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

Security Council  
Seventy-fifth year

## Identical letters dated 26 February 2020 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 am compelled to write to you once again as Israel, the occupying Power, persists in rabid pursuit of its illegal colonization schemes in the Occupied State of Palestine, emboldened in its impunity and further exploiting the situation following the presentation of the United States plan for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Following the Israeli announcement just last week of plans to construct more than 14,000 settlement units throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in particular in and around Occupied East Jerusalem and Bethlehem, severing the continuum of these cities and further isolating them from the rest of their natural Palestinian environs, the Israeli Prime Minister made yet another brazen settlement announcement on 25 February.

Yesterday, Netanyahu pledged to build 3,500 new illegal settlement units in the so-called “E-1” area, aiming to connect the illegal “Maale Adumim” settlement with Occupied East Jerusalem. These plans are not only in grave breach of the Fourth Geneva Convention, thus constituting war crimes, but also threaten to completely sever the northern and southern parts of the West Bank and further isolate East Jerusalem, completely undermining the Territory’s contiguity.

Together, these are premeditated and clear steps whose intention is to deal a final and decisive blow to the practicability of the two-State formula and yet further evidence of Israel’s agenda for permanent occupation. As stated by Israeli non-governmental organization Peace Now: “Last time they tried to promote construction in E1 the world was shaken. This is a strategic area for the two-state solution and building a settlement in E1 means that Israel is officially choosing to risk perpetual conflict instead of resolving it. It is no less than a national disaster that must be stopped before it is too late.”

This string of Israeli announcements is a clear indication that Israel sees the United States administration’s plan as a green light for pursuing its expansionist annexationist ambitions, which Israeli officials, including candidates running in the



election that will take place in less than one week, are scrambling to unilaterally implement on the ground.

Settlement plans in and around East Jerusalem that had previously been frozen as a result of international pressure and outrage have now been boastfully relaunched, with the extremist, right-wing Israeli government exploiting the current circumstances, including international inaction, to move forward with these illegal plans. As long as there is no accountability for its actions, Israel will clearly continue its contempt of the will of the rest of the international community and continue to trample the law and the chances for a just solution.

Such intentions were borne out once again, on 24 February, when the joint United States-Israel “committee” formed to “map out” areas of the Occupied West Bank slated for illegal annexation toured the settlement of “Ariel” and Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu provocatively stated: “The process will be completed as quickly as possible; there is no artificial impediment ... We are determining here lines that have historic implications. Therefore, the work will be done as quickly as possible, and we will not stop for anything.”

Extremist Israeli settlers have been equally emboldened, calling for the full and immediate annexation of the West Bank and escalating their violent attacks on Palestinian civilians. On 21 February, under the protection of Israeli occupation forces, around 4,000 Israeli settlers aboard dozens of buses and cars raided the Palestinian villages of Laqba and Al-Burj in the Jordan Valley and gathered on land belonging to the Latin Patriarchate in Tayasir, terrorizing the local population.

This utter disregard for Palestinians’ inalienable rights is the result of years of systematic dehumanization of the Palestinian people, who are treated by the occupation as undeserving of basic human rights and dignity. In Israel’s latest demonstration of unhinged cruelty and barbaric treatment of Palestinians, images were caught on video on 23 February of an Israeli military bulldozer dragging the body of a dead Palestinian man in Gaza. Reacting to the video, Israeli Minister Naftali Bennett then tweeted “this is how it should be done, and this is how it will be done”. Mohammed Ali al-Naim, age 27, had previously been shot dead by Israeli forces. Two Palestinian men who tried to retrieve the dead body were also injured by Israeli forces and ended up in hospital.

In a further demonstration of such utter contempt for Palestinian lives, the Israeli Prime Minister chose to visit Al-Ibrahimi mosque in Hebron the same week marking the twenty-sixth anniversary since a terrorist Israeli settler, Baruch Goldstein, used an army-issued automatic rifle to fire on hundreds of Palestinian worshippers, murdering 29 Palestinians as they were performing a dawn prayer during Ramadan in Al-Ibrahimi mosque, and injuring 150. That terror attack was followed by Israeli soldiers killing an additional 21 Palestinians who protested the massacre.

It should be recalled that these horrific acts led the Security Council to adopt its resolution [904 \(1994\)](#), calling for measures to be taken to guarantee the safety and protection of the Palestinian civilians throughout the occupied territory, including, inter alia, a temporary international or foreign presence. It is not a coincidence that the mandate of the presence that was established – the Temporary International Presence in Hebron – was terminated by Israel just last year as it obviously seeks to forge ahead with its illegal plans in the City and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

Without genuine international efforts to hold Israel accountable for all of its violations and crimes, the occupying Power’s impunity will only escalate. This is being blatantly exhibited by the contemptuous declarations of Israeli officials and by

the incessant series of illegal actions on the ground that are aggravating already high tensions and risk further destabilization of the situation.

It is past time for the international community, with the Security Council at the forefront, to answer such defiance by Israel, with a firm resolve for peace and rejection of all illegal actions and provocations. It must be unyielding in its response to the occupying Power and this requires immediate action. As stated by the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Nikolay Mladenov, in his briefing to the Security Council on 24 February: “Today, it is not enough to reaffirm the internationally agreed parameters on how the conflict can be resolved.” This must include tangible measures now to save the viability of the two-State solution and the possibility for Israeli-Palestinian peace before it is too late.

We urge the international community to act now with concrete measures to uphold international law and to actualize the long-standing international consensus for a just solution as enshrined in the relevant United Nations resolutions. As stated by Pope Francis on 23 February, “inequitable” solutions to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict would only be a prelude to new crises, which we must collectively act to avert.

The present letter is in follow-up to our 681 letters regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which constitutes the territory of the State of Palestine. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 ([A/55/432-S/2000/921](#)) to 20 February 2020 ([A/ES-10/834-S/2020/132](#)), 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 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**  
Minister

Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations