; United Nations Watch; Defence for Children International; Commission of the Churches on International Affairs of the World Council of Churches; *Conseil International pour le soutien à des procès équitables et aux Droits de l'Homme*; Human Rights Now; Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies, (in a joint statement with Al-Haq, Law in the Service of Man); Union of Arab Jurists; International

Federation for Human Rights Leagues, (in a joint statement with Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies); Association of World Citizens; Europe-Third World Centre, (in a joint statement with International Association of Democratic Lawyers); Human Rights Watch; International-Lawyers.Org; Ius Primi Viri International Association; United Towns Agency for North-South Cooperation; Organization for Defending Victims of Violence; Khiam Rehabilitation Center for Victims of Torture; International Youth and Student Movement for the United Nations; International Organization for the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination (EAFORD); International Institute for Rights and Development Geneva; *Association Bharathi Centre Culturel Franco-Tamoul*; *L'Observatoire Mauritanien des Droits de l'Homme et de la Démocratie*; Badil Resource Center for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights; Indian Movement "Tupaj Amaru"; Institute for NGO Research; Servas International and Al Mezan Centre for Human Rights.

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Statements by Concerned Countries

VOJISLAV ŠUC, President of the Human Rights Council, noted that the delegation of Israel was not present in the room.

Palestine, speaking as a concerned country, expressed gratitude to brotherly States which were ready to take part in the debate under agenda item 7. The occupying party continued to refuse to comply with international humanitarian and human rights law and United Nations' resolutions. Israel continued to refuse to cooperate with the Council and other human rights mechanisms. The United States Ambassador in New York came to remove the agenda item 7 last year, and was considering a resolution for removing the item during this session, but that decision was only supported by Israel. As a result of such failure, the United States withdrew from the Council. The United States had recognized Jerusalem as the capital of Israel last December but this was a violation of international law and the right to self-determination of Palestinians. The occupying power continued to target civilians, impose sieges, carry out land theft, attack religious places and destroy infrastructure. The practice of apartheid and adoption of racist laws continued by Israel. There were over 6,000 Palestinian detainees held by Israel, including members of parliament. All Israeli violations were documented in the report of the High Commissioner, as well as the report of the Secretary General. The Council had to help stop international human rights violations by Israel against Palestinians. The Commission of Inquiry had to investigate the latest atrocities. The High Commissioner had to publish the list of enterprises cooperating with the occupying power in the building of settlements.

Syria, speaking as a concerned country, said the debate on the situation of human rights in Palestine and other occupied Arab territories was of great importance as human rights violations in the occupied lands continued. The rights of Palestinians and people in the Syrian Golan were violated on a daily basis. The theft of resources and displacement resulting from settlements amounted to war crimes. Israel was attempting to annex parts of the West Bank through new settlements. Syria regretted the fact that Israel was preventing the visit of Special Procedures to Palestine. People in Gaza were deprived of their rights to education and to life. Syria requested the unconditional release of all Palestinian detainees in Israeli prisons. Israel was flouting all its international commitments. United Nations reports on Israeli practices clearly documented Israel's disregard for its international obligations. Threats levelled by the United States and United

Kingdom in the Human Rights Council demonstrated their continued support for the Palestinian occupation.

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II. UNRWA, OHCHR AND UNSCO OFFICIALS CALL FOR AN END TO WEST BANK DEMOLITIONS AND RESPECT FOR INTERNATIONAL LAW

The following [statement](#) was issued by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) on 5 July 2018.

Today, the Humanitarian Coordinator, Mr. Jamie McGoldrick, the Head of West Bank Operations for UNRWA, Mr. Scott Anderson, and the Head of the UN Office for the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mr. James Heenan, expressed serious concern over demolitions and related events in vulnerable Palestinian communities in the central West Bank.

Yesterday, Israeli forces began levelling access routes in the Palestinian Bedouin community of Khan al Ahmar-Abu al Helu, home to more than 180 people, 95 per cent of whom are Palestine refugees. The work comes in advance of the expected demolition of the entire community. Israeli forces injured thirty-five Palestinians and arrested others, including residents, in confrontations that ensued while bulldozers were levelling all entry and exit points. One Israeli soldier was also reported injured as well. Today, the Israeli authorities have declared Khan al Ahmar a closed military area, and are heavily restricting movement of residents and preventing the entry of others to the community.

“What we are seeing unfold on the ground is deeply disturbing,” said Mr. McGoldrick. “Demolitions have a devastating impact on families and on communities. These demolitions are particularly outrageous because they target communities who already live in extremely difficult conditions, with high levels of humanitarian needs. I call again on the Israeli authorities to cease demolitions and other measures that may result in the forcible transfer of Palestinians.”

This situation occurs on the backdrop of a wave of demolitions across the West Bank in recent days. Since 1 July, eleven incidents have occurred, displacing 59 Palestinians, including 37 children, and affecting more than 200 others. Included within this is the demolition of 19 structures, including nine homes, in the Palestinian Bedouin community of Abu Nuwar (around 600 residents, 88 per cent Palestine refugees). As a result, 51 people, including 33 children, were displaced and another 13 people, including five children, who had family property destroyed, were directly affected. Also, one home was destroyed today in Susiya, displacing a family of five.

“The escalation of events in the last few days – the demolitions in Abu Nuwar, the declaration of the Khan al Ahmar community as a closed military zone, the violence and large presence of armed Israeli forces – makes life in these communities virtually untenable. The latest developments are of serious concern as it is evident that they are undertaken with the objective of relocating the concerned communities, as well as causing serious distress to the vulnerable residents who are watching what appear to be preparations for the demolition of their community,” said Mr. Scott Anderson. “These pastoral communities are mostly Palestine refugees – originally

displaced from their tribal lands in the Negev. They should not be forced to experience a second displacement against their will.”

“The demolitions in the community will have serious human rights and humanitarian law consequences,” said Mr. Heenan. “There is high risk of forced evictions of individuals, destruction of private property as well as a dramatic increase in the coercive environment under which the community already lives, in turn raising the risk of forcible transfer.”

III. UN SPECIAL COORDINATOR FOR THE MIDDLE EAST PEACE PROCESS EXPRESSES CONCERN ABOUT NEW RESTRICTIONS AT KEREM SHALOM CROSSING

The following [statement](#) was issued on 5 July 2018 by the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Nickolay Mladenov:

I am concerned by the consequences of Israel’s decision to temporarily suspend imports and exports with the exception of basic humanitarian supplies through the Kerem Shalom crossing.

Humanitarian assistance is no substitute for commerce and trade. I urge the authorities to reverse this decision.

Hamas and other Palestinian factions in Gaza should also do their part by maintaining calm, stopping incendiary kites and preventing other provocations.

The United Nations is continuing its engagement with Israeli and Palestinian counterparts, as well as regional and international partners, to reduce tensions, support intra-Palestinian reconciliation and resolve all humanitarian challenges. This latest development must not divert us from this urgent course of action.

Everyone must step back from the trajectory of confrontation and escalation.

IV. UN SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR ON HUMAN RIGHTS IN OPT CALLS ON ISRAEL TO REVERSE DECISION ON CLOSURE OF GAZA COMMERCIAL CROSSING

On 13 July, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian Territory occupied since 1967, Michael Lynk, issued a [press release](#) reproduced below, on the closure of the Kerem Shalom/Karm Abu Salem commercial crossing.

The Israeli decision, announced on 9 July, prohibits the import of everything but food, animal fodder, livestock, fuels and medical supplies into Gaza, and bans all export from Gaza. Israel imposed these new restrictions in response to burning kites being sent by Palestinians into southern Israel from Gaza.

“This further tightening of an already-punitive and comprehensive blockade on Gaza will only worsen its dire humanitarian crisis,” said Michael Lynk, the UN Special Rapporteur for the situation of human rights in the Palestinian Territory occupied since 1967.

“Gaza survives with four to six hours of daily electrical power, its drinkable water is almost exhausted, it endures the highest unemployment rates in the world, and its anaemic economy is already flat on its back.”

“Israel’s 11-year-old air, sea and land blockade has driven Gaza’s social and economic conditions steadily backwards. This amounts to the collective punishment of the two million residents of Gaza, which is strictly prohibited under the Fourth Geneva Convention.”

Although Israel removed its settlements and its military in 2005, it controls Gaza’s frontiers and determines who and what can enter and leave Gaza. As such, it maintains effective control over Gaza, and therefore remains the occupying power, with strict duties and responsibilities under international law.

“The flying of incendiary kites into southern Israel, which has caused the burning and destruction of agricultural fields, is to be deplored,” Mr. Lynk said. “However, imposing even greater social and economic harm on Gaza will not address Israel’s true security interests, and it profoundly violates the rights of the residents of Gaza.”

As well as closing the commercial crossing, Israel has once again restricted the fishing zone off Gaza from nine nautical miles to six. According to the Oslo Accords of the 1990s, the fishing zone had been set at 20 nautical miles.

Instead of punitive responses, the Special Rapporteur has called on Israel to reverse the closure of the Kerem Shalom/Karm Abu Salem crossing, and commit to lifting its comprehensive blockade, consistent with appropriate security arrangements.

“Only through the economic restoration of Gaza, and a guaranteed path for Palestinian self-determination and the end of the Israeli occupation, will tensions ease between Gaza and Israel. Collectively punishing the entire population of Gaza, and further isolating it from the world, is exactly the wrong path – legally, politically and morally.”

V. EU HIGH REPRESENTATIVE FEDERICA MOGHERINI’S STATEMENT ON PALESTINIAN COMMUNITY OF KHAN AL-AHMAR

On 18 July, the European External Action Service issued the following [press release](#).

The developments in the Palestinian community of Khan al-Ahmar (Abu al Helu) in the occupied West Bank continue to have our full attention. The EU Foreign Affairs Council has systematically highlighted the plight of Bedouin communities, including the risk of forced transfer from the wider E1 area. While the Israeli Supreme Court has issued temporary injunctions against the demolition orders, the European Union emphasises that the consequences of a demolition of this community and the displacement of its residents, including children, against their will, would be very serious.

Khan al-Ahmar is located in a sensitive location in Area C, of strategic importance for preserving the contiguity of a future Palestinian state. Its demolition and displacement,

together with plans for new settlements in the same area, illegal under international law, would severely threaten the viability of the two-state solution and undermine prospects for peace. The European Union expects the Israeli authorities to reconsider their decision to demolish Khan al-Ahmar, and to allow for full and unimpeded access of humanitarian assistance to Palestinians in need, in line with its obligations as an occupying power under international humanitarian law.

VI. UN RESPONDS TO THE ISRAELI NATIONALITY LAW

On 20 July, the Office of the Spokesperson for the Secretary-General responded to questions on the Secretary-Generals opinion on the new Israeli Nationality Law. [Excerpts](#) from the daily press briefing are below.

...

Deputy Spokesman: What I can say is that we've taken note of the passing of the so-called nationality law by the Israeli Knesset. We reaffirm the United Nations' respect for the sovereignty of States to define their constitutional character while emphasizing the need for all States to adhere to universal human rights principles, including the protection of minority rights. We reiterate that a negotiated two-State outcome of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, in line with United Nations resolutions and previous agreements, is the only way to achieve enduring peace that resolves all permanent status issues and realises the national aspirations of both peoples. And we call once more on all parties to refrain from unilateral moves that undermine the two-State solution.

...

VII. SECRETARY-GENERAL URGES ALL PARTIES TO STOP VIOLENT ESCALATION IN GAZA

On 21 July, the Department of Public Information issued press release [SG/SM/19141](#) reproduced below. The statement contained therein was issued by the Spokesman for Secretary-General António Guterres:

I am gravely concerned over the dangerous escalation of violence in Gaza and southern Israel. I deeply regret the loss of life. It is imperative that all sides urgently step back from the brink of another devastating conflict.

I call on Hamas and other Palestinian militants to cease the launching of rockets and incendiary kites and provocations along the fence. And Israel must exercise restraint to avoid further inflaming the situation.

I encourage all to engage with the United Nations, and particularly my Special Coordinator, and work to find a way out of this dangerous situation. Any further escalation will endanger the lives of Palestinians and Israelis alike, deepen the humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza and undermine current efforts to improve livelihoods and support the return of the Palestinian Authority to Gaza.

VIII. UN SPECIAL COMMITTEE TO INVESTIGATE ISRAELI PRACTICES ISSUES ITS END OF MISSION STATEMENT

On 23 July, the United Nations Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories issued the following [statement](#) following its visit to Jordan.

The United Nations Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories has heard grave concerns about the deteriorating situation of human rights, during its annual visit to Jordan.

The Committee's three-member delegation was told that discriminatory measures against the Palestinians were on the rise in a climate of impunity, with the continuation by the occupying power, Israel, of its deliberate and unlawful policies and practices.

The delegation also heard testimony on a range of human rights issues, including arrests and detentions, the restriction of movement, destruction and confiscation of property, expansion of settlements, and poor detention conditions, as well as the excessive use of force by Israeli security forces and an overarching lack of accountability.

Members of the delegation said it was especially troubling to hear accounts of the increasingly coercive environment in which Palestinians live in Area C of the West Bank – which is under full Israeli civil and security control.

Palestinians feared demolition of their homes, schools and other structures, faced night raids on their homes, and were unable to build or expand their own homes, as they were denied building permits by the Israeli authorities.

The Committee said this was in stark contrast to the current expansion of Israeli settlements in the West Bank. The construction of new homes in Israeli settlements threatened the very possibility of a viable and contiguous Palestinian state and was in violation of international humanitarian law.

Against this backdrop, the delegation received detailed briefings on the precarious situation of Palestinian Bedouin communities in Area C, and particularly of the community of Khan al-Ahmar Abu al Helu, whose 181 inhabitants are facing eviction at any moment. This planned displacement could amount to “forcible transfer” under international law, the Committee noted.

Witnesses explained that the pressure exercised by the Israeli authorities on Palestinians living in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, to try to force them to leave their property and land, was enormous. The fragmentation of the Palestinian territory, the expansion of settlements, the wall built by Israel, and checkpoints had had a profound impact on the daily life of Palestinians and the enjoyment of their basic human rights, including freedom of movement and access to their livelihoods, education and healthcare.

Organizations told the Committee that Israeli practices, underpinned by the obstruction of humanitarian relief and human rights protection, were pursued in favour of Israeli territorial interests.

The delegates were also briefed on a series of legislative measures, either adopted or under discussion at the Knesset. In particular, they heard about the adoption last week of an amendment to the Administrative Courts Law, transferring jurisdiction for petitions relating to the Occupied Palestinian Territory – currently brought before the High Court of Justice – to the Administrative Affairs Court in Jerusalem. Organizations have expressed concern that this change would have the effect of severely limiting Palestinian access to justice.

Other testimony described the continued use of administrative detention and the poor conditions for Palestinian detainees in Israeli prisons. Concerns were also expressed about the arrest and detention of children, including reports of ill-treatment.

The delegation was briefed extensively on the continuation of the blockade in Gaza for the eleventh year, and its negative impact on the most basic human rights of residents, including their rights to health, education and freedom of movement.

The electricity crisis which worsened over a year ago was continuing, with only four to six hours of electricity available per day. This has significant negative repercussions on access to clean water and medical care.

The Committee's representatives learned of Israel's decision on 9 July to place additional restrictions on the Kerem Shalom/Karm Abu Salem commercial crossing into Gaza, restricting even more the movements of goods in and out of Gaza.

The delegation heard disturbing testimony regarding the use of lethal force against mostly unarmed demonstrators by Israeli security forces during the "Great March of Return" demonstrations along the fence in Gaza. 112 Palestinians have been killed and thousands of others have been injured since 30 March 2018. Among those killed were 17 children, as well as a paramedic and two journalists, who were wearing clearly visible insignia identifying them as medical staff and members of the press. Concerns were expressed about the lack of accountability that further exacerbates the violence.

Members of the delegation also heard that many injured protesters had sustained permanent injuries, including limb amputations, and that a high number of those who required care not available in Gaza had been denied exit permits to access healthcare elsewhere.

Organizations told the Committee that the space in which they operate was shrinking rapidly. Human rights defenders faced threats and discrimination, and several cases of arrest and detention of human rights defenders were also reported.

The delegates heard with concern of significant cuts to the funding of UNRWA, which plays a crucial role in providing protection, education and health services to the refugee populations, as well as employment in Gaza and the West Bank. The Committee's members were briefed on the possibility that UNRWA would not be able to start the school year in a few weeks' time if new funding was not made available by the end of August.

In this context of increased Israeli discriminatory practices against the Palestinians, and in order to cease the deterioration of the human rights situation of Palestinians, members of the Committee stressed the importance of the peace process and the two-State solution.

The delegates of the Special Committee had meetings with civil society organizations, Palestinian government officials and UN representatives during their visit to Amman from 17 to 20 July.

The Committee's next report will be presented to the General Assembly in November 2018.

IX. PALESTINIAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE ELECTS NEW CHAIR AND RECEIVES BRIEFING FROM UN HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (CEIRPP) held its 390th meeting on 23 July where it elected a new Chair, Ambassador Cheick Niang of Senegal, by acclamation and received a briefing from outgoing United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Zeid Ra'ad al-Hussein. A press release ([GA/PAL/1414](#)) with details of the meeting is excerpted below.

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Zeid Ra'ad al Hussein, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, briefed the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People via video conference from Geneva, following that body's election, by acclamation, of Cheikh Niang (Senegal) as its new Chairperson. Noting that the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory — including the Gaza Strip — has escalated dramatically in recent months, he described two heavy exchanges of fire between Israeli forces and armed groups in Gaza within the past two weeks. On 20 July, he said, the situation “almost exploded into a serious conflict” triggered by the killing of an Israeli soldier and the subsequent killing of four Palestinian civilians, while during the weekend of 14 July, air strikes by Israeli security forces killed 2 Palestinian children and injured some 35 others.

During the same period, he continued, Palestinian armed groups fired 184 rockets and mortar shells towards Israel — injuring three people — and deployed burning kites and incendiary balloons. “I remind all parties that any disproportionate or indiscriminate use of weapons which lead to the death and injury of civilians is prohibited by international law,” he stressed, noting that, while efforts by Egypt and the United Nations have led to a ceasefire, the situation remains extremely fragile. The parties and all those with influence over them should do their utmost to avoid another round of violence and misery, he said, pointing out that skyrocketing unemployment and poverty, crumbling infrastructure and other challenges — including a bleak political horizon — are already creating a massive, devastating and multifaceted deprivation which is both “entirely man-made and entirely preventable”.

Recalling that the Human Rights Council decided to dispatch an international commission of inquiry to examine the recent violence at the Gaza border — which led to

the deaths of more than 100 Palestinians — he called upon Israeli authorities to cooperate fully with its work. He also voiced concern that the situation may be aggravated in the coming months by the funding crisis being experienced by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), as well as by Israel's adoption last week of its "Nation-State Basic Law", which anchors discrimination against non-Jewish communities. Also of concern is the continued construction of Israeli settlements across the occupied West Bank, restrictions on movement, daily intimidation, threats against and arrests of human rights defenders, and the holding of some 440 Palestinians, including children, under Israel's so-called "administrative detention" system.

"Although they are of a different magnitude, I also have concerns about restriction on civil society by the Palestinian authorities," he continued. Such assaults on fundamental rights dismantle trust in institutions, strip away the social structures that enable the peaceful resolution of disputes and "create a tinderbox" in which any flash of conflict may ignite severe and unpredictable consequences, he warned. Above all, only an end to the occupation can bring about lasting peace and establish the conditions in which the human rights of all people can at last be fully respected — and in which each side respects the humanity and equality of the other. "All States have a responsibility to realize this hope, too long promised and too long denied."

...

X. ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL ADOPTS RESOLUTION ON LIVING CONDITIONS OF PALESTINIAN PEOPLE, REJECTS ISRAELI AMENDMENT CALLING FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE OF CIVILIANS AND SOLDIERS HELD BY HAMAS

On 24 July, the Economic and Social Council [adopted](#) a resolution on the "Economic and Social Repercussions of the Israeli Occupation on the Living Conditions of Palestinian People in OPT and Syrian Golan", introduced by Egypt and orally revised by members of the Council as document [E/RES/2018/20](#) reproduced below. An Israeli amendment of the draft resolution, document [E/2018/L.27](#) was rejected by the Council.

The Economic and Social Council,

Recalling General Assembly resolutions [72/86](#) of 7 December 2017 and [72/240](#) of 20 December 2017,

Recalling also its resolution [2017/30](#) of 25 July 2017,

Guided by the principles of the Charter of the United Nations affirming the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force, and recalling relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolutions [242 \(1967\)](#) of 22 November 1967, [252 \(1968\)](#) of 21 May 1968, [338 \(1973\)](#) of 22 October 1973, [465 \(1980\)](#) of 1 March 1980, [497 \(1981\)](#) of 17 December 1981 and [2334 \(2016\)](#) of 23 December 2016,

Recalling the resolutions of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, including resolutions [ES-10/13](#) of 21 October 2003, [ES-10/14](#) of 8 December 2003, [ES-10/15](#) of 20 July 2004 and [ES-10/17](#) of 15 December 2006,

Taking note of the report of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia on the economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan, as transmitted by the Secretary-General,¹

Reaffirming the applicability of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949,² to the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and other Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967,

Recalling the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,³ the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights³ and the Convention on the Rights of the Child,⁴ and affirming that these human rights instruments are applicable and must be respected in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, as well as in the occupied Syrian Golan,

Noting with concern that more than 70 years have passed since the adoption of General Assembly resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947 and 51 years since the occupation of Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, in 1967,

Taking note, in this regard, of Palestine's accession to several human rights treaties and the core humanitarian law conventions as well as other international treaties,

Taking note also of General Assembly resolution [67/19](#) of 29 November 2012,

Stressing the urgency of achieving without delay an end to the Israeli occupation that began in 1967 and a just, lasting and comprehensive peace settlement on all tracks on the basis of Security Council resolutions [242 \(1967\)](#), [338 \(1973\)](#), [425 \(1978\)](#) of 19 March 1978, [1397 \(2002\)](#) of 12 March 2002, [1515 \(2003\)](#) of 19 November 2003, [1544 \(2004\)](#) of 19 May 2004, [1850 \(2008\)](#) of 16 December 2008 and [2334 \(2016\)](#), the principle of land for peace, the Arab Peace Initiative⁵ and the Quartet road map,⁶ as well as compliance with the agreements reached between the Government of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people,

Reaffirming the principle of the permanent sovereignty of peoples under foreign occupation over their natural resources, and expressing concern in that regard about the exploitation, endangerment and depletion of natural resources by Israel, the occupying Power, and Israeli settlers in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem,

¹ [A/73/87-E/2018/69](#).

² United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 75, No. 973.

³ See General Assembly resolution 2200 A (XXI), annex.

⁴ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1577, No. 27531.

⁵ [A/56/1026-S/2002/932](#), annex II, resolution 14/221.

⁶ [S/2003/529](#), annex.

and in the occupied Syrian Golan, particularly as a result of settlement activities, which are illegal under international law and which, deplorably, continued during the reporting period,

Convinced that the Israeli occupation has gravely impeded the efforts to achieve environmentally sustainable development and a sound economic environment in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan, and expressing grave concern about the consequent deterioration of economic and living conditions,

Expressing alarm, in this regard, about the extremely high levels of unemployment in the Gaza Strip in particular, which remains at over 40 per cent, with youth unemployment reaching 60 per cent, exacerbated by the prolonged Israeli closures and severe economic and movement restrictions that in effect amount to a blockade, and the continuing negative repercussions of the military operations in the Gaza Strip on economic and social infrastructure and living conditions,

Commending, despite the many constraints, including the obstacles imposed by the ongoing Israeli occupation, the efforts of the Palestinian Government to improve the economic and social situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, especially in the areas of governance, the rule of law and human rights, livelihoods and productive sectors, education and culture, health, social protection, infrastructure and water,

Stressing the importance of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, which aims, inter alia, at enhancing development support and assistance to the Palestinian people and strengthening institutional capacity in line with Palestinian national priorities,

Gravely concerned about the accelerated construction of settlements and implementation of other related measures by Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, particularly in and around occupied East Jerusalem, as well as in the occupied Syrian Golan, in violation of international humanitarian law and relevant United Nations resolutions, and stressing that such illegal measures are main sources of other Israeli violations and discriminatory policies,

Encouraging all States and international organizations to continue to actively pursue policies to ensure respect for their obligations under international law with regard to all illegal Israeli practices and measures in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, particularly Israeli settlements,

Taking note of the report of the independent international fact-finding mission to investigate the implications of the Israeli settlements on the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of the Palestinian people throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem,⁷

Expressing deep concern about the rising incidence of violence, harassment, provocation, vandalism and incitement in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, in particular by illegal armed Israeli settlers against Palestinian civilians, including children, and their properties, including homes, historic and religious sites and

⁷ [A/HRC/22/63](#).

agricultural lands, and calling for accountability for the illegal actions perpetrated in this regard,

Gravely concerned by the serious repercussions on the economic and social conditions of the Palestinian people caused by Israel's construction of the wall and its associated regime inside the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in and around East Jerusalem, and the resulting violation of their economic and social rights, including the rights to work, to health, to education, to property, to an adequate standard of living and to freedom of access and movement,

Recalling, in that regard, the advisory opinion rendered on 9 July 2004 by the International Court of Justice on the legal consequences of the construction of a wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory,⁸ and General Assembly resolution [ES-10/15](#), and stressing the need to comply with the obligations mentioned therein,

Deploring all loss of innocent civilian life and injury to scores of civilians, and calling upon all parties to fully respect international law, including humanitarian and human rights law, including for the protection of civilian life, as well as for the promotion of human security, the de-escalation of the situation, the exercise of restraint, including from provocative actions and rhetoric, and the establishment of a stable environment conducive to the pursuit of peace,

Expressing grave concern at the extensive destruction by Israel, the occupying Power, of properties, including the increased demolition of homes, economic institutions, historical landmarks, agricultural lands and orchards, in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, in particular in connection with its construction of settlements and the wall and confiscation of land, contrary to international law, in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in and around East Jerusalem,

Expressing grave concern also over the continuing forced displacement and dispossession of Palestinian civilians, including the Bedouin community, due to the continuing and intensifying policy of home demolitions, evictions and revocation of residency rights in and around occupied East Jerusalem, as well as measures to further isolate the city from its natural Palestinian environs, which have seriously exacerbated the already critical socioeconomic situation being faced by the Palestinian population,

Expressing grave concern further about ongoing Israeli military operations and policies of closures and severe restrictions on the movement of persons and goods, the imposition of crossing closures, checkpoints and a permit regime throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the consequent negative impact on the socioeconomic situation of the Palestinian people, in particular the Palestine refugee population, which remains that of a humanitarian crisis,

Expressing grave concern, in particular, over the continuing crisis in the Gaza Strip as a result of the prolonged Israeli closures and severe economic and movement restrictions that in effect amount to a blockade, stressing that the situation is unsustainable, as reflected in numerous reports, including the report of 26 August 2016 of the United Nations country

⁸ See [A/ES-10/273](#) and [A/ES-10/273/Corr.1](#).

team, entitled “Gaza: two years after”, and calling in that regard for the full implementation of Security Council resolution [1860 \(2009\)](#) of 8 January 2009 with a view to ensuring the full opening of the border crossings for the sustained and regular movement of persons and goods, including humanitarian aid, commercial flows and construction materials, and emphasizing the need for security for all civilian populations,

Deploring the conflict in and around the Gaza Strip in July and August 2014 and the civilian casualties caused, including the killing of and injury to thousands of Palestinian civilians, including children, women and the elderly, as well as the widespread destruction of or damage to thousands of homes and vital civilian infrastructure, including schools, hospitals, water, sanitation and electricity networks, economic, industrial and agricultural properties, public institutions, religious sites and United Nations schools and facilities, as well as the internal displacement of hundreds of thousands of civilians, and any violations of international law, including humanitarian and human rights law, in this regard,

Gravely concerned about the consequent prolonged and extensive negative impact of the military operations of July and August 2014, as well as the military operations between December 2008 and January 2009 and of November 2012, on economic conditions, the provision of social services and the social, humanitarian and physical living conditions of the Palestinian civilian population, including the Palestine refugee population,

Recalling, in that regard, the relevant United Nations reports, including those of the Economic and Social Council, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia and the Human Rights Council,

Expressing deep concern about the short- and long-term detrimental impact of such widespread destruction and the hampering of the reconstruction process, by Israel, the occupying Power, on the socioeconomic and humanitarian conditions of the Palestinian civilian population in the Gaza Strip, where the humanitarian crisis continues to deepen, and calling in that regard for the immediate acceleration and fulfilment of the reconstruction process in the Gaza Strip with the assistance of the donor countries, including the disbursement of funds pledged at the Cairo International Conference on Palestine: Reconstructing Gaza, held on 12 October 2014,

Gravely concerned about various reports of the United Nations and specialized agencies regarding the substantial aid dependency caused by prolonged border closures, inordinate rates of unemployment, widespread poverty and severe humanitarian hardships, including food insecurity and rising health-related problems, including high levels of malnutrition, among the Palestinian people, especially children, in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem,

Expressing grave concern at the deaths of and injuries caused to civilians, including children, women and peaceful demonstrators, and emphasizing that the Palestinian civilian population must be protected in accordance with international humanitarian law,

Emphasizing the importance of the safety and well-being of all civilians, and calling for the cessation of all acts of violence, including all acts of terror, provocation, incitement and destruction, and all firing of rockets,

Expressing deep concern that thousands of Palestinians, including many children and women, continue to be held in Israeli prisons or detention centres under harsh conditions, including unhygienic conditions, solitary confinement, excessive use of administrative detention, including of children, lack of proper medical care and widespread medical neglect, including for ill prisoners, with the risk of fatal consequences, and denial of family visits and of due process, that impair their well-being, and expressing deep concern also about any ill-treatment and harassment of Palestinian prisoners and detainees and all reports of torture,

Conscious of the urgent need for the reconstruction and development of the economic and social infrastructure of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, as well as the urgent need to address the humanitarian crisis facing the Palestinian people, including by ensuring the unimpeded provision of humanitarian assistance and the sustained and regular flow of persons and goods into and out of the Gaza Strip,

Recognizing the efforts being undertaken by the Palestinian Government, with international support, to reform, develop and strengthen its institutions and infrastructure, emphasizing the need to preserve and further develop Palestinian institutions and infrastructure, despite the obstacles presented by the ongoing Israeli occupation, and commending in this regard the ongoing efforts to develop the institutions of an independent Palestinian State, including through the implementation of the Palestinian National Policy Agenda: National Priorities, Policies and Policy Interventions (2017–2022),

Expressing concern about the risks posed to the significant achievements made, as confirmed by the positive assessments made by international institutions regarding readiness for statehood, including by the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the United Nations and the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee for the Coordination of the International Assistance to Palestinians, owing to the negative impact of ongoing instability and the financial crisis being faced by the Palestinian Government and the continued absence of a credible political horizon,

Commending, in that regard, the important work being done by the United Nations, the specialized agencies and the donor community in support of the economic and social development of the Palestinian people in line with their national development and State-building plan, as well as the vital assistance being provided in the humanitarian field,

Affirming the need to support the Palestinian Government of national consensus in its assumption of full government responsibilities in both the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, in all fields, as well as through its presence at Gaza's crossing points, and Palestinian national reconciliation, and emphasizing the need for the respect and preservation of the territorial integrity and unity of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem,

Calling upon both parties to fulfil their obligations under the road map in cooperation with the Quartet,

Aware that development and fostering healthy economic, social and environmental conditions are difficult under occupation and best promoted in circumstances of peace and stability,

1. *Calls for* the full opening of the border crossings of the Gaza Strip, in line with Security Council resolution [1860 \(2009\)](#), to ensure humanitarian access as well as the sustained and regular flow of persons and goods and the lifting of all movement restrictions imposed on the Palestinian people, including those restrictions arising from ongoing Israeli military operations and the multi-layered closure system, and for other urgent measures to be taken to alleviate the serious humanitarian situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, which is dire in the Gaza Strip, and also calls for compliance by Israel, the occupying Power, with all of its legal obligations under international humanitarian law and United Nations resolutions in that regard;
2. *Stresses* the need to preserve the territorial contiguity, unity and integrity of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and to guarantee the freedom of movement of persons and goods throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, as well as to and from the outside world;
3. *Also stresses* the need to preserve and develop Palestinian national institutions and infrastructure for the provision of vital public services to the Palestinian civilian population and to contribute to the promotion and protection of human rights, including economic and social rights;
4. *Demands* that Israel comply with the Protocol on Economic Relations between the Government of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization signed in Paris on 29 April 1994;⁹
5. *Calls upon* Israel to restore and replace civilian properties, vital infrastructure, agricultural lands and government institutions that have been damaged or destroyed as a result of its military operations in the Occupied Palestinian Territory;
6. *Reiterates* the call for the full implementation of the Agreement on Movement and Access of 15 November 2005, particularly the urgent and uninterrupted reopening of all crossings into the Gaza Strip, which is crucial to ensuring the passage of foodstuffs and essential supplies, including construction materials and adequate fuel supplies, as well as to ensuring the unhindered access of the United Nations and related agencies and regular commercial flows necessary for economic recovery to and within the Occupied Palestinian Territory, and emphasizes the need for security for all civilian populations;
7. *Calls upon* all parties to respect the rules of international humanitarian law and to refrain from violence against the civilian population, in accordance with the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949;²
8. *Reaffirms* the inalienable right of the Palestinian people and the Arab population of the occupied Syrian Golan to all their natural and economic resources, and calls upon Israel, the occupying Power, not to exploit, endanger or cause loss or depletion of those resources;
9. *Calls upon* Israel, the occupying Power, to cease its destruction of homes and properties, economic institutions and agricultural lands and orchards in the Occupied

⁹ See [A/49/180-S/1994/727](#), annex, entitled “Agreement on the Gaza Strip and the Jericho Area”, annex IV.

Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, as well as in the occupied Syrian Golan, and to prevent Israeli settlers from perpetrating such illegal activities;

10. *Also calls upon* Israel, the occupying Power, to end immediately its exploitation of natural resources, including water and mining resources, and to cease the dumping of all kinds of waste materials in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan, which gravely threaten their natural resources, namely, the water, land and energy resources, and present a serious environmental hazard and health threat to the civilian populations, and also calls upon Israel, the occupying Power, to remove all obstacles that obstruct the implementation of critical environmental projects, including the sewage treatment plants in the Gaza Strip, notably the provision of the electric power needed for the work of the northern Gaza emergency sewage treatment plant, and stresses in this regard the urgency of the reconstruction and development of water infrastructure, including the desalination facility project for the Gaza Strip;

11. *Calls for* the assistance necessary for the safe removal of all unexploded ordnance in the Gaza Strip, which endangers Palestinian lives and negatively impacts the environment, as well as reconstruction and development efforts, and welcomes the efforts exerted by the Mine Action Service of the United Nations to date;

12. *Reaffirms* that the construction and expansion of Israeli settlements and related infrastructure in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the occupied Syrian Golan, are illegal and constitute a major obstacle to economic and social development and to the achievement of peace, and calls for the full cessation of all settlement and settlement-related activity, including full cessation of all measures aimed at altering the demographic composition, legal status and character of the occupied territories, including in particular in and around occupied East Jerusalem, in compliance with relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#), and international law, including the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War;

13. *Calls for* accountability for the illegal actions perpetrated by Israeli settlers in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and recalls in this regard Security Council resolution [904 \(1994\)](#) of 18 March 1994 and stresses the need for its implementation;

14. *Also calls for* urgent attention to the plight and the rights, in accordance with international law, of prisoners and detainees, and calls for efforts between the two sides for the further release of prisoners and detainees, and deplores the practice of withholding the bodies of those killed, and calls for the release of the bodies that have not yet been returned to their relatives, in line with international humanitarian law and human rights law, in order to ensure dignified closure in accordance with their religious beliefs and traditions;

15. *Reaffirms* that Israel's ongoing construction of the wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in and around East Jerusalem, is contrary to international law and is isolating East Jerusalem, fragmenting the West Bank and seriously debilitating the economic and social development of the Palestinian people, and calls in that regard for full compliance with the legal obligations mentioned in the 9 July 2004 advisory opinion of the International

Court of Justice⁸ and in General Assembly resolution [ES-10/15](#) and subsequent relevant resolutions;

16. *Calls upon* Israel to comply with the provisions of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War and to facilitate visits of the Syrian citizens of the occupied Syrian Golan whose family members reside in their mother homeland, the Syrian Arab Republic, via the Qunaytirah entrance;

17. *Emphasizes* the importance of the work of United Nations organizations and agencies in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General to the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority;

18. *Welcomes and urges* further engagement by the Secretary-General and the United Nations Special Coordinator to assist, in cooperation with concerned partners, in the efforts to address urgent infrastructure, humanitarian and economic development needs, including through the implementation of projects endorsed by the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee for the Coordination of the International Assistance to Palestinians;

19. *Expresses appreciation* to the Member States, United Nations bodies and intergovernmental, regional and non-governmental organizations that have provided and continue to provide economic and humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian people, which has helped to ameliorate their critical economic and social conditions, and urges the continued provision of assistance commensurate with increased socioeconomic and humanitarian needs and in cooperation with official Palestinian institutions and consistent with the Palestinian National Development Plan;

20. *Reiterates* the importance of and need for increased and renewed international efforts on the basis of relevant United Nations resolutions, including Security Council resolutions [242 \(1967\)](#), [338 \(1973\)](#), [425 \(1978\)](#), [1397 \(2002\)](#), [1515 \(2003\)](#), [1544 \(2004\)](#), [1850 \(2008\)](#) and [2334 \(2016\)](#), and the Madrid Conference, the principle of land for peace, the Arab Peace Initiative⁵ and the Quartet road map,⁶ as well as compliance with the agreements reached between the Government of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people, in order to pave the way for the realization of the two-State solution of Israel and Palestine living side by side in peace and security within recognized borders, based on the pre-1967 borders, and the achievement of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace settlement;

21. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its seventy-third session, through the Economic and Social Council, a report on the implementation of the present resolution and to continue to include in the report of the United Nations Special Coordinator an update on the living conditions of the Palestinian people, in collaboration with relevant United Nations agencies;

22. *Decides* to include the item entitled “Economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the Occupied

Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan” in the agenda of its 2019 session.

50th plenary meeting
24 July 2018

**XI. UN SPECIAL COORDINATOR FOR MIDDLE EAST PEACE PROCESS
WARNS SECURITY COUNCIL NEW ISRAEL-HAMAS CONFLICT
“ALMOST A CERTAINTY”**

The Security Council, at its 8316th meeting of 24 July was briefed by the Special Coordinator on the Middle East Peace Process, Nikolay Mladenov, on the situation in the Gaza Strip. Excerpts of the Special Coordinator’s [briefing](#) are reproduced below.

As we meet today, tensions between Syria and Israel continue to rise, while last Saturday we were minutes away from another devastating confrontation between Israel and Hamas in Gaza. It has taken an intense effort at preventive diplomacy by the United Nations and Egypt to make sure that both sides in the Gaza conflict step back from the brink and from potentially the fourth military confrontation in Gaza over the past decade.

In September 2014, shortly after the devastating 2014 conflict, my predecessor delivered the following remarks to this Council: “We must fundamentally change the dynamics in Gaza — if we do not, Gaza could implode — or yet again— explode, possibly with a new and even more deadly round of violence.”

For four long years that fragile ceasefire that has existed has been taken for granted.

For four long years the United Nations has urged concerted action to address the root causes of this man-made catastrophe — the intractable conflict, over 50 years of occupation, and over a decade of Hamas control of the Gaza strip, Palestinian division and a crippling Israeli closure regime.

And for four long years, the underlying dynamics have not improved. The humanitarian crisis has deepened, the political stalemate between Hamas and Fatah has worsened, and the prospect of another deadly round of violence is growing by the day.

Only through the repeated, collective efforts of all sides has another catastrophic escalation been averted over the past weeks.

On July15, and earlier today, I travelled to Gaza in an urgent effort to de-escalate tensions. I appealed to Palestinian factions not to provoke incidents at the fence, to immediately stop the firing of rockets and mortars and to stop the incendiary kites and balloons. And I appealed to Israel to reopen the crossings, stop shelling, particularly in populated areas, and to exercise restraint towards Gaza.

Over the last two weeks however the situation quickly spiraled out of control, nearly to a point of no-return.

Today, I reiterate my call to all in Gaza to step back from the brink. Those who seek to provoke Israelis and Palestinians to war must not succeed.

The past month has witnessed one of the largest escalations since the 2014 conflict. Nineteen Palestinians, including seven children, were killed by Israel Defense Forces (IDF) in Gaza, during protests, clashes, and airstrikes, and over 1,000 have been injured. One IDF soldier was killed by gunfire from Gaza, while four Israeli civilians and one other IDF soldier were moderately injured. In the occupied West Bank, a Palestinian teenager was killed by the IDF during a search and arrest operation, while some 25 Palestinians and three Israeli soldiers were injured in various incidents.

Hamas and other militants fired 283 rockets and mortars from Gaza towards Israel. The Israeli Air Force (IAF) fired some 189 missiles and artillery shells against targets in Gaza, including against two tunnels between Gaza and Israel. Meanwhile, Egyptian Security Forces also destroyed a tunnel between Gaza and Sinai

Over a 24-hour period from 14 to 15 July alone militants fired some 220 rockets and mortars from Gaza towards Israel. One rocket directly hit a house and injured four people. Other rockets landed in the grounds of a synagogue and near a children's playground in Sderot. The IDF fired 90 missiles and artillery shells towards what it said were military sites, injuring at least 25 Palestinians and killing two teenagers in the highly populated center of Gaza City.

On 19 July, an Israeli drone shot towards a group launching incendiary balloons, killing a Hamas militant. The next day, an IDF soldier was killed by sniper fire from Gaza, the first such fatality since the 2014 hostilities. Israel retaliated against dozens of military targets across the Strip, killing three militants claimed by Hamas' s military wing. In response, Palestinians in Gaza launched three rockets towards Israel, without injury or damage. In the early hours of 21 July, Hamas' s spokesperson announced that Hamas had agreed to restore calm. This was followed by Israeli authorities later that morning informing Israeli civilians living near the Gaza border to return to their normal routine.

Incendiary kites and balloons continued to be launched from the Gaza Strip towards Israel, triggering over 1,000 fires in surrounding communities; although, since the evening of 20 July, that number has decreased significantly. Over 8,500 acres of land have been burned, including fields, forests and agricultural land since the beginning of the launching of incendiary kites.

In other violence related to the continuing protests at the Gaza fence, on 13 July, a 15-year-old Palestinian was shot and killed by the IDF while climbing the Gaza perimeter fence; and an IDF soldier was injured by a hand grenade thrown by a Palestinian protestor. A 20-year-old Palestinian also later succumbed to injuries incurred at the fence on that same day. And on 6 July, a Palestinian was killed reportedly due to the detonation of an explosive device he was carrying.

On 2 July, four Palestinians breached the fence into Israel and reportedly attempted to set fire to an abandoned military post. The IDF shot and killed one, and injured at least one other.

In reaction to the continuing launching of incendiary kites and balloons from Gaza, on 10 July, Israel closed the Kerem Shalom crossing, allowing only humanitarian supplies, food, fuel, medicines, animal fodder and livestock, and reduced the fishing zone for the Gaza strip from nine to six nautical miles. As tension continued to escalate, on 17 July, the entry of fuel and gas through the crossing was also halted, and the fishing zone was further reduced to three nautical miles.

After intense efforts by the United Nations and Egypt, I can now report that the situation is calming down, although tensions remain.

I returned to Jerusalem from Gaza just an hour ago and I am hopeful that with collective efforts by all sides we can avoid another confrontation, allow Palestinians in Gaza and Israelis in communities across the border to sleep in peace and begin addressing all humanitarian issues. Today the first 100,000 litres of much-needed fuel were allowed through the Kerem Shalom crossing to be distributed by the United Nations, prioritizing hospitals and emergency services.

The recent sharp escalation in violence and heightened tensions in Gaza must not divert us from our broader efforts to address the crisis.

I continue my engagement with Israeli and Palestinian counterparts as well as with regional and international partners to reduce tensions, to address humanitarian challenges and, critically, to support the Egyptian-led intra-Palestinian reconciliation process.

Advancing urgent infrastructure projects to improve the water, electricity and health systems, and creating employment that would have quick impact on the ground remains a key element of de-escalation. So is improving access and movement for the people of Gaza through Israel and Egypt. To this end, the United Nations is enhancing its presence on the ground to work with donors and international partners to facilitate the smooth implementation of projects, in full coordination with the Palestinian Authority, regional and international stakeholders.

These efforts are already gaining momentum. On 17 July, UNDP announced the implementation of various economic initiatives that will create more than 2,500 immediate and short-term job opportunities in Gaza, particularly benefitting youth and women, over a 12-month period.

But let me reiterate what I said on the 15 July: there is no point in asking donors to continue funding initiatives without a political horizon for the future. This cannot be another futile exercise in conflict management and recurring humanitarian support.

Our work is focused on restoring unity between Gaza and the West Bank under one democratic government and under one legal system where all weapons are under the control of one legitimate national authority. To achieve this, we must avoid an escalation, alleviate the suffering of people, and work to lift movement and access restrictions in line with UNSCR 1860.

To move these efforts forward I have engaged with the Government of Israel, the Palestinian Authority and all stakeholders.

Last week, Norway convened a meeting of the UN, EU, World Bank and the PA to discuss coordination mechanisms to fast track interventions aimed at bolstering the water, electricity and health networks as well as temporary job creation on the ground. Yesterday, the Palestinian Prime Minister's Office convened donors to reinforce these priorities ahead of the AHLC discussions scheduled for September.

These developments are taking place while UNRWA's financial crisis remains a very serious concern.

UNRWA has communicated to staff that every effort will be made to mitigate the impact on the most vulnerable refugees of reductions in emergency assistance. Of particular concern, is the possibility of a delay to the start of the school year for some 526,000 students in UNRWA schools throughout its areas of operation.

At present, UNRWA needs USD 217 million to sustain its work for this year. I urge the swift mobilization of support to enable the continuity of assistance and a maintenance of stability on the ground in the region.

In the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, Israeli authorities have continued the demolition and confiscation of Palestinian-owned structures.

In Khan al-Ahmar/Abu al-Helu, located on the outskirts of Jerusalem and populated by some 200 people, Israeli authorities requisitioned land, levelled access routes to the community and declared the area a closed military zone. These actions were taken in advance of the planned demolition and displacement of the entire community. The relocation site offered by the Israeli authorities — Jabal West — has been rejected by the community itself.

The fate of the community will be decided by the Israeli High Court no later than 15 August.

On July 5, in Abu Nuwar, the authorities demolished 19 structures.

Both Khan al-Ahmar and Abu Nuwar are among the 18 communities located in or adjacent to the controversial E1 area, where plans for new settlement construction would create a continuous built-up area between the Ma'ale Adumim settlement and East Jerusalem, undermining the contiguity of a future Palestinian state.

The UN Humanitarian Coordinator, along with the European Union, Norway, France, the UK, Germany and the Arab League and others, have condemned these measures. I reiterate the call on Government of Israel to cease demolitions and other measures that run contrary to its obligations under international law.

On 12 and 17 of June, in compliance with Israeli Supreme Court rulings against settlement construction on privately-owned Palestinian land, the authorities demolished 28 structures in the two illegal Israeli outposts of Netiv Ha'avot and Tapuah West.

The United Nations holds that settlement construction and related activity remains illegal under international law, and I take this opportunity to call on Israeli authorities to cease these actions.

On 2 July, the Knesset passed a new law requiring the withholding of a portion of clearance revenues that Israel collects on behalf of the Palestinian Authority and transfers to Ramallah, in line with its commitments under the Paris Protocol. Funds withheld would be equal to the amount paid by Palestinian authorities to prisoners and detainees convicted, or accused, of security offenses against Israelis, to their families, as well as to families of Palestinians killed or injured in attacks against Israelis.

Implementation of this law is expected to have a significant negative impact on the Palestinian Authority's fiscal sustainability.

I reiterate the Secretary-Generals call on all parties to refrain from unilateral actions and respect their obligations under previous agreements, UN resolutions and international law.

...

Gazans deserve to live their lives in freedom and dignity. That is their right. It is not a privilege that can be taken hostage, that can be granted or withheld by others who have no regard for their suffering.

Israelis living near Gaza also deserve to finally be free of indiscriminate attacks, be it by rockets, mortars or incendiary devices, which have plagued their lives for so many years.

We cannot lose sight of the broader context.

Another missed opportunity could have disastrous consequences, including for reaching a broader Israeli-Palestinian peace on the basis of the two-state solution, in which Gaza is an integral part of the future Palestinian state.

Thank you.

XII. CHAIRMAN OF THE PALESTINIAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE ADDRESSES SECURITY COUNCIL AT ITS OPEN DEBATE

The Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (CEIRPP), Ambassador Cheick Niang of Senegal, also addressed the Security Council at its 8316th meeting and open debate of 24 July. Below is his [statement](#).

Speaking for the first time in my capacity as Chair of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, I should like, at the outset, to commend the professional manner in which your delegation is conducting the work of the Security Council this month and to welcome the holding of this public debate, which is a renewed opportunity to consider the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question.

At a time when we have just marked 70 years of the Israeli-Arab war and 51 years of occupation, the Committee, concerned by recent developments on the ground which are impeding a just, lasting and peaceful solution to the Israeli-Palestinian dispute, reiterates its appeal to the Security Council, the guarantor of international peace and security, to ensure the implementation of its resolutions.

As the occupying Power, Israel has the responsibility of ensuring the protection of Palestinian civilians, pursuant to international law and the relevant resolutions of this Council, including resolution 2417 (2018) on protection of civilians in armed conflict. However, since the beginning of the violence of March 2018, at least 146 Palestinians have lost their lives in Gaza and about 15,000 have been wounded, including many children.

The Committee reaffirms its support for the numerous appeals made by the international community, including by the Secretary-General, for an independent and transparent inquiry into these incidents. It also supports the Commission of Inquiry established by the Human Rights Council.

Furthermore, the Committee is looking forward to the report of the Secretary-General, pursuant to General Assembly resolution ES-10/20, on specific proposals relating to the international protection of the Palestinian civilian population.

The civilian population of Gaza is continuing to endure indescribable suffering and deprivation. The additional restrictions on trade with Gaza recently introduced by the Israeli Government are exacerbating a situation which is already disastrous.

Meanwhile, the Parties have an obligation to guarantee humanitarian access and medical care for populations in need, pursuant to international humanitarian law.

While expressing our deep concern about the risks of a further military confrontation in Gaza, we urge the Israeli authorities to lift the blockade of Gaza and to refrain from the disproportionate use of force. The Committee calls upon all Parties to the dispute to demonstrate restraint and to avoid all forms of violence and incitement to hatred and extremism.

It also calls for true reconciliation among Palestinian political actors, in order to help address more effectively the significant security, humanitarian and socioeconomic challenges faced by the civilian population, especially in Gaza

For decades, UNRWA has been a lifesaver for millions of Palestinian refugees in the Middle East, providing them with education, health and humanitarian assistance, and promoting sustainable development.

However, this United Nations Agency is currently facing one of the most serious crises of its existence, associated with an enormous financial deficit of US\$ 256 million. This exceptional situation calls for an urgent mobilization of the international community in order to ensure the continuity of the vital services provided by UNRWA.

I therefore take this opportunity to renew the appeal to Member States to continue and strengthen support for UNRWA. The objective, as the Secretary-General calls on us to do, is to ensure sufficient, predictable and sustainable resources for the Agency.

Continued construction of illegal settlements, forced displacement, confiscation of land and demolition of homes and structures belonging to Palestinians, in violation of international law and the relevant resolutions of the Council, including resolution 2334 (2016), are of equally deep concern.

The international community cannot ignore these actions, which are imperiling the two-State solution.

The Committee therefore encourages the Secretary-General to continue to issue written reports on resolution 2334, particularly with regard to the status of implementation of paragraph 5, which calls upon Member States, in their dealings with Israel, to distinguish between the territory of the State of Israel and the territories occupied since 1967.

The Committee also hopes that the database on business enterprises involved in activities connected with Israeli settlements, which is currently being prepared by the Human Rights Council, will be completed as soon as possible. In this regard, all Israeli legislation aimed at consolidating the occupation and supporting discrimination, including the “nation-State” law, must be denounced and repealed.

Exactly one month ago, the Committee organized a Conference on Jerusalem. On this occasion, the Member States and all the participants, including Israelis, reiterated the illegal nature of recent decisions to set up embassies in Jerusalem, and called on the international community to provide full support for the Palestinian population living under occupation in East Jerusalem.

While renewing its appeal for the resumption of negotiations on all pending issues, on the basis of internationally recognized terms of reference, the Committee remains convinced of the imperative need for the solution to this dispute, in order to be lasting, to be based on international law and the relevant resolutions of the United Nations.

XIII. PRESIDENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL APPOINTS MEMBERS OF COMMISSION OF INQUIRY ON 2018 KILLINGS DURING GAZA PROTESTS

On 25 July, the President of the Human Rights Council, Ambassador Vojislav Šuc of Slovenia, appointed the three members of the Commission of Inquiry on the 2018 protests in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. A [press release](#) is reproduced below.

The President of the Human Rights Council, Ambassador Vojislav Šuc (Slovenia), announced today the appointment of David Michael Crane (United States), Sara Hossain (Bangladesh) and Kaari Betty Murungi (Kenya), to serve as the three members of the Commission of Inquiry on the 2018 protests in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Mr. Crane will serve as Chair of the three-person Commission.

The Council decided to urgently dispatch an independent, international commission of inquiry at its special session of 18 May 2018 “to investigate all alleged violations and abuses of international humanitarian law and international human rights law in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, particularly in the occupied Gaza Strip, in the context of the military assaults on the large-scale civilian protests that began on 30 March 2018”.

Through Human Rights Council [resolution S-28/1](#), the 47-member body mandated the Commission “to establish the facts and circumstances, with assistance from relevant experts and special procedure mandate holders, of the alleged violations and abuses, including those that may amount to war crimes” and “to identify those responsible”.

The Commissioners, who will serve in their personal capacities, were also requested by the Council “to make recommendations, in particular on accountability measures, all with a view to avoiding and ending impunity and ensuring legal accountability, including individual criminal and command responsibility, for such violations and abuses, and on protecting civilians against any further assaults”.

The Commission is scheduled to present an oral update to the Human Rights Council at its 39th session in September 2018, and a final, written report at its 40th session to be held in March 2019.

Biographies of the members of the Commission of Inquiry

David Michael Crane (United States) is an international law expert who has served over 30 years in the federal government of the United States having held numerous key positions, including Senior Inspector General in the Department of Defence. In 2006, he was appointed Professor of Practice at Syracuse University College of Law where he teaches international criminal law, international law, national security law, and the law of armed conflict. Professor Crane served as Chief Prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone from April 2002 until 15 July 2005, during which period he indicted, among others, the then-President of Liberia, Charles Taylor.

Sara Hossain (Bangladesh) is a lawyer who works as a barrister at the bar of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh and an honorary executive director of Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST). In 2016, she was appointed by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights as one of the two experts on accountability to support the work of the Special Rapporteur on the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea. She was one of the recipients of the 2016 International Women of Courage Award awarded by the US Secretary of State. She is also a Member of the Board of trustee on the UN Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture since 2017.

Kaari Betty Murungi (Kenya) is a lawyer who has practiced law at national, regional and international levels, and has experience in the management of non-governmental and non-profit organisations. She served on the board of the Kenya Human Rights Commission and the Women’s Initiatives for Gender Justice, among others. She has background in international human rights in the context of violent conflict with experience in international criminal justice and accountability mechanisms. She has worked in Sierra Leone, Rwanda, Northern Uganda and South Sudan and served for a short period as Vice Chairperson and Commissioner to the Kenya Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission, and as the Africa representative on the Board of Directors of the Trust Fund for Victims at the International Criminal Court (2010-2013).

XIV. UN SPECIAL COORDINATOR FOR THE MIDDLE EAST PEACE PROCESS ENCOURAGED BY WORLD BANK'S ALLOCATION OF US \$90 MILLION IN SUPPORT OF PALESTINIAN ECONOMY

The following [statement](#) was issued on 25 July 2018 by the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Nickolay Mladenov:

I am greatly encouraged by the [recommendation](#) of the World Bank's Board to allocate USD 90 million, up from USD 55 million last year, in response to the alarming economic circumstances in the occupied Palestinian territory, in particular in Gaza.

This significant increase in funding comes at a critical time when urgent interventions are required to prevent renewed conflict and to boost Palestinian economic opportunities and livelihoods.

It is particularly vital for Gaza which is on the verge of a total economic and social collapse, with half of the population jobless and basic services severely overstretched.

The allocation, which will be used in partnership with the Palestinian Authority to support key interventions including job creation through emergency cash-for-work and labor-intensive infrastructure rehabilitation, is exactly the type of response that is most needed right now.

The United Nations and its partners will continue efforts to reduce tensions in Gaza, address urgent humanitarian needs and support a return of the legitimate Palestinian Authority to Gaza through the Egyptian-led intra-Palestinian reconciliation process.

XV. UNRWA DEPLORES THREATS AGAINST ITS MANAGEMENT AND STAFF

On 29 July, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) issued the following [press statement](#).

Over the past week, UNRWA has faced strong reactions in Gaza related to measures it had to take following severe reductions in funding by the United States, its single-largest donor. These financial cuts affected emergency operations and impacted a number of staff positions in both Gaza and West Bank.

UNRWA has stood firm in its defense of rights and dignity of Palestine refugees and has shown unparalleled energy and creativity in its attempt to overcome the critical risks to its ability to provide continued services to Palestine refugees. The Agency fully understands and recognizes that the adjustments made to its emergency services in the Gaza Strip are painful for the affected staff members and their extended families, particularly in the context of extreme hardship and anxiety in the Strip.

While it is legitimate for staff members to express their frustration and discontent, UNRWA firmly and unreservedly deplores and rejects a series of actions taken by some of the protesting staff. We denounce the actions to prevent senior management from accessing the compound. At this stage, the premises remain unsafe for access and use; the conduct of the protesters within the premises is beyond our control.

In particular, we strongly condemn the burning of effigies of UNRWA leadership, the expression of threats, the circulating of offensive images of staff and the staging of unauthorized events in UNRWA installations. These actions are shameful and nothing can justify them.

On 23 July, an improvised explosive device was detonated inside the UNRWA compound in Gaza during a protest action. Lives were put at serious risk and some property was damaged. UNRWA condemns this criminal act and an investigation is underway.

The normal functioning of UNRWA operations must be re-established in Gaza. UNRWA serves over 1 million Palestine refugees in Gaza and we cannot accept that our humanitarian activities be disrupted by irresponsible actions. Protests must be properly managed and dignified. Full security for management and staff must be guaranteed. Our priority is to serve the Refugee community and the human dimension of our work must be safeguarded.
