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PALESTINIAN RIGHTS

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relevant to the question of Palestine

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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. UNRWA EXPRESSES DEEP REGRET AND DISAPPOINTMENT AT THE US ANNOUNCEMENT THAT IT WILL NO LONGER PROVIDE FUNDING TO THE AGENCY

The following press [statement](#) was made on 1 September 2018 by UNRWA spokesman Sami Mshasha:

UNRWA expresses deep regret and disappointment at the United States' announcement that it will no longer provide funding to the Agency after decades of staunch political and financial support. This decision is all the more surprising given that UNRWA and the United States renewed a funding agreement in December 2017 which had acknowledged the successful, dedicated and professional management of the Agency.

We reject in the strongest possible terms the criticism that UNRWA's schools, health centers, and emergency assistance programs are "irredeemably flawed". These very programs have a proven track record in creating one of the most successful human development processes and results in the Middle East. The international state community, our donors and host countries have consistently praised UNRWA for its achievements and standards. The World Bank described our activities as a "global public good" and recognized us for running one of the most effective school systems in the region, in which students regularly outperform their peers in public schools.

This is a reflection of UNRWA's steadfast commitment to preserving dignity and opportunities.

The United States itself had consistently been the largest and most generous donor of UNRWA, making a much-valued contribution to UNRWA's life-saving humanitarian work, including support for ensuring girl's access to education, high health standards and food assistance for the most vulnerable.

In January 2018, the US had communicated a reduction of \$300 M to UNRWA's budget, providing \$60 M compared to \$364 M in 2017. Following today's announcement, UNRWA will pursue with even greater determination and engagement its mobilization of existing partners - 20 of whom have to date contributed more money than in 2017, including countries from the Gulf, Asia and Europe - and of new ones.

We are extremely grateful for the widespread solidarity that our unprecedented situation has generated and the generosity of many donors that has allowed us to open the school year on time for 526'000 girls and boys this very week. This is what UNRWA stands for and as an organ of UN General Assembly, we will continue to provide high-quality services and assistance to over 5.4 M Palestine refugees in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, Gaza, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria.

II. STATEMENT BY DIRECTOR, UNRWA REPRESENTATIVE OFFICE IN NEW YORK, AT CEIRPP MEETING

The following [statement](#) was made on 4 September 2018 at the 391st meeting of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People:

I would like to thank the Committee and its bureau for permitting me to brief you today, as well as for the Committee's long-standing support of UNRWA and, more importantly, of Palestine refugees.

Mr. Chairman, last Friday, the United States announced that it would provide no additional funding to UNRWA. Allow me to express our deep regret and disappointment at the nature of the U.S. decision. The potential consequences of the decision are grave, which I will address in a moment. But it also signals a radical departure from what had been one of the most robust and rewarding partnerships in the humanitarian and development fields.

While recognizing that it is the sovereign right of any Member State to allocate its voluntary funding according to its wishes, the U.S. freezing of its UNRWA contributions in January was unexpected and its decision last week seems inconsistent with the cooperation agreement signed in early December 2017 between the United States and UNRWA. At the end of 2017, the U.S. recognized the robustness and integrity of the management of UNRWA and its resources, as well as how we addressed our multiple operational, security and financial challenges.

Therefore, we reject the criticism in the United States' announcement that UNRWA's schools, health centers, and emergency assistance programs are "irredeemably flawed". These very programs have a proven track record in creating one of the most successful human development processes and results in the Middle East. The international community, our donors and host countries have consistently praised UNRWA for its achievements and standards. The World Bank described our activities as a "global public good" and recognized us for running one of the most effective school systems in the region, in which students regularly outperform their peers in public schools.

Mr. Chairman, since the United States unexpectedly decided in January to freeze \$300 million in funding, UNRWA has taken extraordinary and innovative efforts to address its financial shortfall. We have achieved remarkable results in terms of diversification and expanding partnerships. In addition, UNRWA has taken exceptional internal management measures to increase efficiencies and control costs. I would like to acknowledge with deep appreciation the more than 25 countries that advanced their expected annual contributions to earlier in the year to help us sustain operations. I wish also to express immense gratitude to the 30 donors who have provided additional contributions of more than \$238 million to UNRWA's core and emergency activities this year, as well as to those who have signed new multi-year agreements with us.

I wish to highlight the generous donations made by Gulf countries, specifically the State of Qatar, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, as well as the historic support from the State of Kuwait. And it goes without saying that UNRWA's important work would be impossible were it not for the continued support of the host countries. I would take special note of the vigor and dedication of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and Palestine for their tireless efforts on our behalf during this crisis. Egypt and Turkey have also played key roles in support of

UNRWA, as the former and current chairs of our Advisory Commission. I would also like to stress that the continuous engagement by the Secretary-General has been essential to mobilizing support for our Agency. We greatly appreciate his statement following the recent U.S. decision, in which he reiterated his confidence in, and support for, UNRWA. The Secretary-General also called on Member States to contribute additional funding in order to close UNRWA's remaining financial shortfall. Because, despite the efforts I have just enumerated, UNRWA is still in critical need of more than \$200 million for the remainder of 2018. As things stand now, we will run out of funding for much of our programming at the end of this month – four weeks from now.

Mr. Chairman, what is at stake is education for 526,000 girls and boys; primary health care accounting for more than three million patient visits last year; food for 1.7 million refugees, 1 million of them in Gaza. In short, UNRWA's assistance is crucial to the well being of millions of refugees. It is also directly linked to their dignity and their hope for the future. All of this contributes to a badly needed stability in the region. For all of those reasons, it is vital that UNRWA maintain its services. We reiterate the call of the Secretary-General to all Member States to find the additional funding needed to reduce human suffering and to contribute to dignity and stability. UNRWA is working tirelessly to mobilize these resources and to keep our schools open and vital services running. We hope that Member States will set the opening of the next General Assembly session as the target date for producing a collective response to UNRWA's present challenges. Mr. Chairman, we regret that the decision taken by the United States regarding UNRWA's funding appears to be linked to political considerations. UNRWA is a humanitarian organization and humanitarian principles call for assistance to be based on need and not linked to a political agenda. It is not the responsibility of UNRWA to find a political solution and UNRWA should not become a bargaining chip in political negotiations. Doing otherwise risks undermining the foundations of the international multilateral and humanitarian systems.

UNRWA received its mandate from the General Assembly. This mandate tasks UNRWA to provide assistance to Palestine refugees until a just and lasting solution is found to the plight of refugees. UNRWA has reported transparently on its activities since it began operations in 1950 and the General Assembly has approved these reports and consistently renewed UNRWA's mandate on the basis of its previous work. Only the General Assembly can change UNRWA's mandate and, until it does, we will continue to do everything we can to carry on with our efforts to address the very real needs of Palestine refugees. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

III. TWO-STATE SOLUTION KEY FOR SECURITY, STABILITY IN MIDDLE EAST, SECRETARY-GENERAL TELLS UN MEDIA SEMINAR

On 5 September, the Secretary-General's [message](#) to the 2018 International Media Seminar on Peace in the Middle East organized by the Department of Public Information in cooperation with the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs was delivered by Ms. Alison Smale, Under-Secretary-General for Global Communications.

I send my warm greetings to everyone at the 2018 United Nations International Media Seminar on Peace in the Middle East. My thanks go to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation for hosting this event, and to the United Nations Association of Russia and the Russian Peace Foundation for their generous support.

This is an important platform to discuss media-related topics connected to the difficult and challenging situation in the Middle East. It is encouraging that it remains strong, 27 years after its inception.

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict remains central to the Middle East quagmire. The recent tensions in Gaza are a painful reminder of how fragile the situation is. The people of the region and the world cannot afford another escalation of violence. The United Nations remains strongly committed to a just, comprehensive and lasting two-State solution that ends the 50-year occupation and resolves all final status issues. This is key for security and stability in the entire region.

This seminar is an opportunity for people from different walks of life to come together and engage in debate — a welcome reminder of the power of words over weapons and an important way of keeping hope alive.

I wish you a successful seminar.

IV. 39TH SESSION OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL: OPENING STATEMENT BY UN HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

On 10 September, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet made the following [remarks](#) at the opening of the 39th session of the Human Rights Council excerpted below:

...

Prospects for peace and respect for human rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territory are undermined by the continued occupation. The ever-deepening human rights crisis in Gaza stems from 11 years of Israel's blockade, as well as successive escalations in hostilities. Against this backdrop, the high number of deaths and injuries of Palestinians in the context of recent demonstrations along the fence in Gaza this year raise serious concerns about excessive use of force. In the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, the Israeli settlement enterprise – illegal under international humanitarian law – continues unabated. The coercive environment created by demolitions and severe restrictions on freedom of movement of Palestinians continues in many areas of the West Bank, with increasing acts of settler violence. Of great concern at present is the possible imminent demolition of Khan al Ahmar-abu Helu, one of 46 Palestinian Bedouin communities at risk of forcible transfer in the West Bank. We are also concerned by the recent adoption of the Nation State Basic Law in Israel, which enshrines discrimination against Israel's non-Jewish population.

...

V. UN SPECIAL RAPORTEURS ON HUMAN RIGHTS, ADEQUATE HOUSING APPALLED BY ISRAELI COURT DECISION PERMITTING DEMOLITION OF WEST BANK BEDOUIN COMMUNITY

On 10 September 2018, Mr. Michael Lynk, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian Territory occupied since 1967 and Ms Leilani Farha, Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living issued the following [statement](#):

An Israeli High Court ruling giving the Government of Israel the green light to demolish the entire Palestinian Bedouin community of Khan al-Ahmar Ab al Helu, has been described as “appalling” by two UN human rights experts*.

“It is gravely disappointing that a High Court can take a decision that is totally against the fundamental principles of international human rights law and international humanitarian law,” said Michael Lynk, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian Territory occupied since 1967 and Leilani Farha, the Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living.

“This appalling decision could trigger the eviction of 180 inhabitants, including more than 90 children, putting them at imminent risk of forcible transfer,” they added.

“Forced eviction constitutes a gross violation of the right to adequate housing under international human rights law. In addition, forcible transfer of people who are protected within an occupied territory is a grave breach of the Fourth Geneva Convention, and amounts to a war crime under the 1998 [Rome Statute](#),” the experts said.

“If the demolition of the village goes ahead and results in the residents having to move out of their current location, all those responsible for this international crime should be held accountable.”

The experts’ comments follow a decision on 5 September to dismiss the latest petitions by residents of Khan al-Ahmar, some 15 km northeast of Jerusalem in the West Bank.

The Special Rapporteurs are also urging Israel, as the occupying power, to stop the eviction.

“It is time to regularize their situation and respect the rights of the Khan al-Ahmar residents to remain on the lands they have inhabited for decades,” the experts added.

The residents of Khan al-Ahmar are descendants of Bedouins expelled from the Negev by Israel in the 1950s. They were relocated in the West Bank, on the outskirts of Jerusalem. Their village is situated between two large Israeli settlements, Ma’ale Adumim and Kfar Adumim, and an Israeli industrial zone called Mishor Adumim. The residents have been subjected to constant pressure by the Israeli authorities and neighbouring settlers and have been living in what has been described as an “increasingly coercive environment” that may leave no other choice to the community but to move.

VI. UN SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR WARNS AGAINST HARSH EFFECTS OF SANCTIONS AND BLOCKADES ON CIVILIANS

On 13 September 2018, the UN Special Rapporteur on the effect of sanctions on human rights issued the following [press release](#):

Sanctions must not degenerate into blockades which expose innocent people to the ravages of economic war in peacetime without the protection of the Geneva Conventions aimed at safeguarding civilians in war time, says Idriss Jazairy, the UN Special Rapporteur on the effect of sanctions on human rights.

“While sanctions have usually led to countries, or groups of countries, refusing to trade with the targeted State, the imposition of blockades has the additional sting of preventing trade with other willing trade partners,” said Mr. Jazairy in a presentation to the Human Rights Council in Geneva.

The Special Rapporteur told the Council there was a clear risk that Iran, Syria, Gaza and possibly Venezuela were having to cope with a blockade situation.

“There is a need for differences between States to be resolved through peaceful means as advocated by the UN Charter, while avoiding exposing innocent civilians to collective punishment,” he said.

The Special Rapporteur expressed concern about the increasing resort to unilateral sanctions, and in particular the banning of business or trade with companies and corporations from third party countries not involved in imposing the measures.

Mr. Jazairy also reported on his mission to Brussels for talks with European Union officials. While welcoming efforts made by the EU to ensure its restrictive measures have due process and human rights protections, the Special Rapporteur urged the EU to consider ways of limiting the extra-territorial effect of “secondary sanctions” which go beyond the targeted country.

With regard to Syria, the Special Rapporteur concluded that however grave the human rights situation is in the country, the imposition of further suffering on innocent civilians through unilateral sanctions only further worsens their situation. He said he would focus on making humanitarian exceptions to internationally imposed measures effective, until States lift all sanctions that are harming human rights.

VII. STATEMENT BY UN SPECIAL COORDINATOR MLADENOV ON KHAN AL-AHMAR BEDOUIN COMMUNITY

On 16 September 2018, the UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process Nickolay Mladenov issued the following [statement](#):

I am concerned at the intention of the Israeli authorities to demolish the Bedouin village of Khan Al-Ahmar/Abu Al-Helu, a community of 181 people, over half of which are children.

I call on the authorities not to proceed with the demolition and to cease efforts to relocate Palestinian communities in the occupied West Bank. Such actions are contrary to international law and could undermine the chances for the establishment of a viable, contiguous Palestinian State.

VIII. UN SPECIAL COORDINATOR MLADENOV'S STATEMENT TO THE SECURITY COUNCIL, REPORTING ON IMPLEMENTATION OF UNSCR 2334

On 20 September 2018, UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process Nickolay Mladenov delivered the following statement ([S/PV.8358](#)) to the Security Council, pursuant to Security Council resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#):

On behalf of the Secretary-General, I will devote this briefing to presenting the seventh report on the implementation of Security Council resolution 2334 (2016), covering the period from 13 June to 12 September 2018. I will focus on developments on the ground in accordance with the provisions of the resolution, including on regional and international efforts to advance peace.

Let me reiterate from the very beginning that these developments cannot be divorced from the broader context: Israel's continued military occupation of Palestinian territory; uncertainties about the future of the peace process and the two-State solution; Hamas' continuing hold on Gaza and its militant activity, including rocket attacks and tunnel construction; unilateral actions that undermine peace efforts; reduced donor support for the Palestinian Authority; and turmoil in the wider region.

I would like to highlight from the outset the very serious financial situation that the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) continues to face. We welcome the contributions that several Member States recently announced and urge that additional new funding be provided for its critical work. On 27 September, a ministerial meeting in support of UNRWA will be held on the margins of the General Assembly. I urge all participants to engage constructively to ensure the continuity of the Agency's vital services.

No steps have been taken during the reporting period to "cease all settlement activities in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem", as required by the resolution. I reiterate that all settlement activities are a violation of international law and a major obstacle to peace.

Approximately 2,800 housing units in settlements in Area C of the occupied West Bank were advanced, approved or tendered by Israel. Approximately one third of those units are in outlying settlements, deep in the West Bank. Plans for about 1,100 units were advanced in the approval process, plans for an additional 600 units reached the final approval stage and tenders were

announced for about 1,100 units. A tender was also announced for 603 housing units in the Ramat Shlomo neighbourhood, the first tender in East Jerusalem since 2016.

On 28 August, the district court in Jerusalem ruled that the illegal outpost of Mizpe Kramim could be legalized under Israeli law, despite being built partially on private Palestinian land. The ruling was the first to rely on the so-called market regulation principle, which allows houses to be built in good faith on private land, without the consent of the owner to be retroactively legalized and the owner compensated. If the ruling is upheld in Israel's High Court of Justice, it could enable the legalization of additional outposts and housing units in settlements.

Demolitions and seizures of Palestinian-owned structures continued across the West Bank and East Jerusalem. Citing the absence of Israeli-issued building permits, which are nearly impossible for Palestinians to obtain, 117 structures were demolished or seized: 61 in Area C and 56 in East Jerusalem. According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), that resulted in the displacement of 145 Palestinians, including 82 children, and affected the livelihoods of approximately 950 people.

In Khan Al-Ahmar/Abu Al-Helu, a Bedouin community of 181 people, Israeli authorities requisitioned land, levelled access routes and temporarily declared the area a closed military zone, in advance of the expected demolition of its structures. Following a protracted legal process, on 5 September, the Israeli High Court of Justice denied several petitions by residents to prevent the demolition. On 4 July, in Abu Nuwar, a Bedouin community of about 600 residents, 19 structures were demolished. OCHA reported that 51 people, including 33 children, were displaced. Later that month a donor-funded caravan in the Bedouin community of Jabal Al-Baba, serving as a kindergarten for 28 children and as a women's centre, was also confiscated and dismantled. Those communities are located in or next to an area that is slated for settlement plans in the E-1 area, which, if constructed, would create a continuous built-up area between the Ma'ale Adumim and East Jerusalem.

In July, the Israeli Knesset approved a law transferring the jurisdiction over certain petitions against decisions by Israeli authorities in the West Bank from the High Court of Justice to the administrative affairs court in Jerusalem. That step could make it more difficult and costly to challenge the demolition or seizure of Palestinian properties in Area C.

On 11 September, the European Union High Representative for Foreign Affairs, Federica Mogherini, called on Israeli authorities to reconsider the decision to allow the demolition of Khan Al-Ahmar, warning that "it would have grave humanitarian consequences" and contravene international humanitarian law. That call was reiterated by Germany, France, Italy, Spain and the United Kingdom. I also issued a statement expressing the same concern over such action. On 13 September, the European Parliament also called for monetary compensation for financial losses, should Khan Al-Ahmar be demolished.

Let me turn to the issue of violence, which also remains an obstacle to peace. The reporting period saw significant incidents and escalation that brought Israel and Hamas almost to war on at least three occasions.

Palestinian protests at the Gaza fence continued on almost a daily basis. While most occasions remained fairly peaceful, militants placed improvised explosive devices, attempted to breach the

fence and continued to send incendiary kites and balloons across the border. The Israel Defence Forces (IDF) responded with riot dispersal means and live fire. During protests throughout the reporting period, 29 Palestinians were killed or died of wounds sustained previously, including 10 children. Approximately 900 people were injured by live ammunition. One Israeli soldier was killed and another injured.

In successive rounds of hostilities, Hamas and other Palestinian militants fired approximately 500 rockets, Grad missiles and mortars from Gaza towards Israel. In response, the IDF fired approximately 400 missiles and tank shells at targets in Gaza. It destroyed three tunnels leading from Gaza into Israel, 18 Palestinians were killed, including 5 children, 118 injured, and 37 Israelis were injured in those exchanges. On at least three occasions the situation escalated dramatically. Calm was restored only after Egypt and the United Nations intervened to de-escalate tensions.

Incendiary kites and balloons continued to be launched from Gaza into neighbouring Israeli communities. In the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, 266 Palestinians, including 5 women and 54 children, were injured in clashes with Israeli security forces during search-and-arrest operations and demonstrations.

On 23 July, a 15-year-old Palestinian was killed during clashes in Bethlehem's Al-Duheisha refugee camp. Three days later, in the settlement of Adam, a 17-year-old Palestinian stabbed and killed an Israeli man and injured two others. On 17 August and 3 September, Israeli security forces shot dead an Israeli-Arab and a Palestinian in Jerusalem's Old City and in Hebron, respectively, after they reportedly attempted to carry out stabbing attacks against security forces.

On 27 July, clashes erupted at the Temple Mount/ Haram Al-Sharif compound between Palestinians and Israeli security forces, where 10 Palestinians and four Israeli police officers were injured. On 16 September, in another attack a Palestinian teenager stabbed and killed an Israeli-American outside a shopping mall in the occupied West Bank. It is reprehensible that Hamas and other factions chose to glorify that attack.

Despite the call in resolution 2334 (2016) for the parties to refrain from acts of provocation, incitement and inflammatory rhetoric, such statements continued. Hamas leaders continued to incite violence, with one senior official speaking of "cleansing Palestine of the filth of Jews" and threatening to decapitate Israeli leaders. Fatah's official social media pages continued to glorify the perpetrators of previous attacks against Israelis and failed to condemn terror attacks against civilians. Some religious leaders and officials made inflammatory statements, accusing Israel of plotting to destroy the Al-Aqsa Mosque and denying the Jewish historic and religious connection to Jerusalem.

Meanwhile, some Israeli officials called for the targeting of Palestinians launching incendiary kites and balloons into Israel from Gaza and for the extrajudicial killings of Hamas officials. One member of the Knesset called for Israel to reconquer Gaza and insisted that Palestinians in Gaza either acquiesce to Israel's sovereignty or emigrate. Others continued to provoke by rejecting the Palestinian right to statehood, supporting settlement growth and the annexation of parts of the West Bank.

Resolution 2334 (2016) reiterated the calls made by the Middle East Quartet for

“affirmative steps to be taken immediately to reverse negative trends on the ground that are imperilling the two-State solution.”

Some positive steps have been taken, including Israel releasing approximately \$44 million of withheld Palestinian health stamp revenues, which is the result of continuing direct engagement of the Finance Ministries of both sides, as well as continued progress on Gaza reconstruction. The Rafah crossing between Gaza and Egypt remained largely open during the reporting period, with the number of people crossing reaching over 12,000 in both June and July.

The negative developments, however, outweigh the positive news. Most worrying perhaps is the continuing deterioration of the humanitarian, security and political situation in Gaza, as the implementation of the Egyptian-brokered October agreement remains stalled and the Palestinian Authority has not been able to take up its responsibilities in Gaza.

As we meet today, the power crisis in Gaza is coming to a head. The United Nations has run out of funding for emergency fuel, putting critical health, water and sanitation facilities at immediate risk of shutting down, while essential medicines are at critically low levels. On 5 September, the United Nations delivered the final stocks of available emergency fuel to Gaza. Despite calls for donors to urgently contribute, little additional funding was forthcoming.

The situation was worsened by the temporary closures of the Kerem Shalom crossing and reductions in the fishing zone that were introduced by Israel during the periods of escalation, as well as the continuing measures by the Palestinian Authority to reduce salaries, energy supplies and overall spending in Gaza. The United Nations Humanitarian Coordinator has released \$1 million from the emergency pooled fund to cover fuel for hospitals and water and sanitation facilities to prevent a full collapse of essential services.

To address the chronic crisis in the occupied Palestinian territory, the humanitarian community appealed for nearly \$550 million this year, through the humanitarian response plan, 75 per cent of which is for projects targeting Palestinians in Gaza. At present, the appeal is less than 29 per cent funded, one of the most poorly funded in the world.

Paragraph 5 of resolution 2334 (2016) called on Member States

“to distinguish, in their relevant dealings, between the territory of the State of Israel and the territories occupied in 1967”.

No such steps were taken during the reporting period. The resolution also called upon all parties to continue to exert collective efforts to launch credible negotiations. No progress was achieved in that respect.

The United States has repeatedly announced that it is continuing its efforts aimed at a comprehensive peace plan. In August, the Administration suspended more than \$200 million in its fiscal year 2017 Economic Support Fund for the West Bank and Gaza, and a further \$25 million for the East Jerusalem hospitals network. On 10 September, it closed the Palestine Liberation Organization Office in Washington, D.C., citing its failure to take steps towards meaningful negotiations with Israel and concerns with Palestinian attempts to prompt an investigation of Israel by the International Criminal Court.

The Palestinian Central Council convened in August and ratified the continued severance of political relations with the United States until the latter revisits its decision regarding Jerusalem, Palestinian refugees and settlements.

On 5 September, the Government of Paraguay announced that it would reverse the previous decision from May to relocate its Embassy in Israel to Jerusalem and move it back to Tel Aviv.

Since the escalation of hostilities in Gaza in July, the United Nations has led an unprecedented effort with the Governments of Egypt, Israel and other international partners to prevent another outbreak of hostilities, respond to the most urgent humanitarian needs and support the return of the legitimate Palestinian Government to Gaza, a crucial element in any political effort to resolve the wider conflict.

The United Nations has enhanced its capacity in Gaza to work with the Palestinian Government and Israeli counterparts to support donor implementation on all issues related to the Gaza Reconstruction Mechanism and provide accountable and transparent reporting to donors.

The World Bank has increased its allocation from \$55 million to \$90 million for the West Bank and Gaza over the next year, part of which will be used to create approximately 4,400 short-term employment opportunities. The United Nations Development Programme has also accelerated its emergency economic assistance programme, with support from several donors.

I would now like to share some broad observations concerning the implementation of the provisions of resolution 2334 (2016) during the reporting period.

First, the expansion of Israeli settlements remains illegal under international law and continues to erode the viability of a two-State solution. Particularly alarming are legal and administrative steps that could consolidate and expand settlement activity deep in the West Bank, further undermining the contiguity of a future Palestinian State.

The persistent threat of demolitions and displacement of Palestinians in Area C, including in Khan Al-Ahmar/Abu Al-Helu, is of great concern. The 5 September decision of the High Court of Justice places the Bedouin community at imminent risk of demolition. Demolitions undermine the prospects for a two-State solution and are also in violation of international law.

Violence, terror and the risk of conflict in Gaza remain an obstacle to peace. I welcome the calm since 9 August, but I am very concerned by consistent attempts to undermine it. All sides — and I underline all — must continue their positive engagement with Egypt and the United Nations and do their part. Hamas and other armed militant groups must stop all provocations and attacks. Israel must improve the movement and access regime for Gaza. The Palestinian Authority must remain engaged in Gaza. The international community must address the urgent humanitarian needs. And, finally, Fatah and Hamas must engage in earnest with Egypt in order to bring back the legitimate Government to Gaza.

I once again call for all violent actions, which continue to endanger the lives of both Israelis and Palestinians, to stop immediately. Indiscriminate attacks are prohibited under international humanitarian law. I urge Hamas and other Palestinian militants to end the indiscriminate firing of rockets into southern Israel.

I reiterate that Israeli security forces have a responsibility to exercise maximum restraint in the use of live fire and must not resort to lethal force unless in response to an imminent threat of death or serious injury. The continued use of live fire by the Israeli Defense Forces is deeply concerning. The killing of children is absolutely unacceptable.

I call on the international community to join the United Nations in condemning violence and incitement, which continue to fuel a climate of mutual fear and mistrust while hindering efforts to bridge the gaps between both sides.

As explicitly outlined in the 2016 report of the Middle East Quartet (S/2016/595, annex), current trends are imperilling the viability of the two-State solution. There has been no positive movement by the parties to take steps to reverse the negative trends on the ground. By complying with their obligations under previous agreements and the relevant United Nations resolutions, the parties can, and must, reverse the current course.

Israel should make progress on the transition to greater Palestinian civil authority of powers and responsibilities in Area C, on improving Palestinian economic prospects, as well as access to housing, water, energy, communications, agriculture, and natural resources, and on significantly easing Palestinian movement restrictions.

The United Nations has been working tirelessly to address the deepening humanitarian and economic crisis on the ground. Support for emergency fuel is urgently needed to avoid a total collapse of critical services in hospitals and sewage treatment. The Deputy Special Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator, Jamie McGoldrick, made two emergency appeals to donors in August for new funding, and I reiterate the urgency of his calls. It is also critical that UNRWA be able to continue to deliver its vital services.

In addition, the United Nations is working with several donors to advance key interventions that will immediately improve the situation on the ground, both in Gaza and the West Bank. I urge donors to consider support for those activities, which play a vital role in preventing further escalation.

Twenty-five years have now passed since the signing of the Oslo Accords. It was a historic moment that captured the world's attention and filled Palestinians, Israelis and the region with hope that genuine peace could be realized. Sadly, that courageous vision of lasting peace now lies in tatters.

We must restore that hope. There is an alternative to this perpetual cycle of violence. We must overcome the current impasse and refocus our efforts on ultimately returning to meaningful negotiations to end the occupation and bring about a just, lasting and comprehensive resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict — a resolution based on two States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security, with Jerusalem as the capital of both States, based on the 1967 lines and in line with the relevant United Nations resolutions and previous agreements. I urge all sides to continue to engage with each other and with the international community to preserve and advance its achievement.

Finally, let underline today that the urgency of the situation that we face on the ground is really desperate. Gaza could explode at any minute. We have a humanitarian responsibility to react. But

we must also understand that it cannot be solved on the basis of humanitarian action alone. It must be solved with a political perspective to resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. We have a responsibility to support the parties in this prospect.

IX. QUARTET ENVOYS MEET TO DISCUSS PROSPECTS FOR PEACE AND SITUATION ON THE GROUND

On 26 September 2018, the Envoys of the Middle East Quartet issued the following [press statement](#):

The Envoys of the Middle East Quartet from the Russian Federation, the United States, the European Union and the United Nations met on the margins of the UN General Assembly in New York to discuss the prospects for peace negotiations and the situation on the ground, in particular in Gaza.

The envoys expressed their deep concern over the continued escalation in Gaza.

The Middle East Envoys expressed support for the United Nations' efforts to prevent further escalation, empower the legitimate Palestinian authorities in Gaza and address all humanitarian needs, including through the AHLC.

The Envoys welcomed Susanna Terstal as the new EU Special Representative for the Middle East Peace Process and thanked Fernando Gentilini for his dedication, service and cooperation.

X. AD HOC LIAISON COMMITTEE OF DONORS MEETS IN NEW YORK

On 27 September 2018, the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee (AHLC) met to discuss the period 1 March to 31 August 2018. Norway's Minister of Foreign Affairs Ine Eriksen Søreide chaired the meeting which included Palestinian Prime Minister Rami Hamdallah, Israeli Minister of Regional Cooperation Tzachi Hanegbi, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Frederica Mogherini, Ministers from several other countries, and US Special Envoy Jason Greenblatt. The [Chair's summary](#) of the meeting is as below:

The members of the AHLC met today in New York to address the critical situation in the Palestinian economy and the humanitarian situation in Gaza.

This was the third AHLC meeting at ministerial level in 2018. In addition, preparatory meetings were held in Cairo, Oslo and Brussels. This engagement reflects the commitment of the international community to the two-state solution and to Palestinian state- and institutionbuilding.

The Palestinian economy seriously declined in 2018 due to a combination of major and unexpected reductions in donor contributions, significant revenue losses due to fiscal leakages and continued restrictions on Palestinian movement, including access to Area C. In Gaza, this has resulted in a dramatically deteriorating humanitarian situation. Large cuts to UNRWA also affect the service delivery to the population, further aggravating the decline of the Palestinian economy.

Reports from the [IMF](#) and [World Bank](#) to this meeting demonstrate that the PA faces a large budget deficit not covered by external financing. Recent Knesset legislation threatens to reduce PA income further. Together, these elements add up to an unmanageable financial situation and a risk of financial breakdown in 2019.

The meeting called for urgent action to address Gaza's humanitarian decline and to mitigate the risks for the broader Palestinian economy. The meeting called for taking steps to significantly improve the fiscal situation for the PA. Reversing the recent decline in donor support is critical, also in order to upgrade basic infrastructure, both in the West Bank and Gaza, for energy, safe water and sanitation. The plans are in place, and implementation should start in 2019. The donors expressed their continued support for the PA to reinstate its governance in Gaza, in order to reunite Palestine under one authority.

The meeting addressed the following high priority areas:

1. Address outstanding fiscal and broader structural issues. The situation cannot be improved unless the parties and donors make concerted efforts to get the Palestinian economy back on track. The Chair in cooperation with AHLC members will facilitate initiatives to address outstanding fiscal issues.
2. Implement in coordination with the PA, a package of humanitarian interventions outlined by the United Nations in its report to the plenary, that I have decided to annex to this chairs summary. The meeting expressed its support for implementing the package as a matter of urgency.
3. Finalize and implement the Power Purchase Agreement and the Red/Dead water agreement, including resolving issues related to lines and the connecting facilities in Area C.
4. Implement the permanent solution decided by the Government of Israel, based on an understanding with the PA, to maintain Correspondent Banking Relationships.
5. The current system of extensive restrictions for people to travel into and out of Gaza must be lifted.
6. Further remove access restrictions for goods into and out of Gaza, and expanding Gaza's fishing zone.
7. Implement the recommendations from the ongoing review of the Gaza Reconstruction Mechanism.
8. Donors need to increase their financial support to the PA for 2019.

XI. STATE OF PALESTINE INSTITUTES PROCEEDINGS AGAINST THE US BEFORE THE INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE

On 28 September, the International Court of Justice issued the following [press release](#):

The State of Palestine today instituted proceedings against the United States of America before the International Court of Justice (ICJ), the principal judicial organ of the United Nations, with respect to a dispute concerning alleged violations of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations of 18 April 1961 (hereinafter the “Vienna Convention”).

It is recalled in the Application that, on 6 December 2017, the President of the United States recognized Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and announced the relocation of the American Embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. The American Embassy in Jerusalem was then inaugurated on 14 May 2018.

Palestine contends that it flows from the Vienna Convention that the diplomatic mission of a sending State must be established on the territory of the receiving State. According to Palestine, in view of the special status of Jerusalem, “[t]he relocation of the United States Embassy in Israel to . . . Jerusalem constitutes a breach of the Vienna Convention”.

As basis for the Court's jurisdiction, the Applicant invokes Article 1 of the Optional Protocol to the Vienna Convention concerning the Compulsory Settlement of Disputes. It notes that Palestine acceded to the Vienna Convention on 2 April 2014 and to the Optional Protocol on 22 March 2018, whereas the United States of America is a party to both these instruments since 13 November 1972.

The Applicant further states that, on 4 July 2018, “in accordance with Security Council Resolution 9 (1946) and Article 35 (2) of the Statute of the Court, [it submitted] a 'Declaration recognizing the Competence of the International Court of Justice' for the settlement of all disputes that may arise or that have already arisen covered by Articles I and II of the Optional Protocol [to the Vienna Convention]”.

At the end of its Application, Palestine “requests the Court to declare that the relocation, to the Holy City of Jerusalem, of the United States embassy in Israel is in breach of the Vienna Convention”. It further requests the Court “to order the United States of America to withdraw the diplomatic mission from the Holy City of Jerusalem and to conform to the international obligations flowing from the Vienna Convention”. Finally, the Applicant “asks the Court to order the United States of America to take all necessary steps to comply with its obligations, to refrain from taking any future measures that would violate its obligations and to provide assurances and guarantees of non-repetition of its unlawful conduct”.

XII. MINISTERIAL MEETING ON UNRWA RAISES US\$122 MILLION

On 28 September, the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA), issued the following [statement](#):

On 27 September, the Foreign Ministers of Jordan, Sweden, Turkey, Japan and Germany, as well as the High Representative and Vice-President of the European Union, hosted a Ministerial Meeting in New York, with the aim of mobilising financial and political support for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA).

The Ministerial Meeting raised a remarkable US\$122 million, with Kuwait, the European Union, Germany, Norway, France, Belgium and Ireland announcing additional funding commitments. This meeting represented a crucial step in the efforts to overcome the Agency's remaining shortfall of US\$ 186 million and sustain UNRWA operations in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, Gaza, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria.

The event was attended by Ministers and senior officials from a total of 34 Member States and organizations, including the League of Arab States, the Organization for Islamic Cooperation and the Islamic Development Bank. The Secretary-General of the United Nations, the President of the General Assembly, the Commissioner-General of UNRWA and two Palestine Refugee students also participated in the event.

The Commissioner-General, Mr Pierre Krähenbühl, thanked Member States for their extraordinary support: "Today, we witnessed a powerful moment of commitment and solidarity with Palestine refugees. I am very grateful to the co-Chairs for convening this important meeting and demonstrating the strength of collective action".

UNRWA was confronted with a dramatic financial crisis when in January 2018 its largest donor announced a major reduction in contributions and the Agency's shortfall reached an unprecedented US\$446 million. The mobilization since then, including at this Ministerial meeting in New York, has brought the deficit down to US\$64 million.

Mr Krähenbühl added: "I express my genuine appreciation for the generous funding announcements made by Kuwait, the European Union, Germany, France, Belgium and Ireland. The results of the New York meeting, added to the support received from other partners this year, represent a very significant achievement."

During the meeting, UN Member States reaffirmed the fundamental rights of Palestine refugees under international law and obligations of the international community. Participants expressed strong political support for UNRWA, its mandate and staff, and its critical services to Palestine refugees. Additionally, they applauded UNRWA for its remarkable achievements, especially this last year, in funding diversification and improved efficiency of its programming.

XIII. STATEMENT BY UN HUMANITARIAN COORDINATOR ON PALESTINIAN CASUALTIES IN GAZA

The following press [statement](#) was issued on 29 September 2018 by Jamie McGoldrick, UN Humanitarian Coordinator in the occupied Palestinian territory:

I am deeply saddened by reports that seven Palestinians, including two children, were killed, and hundreds of others injured, by Israeli forces during demonstrations in the Gaza Strip yesterday. This is the highest fatality toll in a single day since 14 May 2018, when 42 Palestinians were killed.

I call on Israeli forces to ensure that their use of force is in line with their obligations under international law. All actors must ensure that children never be the target of violence and neither be put at risk of violence, nor encouraged to participate in violence.

The growing number and expanding nature of demonstrations in the Gaza Strip in recent weeks reflects increasing frustration over worsening conditions of daily life and the continued deprivation of basic human rights, alongside the lack of a political process. I call on Israel, Hamas and all other actors with the ability to influence the situation, to take action now to prevent further deterioration and loss of life.
