



General Assembly Security Council

Distr.: General
21 May 2019

Original: English

General Assembly
Tenth emergency special session
Agenda item 5
**Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the
rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory**

Security Council
Seventy-fourth year

Identical letters dated 16 May 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

On this solemn seventy-first anniversary of the 1948 Nakba, I write to you to draw the international community's attention, once again, to the ongoing Nakba that continues to be suffered by the Palestinian people as their rights continue to be cruelly denied and so grossly and systematically violated.

In the absence of a just solution, every passing day has brought to our people only more loss of life, loss of land, loss of homes, loss of livelihoods and loss of hope. As Israel, the occupying Power, persists with its oppression and denigration of the Palestinian people, depriving them of their rights and human dignity, despair and grievances are mounting and the humanitarian situation in Occupied Palestine, including East Jerusalem, continues to deteriorate. It is urgent that the international community, including the Security Council, act to redress this unjust and volatile situation and to bring this illegal and inhumane Israeli occupation to an end.

As we painfully mark the tragedy of the Nakba and sombrely reflect on the continuing plight of the millions of Palestine refugees, we are also marking one year since the massacre perpetrated against the defenceless Palestinian civilian population in the besieged Gaza Strip on 14 May 2018. On that day, the Israeli occupying forces murdered 60 Palestinians, including children, and wounded more than 2,000 other civilians in a blatant display of brutality and criminality and absolute disregard for human life. Innocent lives were taken simply for exercising the right to peaceful assembly and protest, voicing rejection of Israel's illegal occupation and siege, and calling for international action and justice.

In those days one year ago, the international community stood in near unanimity in calling upon Israel to abide by international law, including international human rights law and humanitarian law, specifically the relevant provisions on the protection of civilians in armed conflict. It is deeply regrettable that, since then, there has been little action to hold the occupying Power accountable for its crimes and end the culture of impunity that Israel has for too long enjoyed. In the absence of accountability,



Israel has been emboldened to continue flouting all calls by the international community to cease its unlawful policies and practices against the Palestinian people and to respect its international legal obligations.

One year after the Israeli massacre in Gaza, the occupying Power continues its targeting of civilians, including women and children, with lethal force, continues its illegal blockade of Gaza, and, likewise, continues its demolition of Palestinian homes and property, forcible transfers of Palestinian civilians, annexation attempts and inhumane treatment of Palestinians, including their detention, imprisonment and countless other forms of collective punishment and abuse.

Moreover, a year after the null and void United States declaration on Jerusalem, our people continue to suffer the consequences of those actions while Israel remains unaccountable and not only persists with its unlawful behaviour, but also shamelessly announces its intent to annex our land in grave breach of the law and in full contempt of the Security Council and the international community as a whole.

We reiterate that urgent international action is needed to end such impunity, to protect the Palestinian people and restore their rights, and to salvage the two-State solution based on the pre-June 1967 borders and the relevant United Nations resolutions.

As a matter of urgency, it must be demanded that Israel, the occupying Power, cease forthwith all colonization measures in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. Settlement activities are illegal and must be halted completely, as clearly demanded by the Security Council in its resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#) and all other relevant resolutions. The failure to enact consequences for these Israeli crimes in our land has only resulted in the construction of thousands more settlement units, with the occupying Power announcing nearly 4,000 more units in April 2019 alone.

Further in this regard, seizures of Palestinian land and the demolition of properties, including homes and other structures, must stop. In the first five months of 2019 alone, we witnessed more forced displacement of Palestinians in Occupied East Jerusalem than in the entirety of 2018. As of the writing of the present letter, 193 Palestinians have been forcibly displaced and thousands more remain under threat of eviction and displacement. This increase is tied directly to the increase in demolitions across the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, with 63 Palestinian homes in the occupied West Bank demolished in April of this year alone, which is part and parcel of Israel's illegal and destructive colonization and annexation schemes.

It is not a coincidence that the rise in these disturbing numbers comes after the provocative United States declaration and the move of its embassy in direct contravention and violation of Security Council resolutions [478 \(1980\)](#) and [2334 \(2016\)](#). Those actions have only encouraged Israel's unlawful behaviour and its contempt for the law and the principles and parameters of a just solution long enshrined in United Nations resolutions and long endorsed by international consensus.

Faced with this regrettable reality, not only is the two-State solution at stake, but so, too, is the authority and credibility of the Security Council. Action to reverse these negative trends and salvage the prospects for a peaceful solution, as well as the rules-based order, must be prioritized by the international community.

At the same time, the situation in Gaza requires immediate action. In addition to the heart-breaking number of civilians killed and injured during the latest Israeli military aggression, the humanitarian situation has further deteriorated as Israel continues to impose its 12-year blockade. The recent Israeli airstrikes and bombardments also destroyed or damaged hundreds more homes and further

displaced hundreds more families in Gaza, which has yet to recover and fully reconstruct from the destruction of wars past. Moreover, the Israeli occupying forces continue their brutality against civilians participating in the ongoing Great March of Return protests. Since the 14 May 2018 massacre, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs has documented the killing of at least 131 more Palestinians and the injuring of at least 13,886 more Palestinians by the occupying forces, who continue to fire live ammunition at civilians peacefully protesting and not posing any danger or threat to human life.

The grave humanitarian situation in Gaza has left no family unaffected as poverty, food insecurity and human insecurity continue to rise, most severely affecting the refugee community, which comprises the majority and most vulnerable segment of the population. Indeed, the intense vulnerability of the Palestine refugees has again been brought to the fore by the horrific events witnessed two days ago in Syria, where a rocket strike on the Nayrab refugee camp in Aleppo killed 10 Palestinians, including 4 children, and critically injured at least 30 other civilians.

This tragedy underscores yet again the plight and ongoing suffering of the Palestine refugees as they continue to be denied justice and their rights. On this solemn anniversary of the Nakba, we reiterate our constant call for a just solution to their plight and the fulfilment of their rights, including to return, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 194 (III).

We also seize this opportunity to renew our deep gratitude to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East for the vital, life-saving assistance it continues to provide to Palestine refugees in all fields of operation. We appeal to the international community to continue its strong support for the Agency's mandate and the generous funding for its programmes, which are so critical for the well-being and development of Palestine refugees, in particular our youth, and renew our recognition of the important, stabilizing role played by the Agency in the region pending a just solution.

On this day, we appeal to the international community to back long-standing resolutions and principled statements with concrete and comprehensive actions. Words alone, whether of condemnation or support, will neither alleviate the suffering of the Palestinian people nor compel Israel to abide by international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions, unless these words are followed by serious action aimed at upholding the law and ensuring accountability and actually pursuing a peaceful settlement of this conflict.

We urge the international community to act before we reach the point of no return. As repeatedly stressed by delegations in recent Security Council meetings, we are worryingly close to the point of no return, where Israel's methodical erosion of the two-State solution makes it unviable and where the failure to halt Israel's crimes and halt the deterioration takes us farther away from the possibility of a future of peace, security and coexistence, further fuelling the conflict, and bringing only more strife and suffering to the two peoples and the region as a whole.

We call on the international community to act in accordance with international law, stated commitments, and political and moral responsibilities long unfulfilled relating to the Palestine question. The Security Council in particular must act in accordance with its duty under the Charter to maintain international peace and security. Only by implementing its resolutions can the Council de-escalate this dangerous situation, ensure the protection of the Palestinian people under Israel's occupation, and contribute to bringing to an end this illegal occupation and achieving a just, lasting, and comprehensive solution, based on the relevant United Nations resolutions, the Madrid principles and the Arab Peace Initiative, that fulfils the rights of the Palestinian people, including to freedom and independence in the State of

Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital, and establishes a genuine and sustainable Israeli-Palestinian peace. That is the only path to a solution, and it must be seized now before it is too late.

The present letter is in follow-up to our 665 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 5 May 2019 (A/ES-10/817-S/2019/370), constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these 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