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Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Seventy-fourth year

Identical letters dated 14 January 2019 from the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council

As the Security Council continues to address the Palestine question month after month, amid constant calls by the international community for responsible action in line with its Charter duties, Israel, the occupying Power, continues to exploit the Council's inaction with the intensification of its illegal and destructive policies and practices in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, further destabilizing the situation and further undermining the prospects for a peaceful solution.

Central to the pursuit of the occupation's illegal agenda has been the use of inflammatory rhetoric and incitement, which persist with alarming intensity. In this regard, it is imperative to draw attention to recent provocative statements made by the director and founder of the Israel Land Fund, Arie King, a so-called "city councilman". In a public statement on social media, King called for the demolition of parts of the walls of the Old City in Occupied East Jerusalem, which constitutes yet another of the ongoing, countless attempts by the occupying Power to illegally alter the character, identity and status of the City and entrench its illegitimate control over the entirety of the City. King stated that the removal of those historic walls, built during the time of the Ottoman Empire, would help reconnect the "Old City to the rest of the City forever". Such a statement is not only inflammatory, but stands in violation of international law, including numerous United Nations resolutions, from General Assembly resolution [181 \(II\)](#), Security Council resolution [252 \(1968\)](#) and onward up to Council resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#) and Assembly resolution [ES-10/20](#), and must be firmly denounced and condemned.

In resolution after resolution, the international community has reaffirmed the prohibition of the annexation of land by force and rejected as unlawful and null and void all Israeli measures aimed at altering the demography, character and status of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. In addition to the repeated reaffirmations of the applicability of the Fourth Geneva Convention in this regard, numerous resolutions have also affirmed that East Jerusalem remains an integral part of the Palestinian Territory occupied since 1967. It is urgent that action be taken by the international community to uphold those resolutions and the principles enshrined



therein, critical for countering the occupation's illegal actions and salvaging the prospects for realizing the two-State solution on the pre-1967 borders.

The Security Council, in particular, must act to uphold its authoritative decision, enshrined in resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#), that it will not recognize any changes to the 4 June 1967 lines, including with regard to Jerusalem, other than those agreed by the parties through negotiations, as well as its call upon all States to distinguish, in their relevant dealings, between the territory of the State of Israel and the territories occupied since 1967. Even rhetorical calls for removing any part of the historical wall that surrounds the Old City of Jerusalem in Occupied East Jerusalem are extremely dangerous, are in direct contempt of the Council's authority and would severely aggravate the already tense situation on the ground with far-reaching repercussions.

Moreover, it is necessary to recall that the Old City of Jerusalem is among the 54 World Heritage Sites considered by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization to be in danger according to article 11 (4) of the 1972 World Heritage Convention. Thus, during the 42nd session of the World Heritage Committee, it was once again decided to keep Jerusalem on the List of World Heritage in Danger, and the importance of the Old City of Jerusalem and its walls for the three monotheistic religions was reaffirmed. In this connection, Member States were again reminded "that all legislative and administrative measures and actions taken by Israel, the occupying Power, which have altered or purport to alter the character and status of the Holy City of Jerusalem, and in particular the 'basic law' on Jerusalem, are null and void and must be rescinded forthwith".

The Security Council and the General Assembly have clearly acknowledged this, further calling for the protection of the City's unique spiritual, religious and cultural dimensions and heritage, and must act resolutely to demand compliance with the law in order to tangibly contribute to the de-escalation of tensions and a reversal of the negative trends on the ground, which are threatening the viability of the two-State solution. Further in this regard, incidents such as the repeated incitement by extremist Israeli settlers and the latest confrontation between Israeli occupying forces and Muslim worshippers today at the Haram al-Sharif, whereby Muslim worshippers were denied entry to worship, constitute serious provocations that risk the inflammation of religious sensitivities and the further destabilization of the situation and that must be immediately ceased.

Here, we must once again recall the Security Council's call in resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#) both for affirmative steps to reverse the negative trends on the ground, including with regard to settlement activities, and for the prevention of all acts of violence against civilians, including acts of terror, and all acts of provocation, incitement and destruction. The Council must reinforce its demand for the parties to act on the basis of international law, including international humanitarian law, to observe calm and restraint, and to demonstrate through both policies and actions a genuine commitment to the two-State solution.

Serious and practical measures to uphold this demand and to compel the occupying Power's compliance are warranted in the light of Israel's continuing and intensifying settlement activities, in flagrant contempt of the Security Council. At the start of this year, Israel brazenly proceeded with this illegal behaviour with plans revealed to illegally colonize further parts of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including reports on 10 January of plans for the illegal seizure of 34 acres of land (139 dunums) of the village of Dayr Dibwan, north of Ramallah, for use by a nearby illegal settlement. Israel must be demanded to cease and reverse all such illegal measures and must be held accountable for this and all other violations that it is blatantly and wantonly perpetrating in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem.

Simultaneously, Israel, the occupying Power, continues its relentless military aggressions, terrorizing the Palestinian civilian population and deliberately causing bodily harm to Palestinian children, women and men without restraint. In particular, the Israel occupying forces have persisted with their lethal brutality against unarmed civilian protesters in the Gaza Strip, who continue to the Great March of Return protests, now in the forty-second week, against Israel's illegal occupation, blockade and oppression of the Palestinian people, who continue to be unjustly denied international protection, despite the repeated appeals for protection, including by the General Assembly.

The latest victims of Israel's assaults were a Palestinian woman, Amal al-Taramsi, age 43, who was shot and killed by live ammunition to the head, a teenage boy, Abed al-Raouf Ismail Salha, age 14, who died today of injuries sustained by bullets to the head, and 25 other civilians who were injured by Israeli fire. It was also reported that Israeli occupying forces had again indiscriminately targeted a Palestinian ambulance and medics. The death toll of civilians in Gaza has now reached a total of 257 Palestinians since the start of the Great March of Return in March 2018.

It is beyond an understatement to state that the prevailing situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, is untenable and requires immediate redress to de-escalate tensions, to save civilian lives and to salvage the chances for a just and peaceful solution to this prolonged conflict that continues to threaten regional and international peace and security. Absent measures of accountability by the international community, particularly by the Security Council, to uphold international law and implement the relevant resolutions, including resolution 2334 (2016), it seems regrettably clear that Israel's impunity will persist, further undermining peace prospects as well as the viability of international law and credibility of the Council itself.

We therefore call once again upon the Security Council to act and urge all Member States to uphold their commitments and obligations, aimed at deterring further violations by the occupying Power, compelling a halt and reversal to the destructive trends on the ground and ultimately bringing an end to the illegal, nearly 51-year foreign military occupation, an end which constitutes the fundamental condition for achieving a just and lasting peace.

The present letter is in follow-up to our 654 letters regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which constitutes the territory of the State of Palestine. Those letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 3 January 2019 (A/ES-10/806-S/2019/4) constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of those war crimes, acts of State terrorism and systematic human rights violations being committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators must be brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) **Riyad Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations