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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 12 February 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

I write to you in follow-up to our numerous letters alerting the international community to the illegal policies and constant incitement by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. In the recent period, such illegal practices and reckless inflammatory rhetoric and provocations appear to have been deliberately escalated by the occupying Power, exacerbating the insecurity of the Palestinian civilian population, who are being targeted by more and more violence by Israeli military and settler forces, risking innocent lives and further destabilization of the fragile situation on the ground.

We condemn the Israeli occupying forces' indiscriminate, lethal force against Palestinian civilians, including the latest murders, perpetrated on 7 February 2019, of two Palestinian children, Hasan Eyad Shalbi, age 13, and Hamza Mohammed Rashdi Ishteivi, age 17. Both were shot dead with live ammunition, one to the chest and one to the neck, during the Great March of Return protests in the besieged Gaza Strip, and dozens of people were injured, adding to the thousands of casualties since these protests began on 30 March 2018. At the same time, Israeli occupying forces and extremist settlers continue their violent rampages against Palestinian civilians in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, terrorizing the population and causing harm to civilians and destruction of their properties.

The Israeli Government's recklessness in this regard has become blatantly apparent in its decision to terminate the mandate of the Temporary International Presence in Hebron, which had provided a semblance of deterrence and protection over the past 22 years to Palestinian civilians in Hebron, a highly-charged and tense area, particularly as a result of the extremism of the Israeli settler population illegally transferred and transplanted there by the occupying Power.

We regret the inability of the Security Council to address this critical matter due to obstruction by one permanent member, despite the imperative of preventing the outbreak of a new cycle of violence and ensuring calm and restraint and the near-



unanimous support affirmed by Council members for the draft press statement introduced last week by the delegations of Indonesia and Kuwait. We continue to believe that it is essential that the Council express itself publicly on this matter, which is directly relevant to its decades-long deliberations on the Palestine question and the very implementation of its own resolutions, including resolutions [904 \(1994\)](#) and [2336 \(2016\)](#).

As the Council regrettably remains paralyzed, it is obvious that Israel, the occupying Power, will continue exploiting such inaction, persisting with its illegal and destructive policies and practices, in particular in connection with its colonial settlement enterprise, in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. Such unlawful behaviour will continue to result in harm to civilian lives, entrench the occupation and destroy the two-State solution on the pre-1967 borders, in direct violation of the relevant Security Council resolutions and in direct contradiction to the objective of a just, lasting and peaceful solution.

In this regard, the escalating barrage of inflammatory rhetoric and incitement by Israeli officials is sending a clear message that they have zero intention of abiding by any form of international law and any agreements they have committed to. In fact, Israel continues to do the opposite, acting in grave breach of international law, in total contempt of the Security Council and the international community, and taking us farther away from a peaceful solution and only closer to an all-out confrontation, as Israeli officials are vying for who can be more hostile and hateful towards the Palestinian people and who is going to colonize Occupied Palestine, including East Jerusalem, even more.

Just days ago, a number of Knesset members from Likud, dozens of senior ministers and other political leaders from other right-of-centre parties signed a formal declaration to support the “*Nahal*” movement, which rejects the two-State solution and whose goals include the transfer of an additional two million illegal settlers to the West Bank, in grave breach of the Fourth Geneva Convention and the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court as well as numerous Security Council resolutions.

Further in this regard, Prime Minister Netanyahu declared, during a visit on 28 January 2019 to the illegal Gush Etzion settlement bloc in the West Bank, that: “There won’t be any more uprooting or halting of settlements – just the opposite: the Land of Israel is ours and will remain ours.” Prior to that, on 16 January, the Israeli Minister for Science and Technology was reported in the press as saying: “We must accelerate the pace of (settlement) construction in Samaria and Judea (occupied West Bank), first and foremost to ensure our natural right to our land and to prevent the catastrophe, and what I defined in the past as the suicide of the State of Israel, and that would be: the establishment of a Palestinian terror state in this place.”

While Israeli officials have been and continue to be provocative with regard to their illegal settlement and annexation schemes, inflammatory rhetoric and hate speech threatening the Palestinian people has also intensified, including towards Palestinian prisoners, the civilian population in Gaza, the indigenous Palestinian citizens of Israel and even members of the Palestinian leadership, particularly President Mahmoud Abbas. On 21 January 2019, Knesset member Anat Berko tweeted: “There won’t be any big funerals for those whom you call martyrs, this is over. They must be buried at night, like the donkey buried without being seen by anyone.”

On Gaza, Israel’s Minister for Internal Security was quoted in the Israeli press on 27 January as stating “the security cabinet should discuss all options with regard to Gaza, from returning to assassinations to launching land operations as well as the return of the Israeli permanent presence.” The same Minister was quoted on the Israeli

Public Broadcasting station discrediting and threatening President Mahmoud Abbas, stating: “In the past, Yasser Arafat was announced as a character that must be ignored, perhaps we have to think of one of Abu Mazen’s trips abroad, not to allow him to come back.”

Such provocative statements provide only a small glimpse of the constant derogatory and inflammatory rhetoric and incitement by Israeli government and military officials, in violation of Security Council resolution 2334 (2016), in which it called explicitly on the parties to refrain from provocative actions, incitement and inflammatory rhetoric and the central fuel for the violence and terror that continues to be committed by extremist Israeli settlers against our people.

While we informed you in our letter dated 30 January 2019 of the killing of 38-year-old Hamdi Taleb Na’san, a father of four young children, in the village of Al-Mughayer by extremist Israeli settlers, the fact is that similar acts of hatred are being perpetrated on a regular basis, destroying the lives of innocent civilians, including women and children, and further heightening tensions on the ground. Throughout the month of January, bands of settler militias attacked and injured dozens of Palestinians, among them farmers trying to harvest their crops, and have caused damage and destruction to homes, cars and other civilian properties and uprooted hundreds of trees.

In one incident, on 28 January, a group of Israeli settlers violently attacked unarmed Palestinian farmers in the Masafer Yatta area; then again, on 30 January, settlers raided the village of Lubban Al-Sharqiyah, vandalizing several vehicles with inflammatory graffiti; and on 31 January, settlers attacked Palestinian shepherds in the Farisiyah area of the northern Jordan Valley. These are just a few examples of the daily acts of provocation, incitement and violence to which Palestinian civilians under Israel’s ruthless, illegal military occupation are being subjected.

Such heinous attacks are often carried out in the presence and under the protection of the Israeli occupying forces, further fostering an environment of impunity and reconfirming the fact that the occupying Power is not only in breach of its responsibilities under international humanitarian law to ensure the safety and protection of the civilian population under its occupation, but has completely abdicated that responsibility, deepening the insecurity of the Palestinian people and necessitating international action. As such provocations have become more routine and more extreme, it is incumbent upon the international community, including the Security Council, to remind Israel explicitly of its obligations as the occupying Power and to insist on compliance or impose accountability for these breaches.

The international community must not ignore early warning signals, whether with regard to the escalation of violence on the ground, the escalation of inflammatory rhetoric or the decision by Israel to terminate the Temporary International Presence in Hebron and remove international observers from one of the most volatile areas of the Occupied Palestinian Territory. As in many other situations, ignoring these signs risks tragic consequences, including the loss of more innocent civilian life, which must be averted at all costs.

More serious, tangible efforts must be made by the international community to hold Israel, the occupying Power, accountable for its violations and to ensure respect for the law. The Security Council in particular must send a strong message to Israel to cease immediately its violence against the Palestinian civilian population, cease all settlement activities, cease its dangerous provocations and incitement and act in respect of the relevant resolutions. Only such collective, responsible action can ensure the de-escalation of this volatile situation, protect civilians and salvage the prospects for realizing the two-State solution before it is too late.

The present letter is in follow-up to our 657 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 30 January 2019 (A/ES-10/809-S/2018/94), 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 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
