



DIVISION FOR  
PALESTINIAN RIGHTS

# Bulletin

on action by the United Nations system and  
intergovernmental organizations  
relevant to the question of Palestine

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	<i>Contents</i>	<i>Page</i>
I.	UN Secretary-General appoints Leni Stenseth Deputy Commissioner-General of UNRWA	1
II.	Statement by UN Humanitarian Coordinator and Resident Coordinator, on the occasion of International Youth Day	1
III.	UN Secretary-General welcomes joint statement suspending Israel's plans to annex West Bank	2
IV.	EU High Representative issues declaration on announcement of a normalization of relations between Israel and the UAE	3
V.	OIC reaffirms its position on the Palestinian cause	3
VI.	UN Special Coordinator addresses Israel-UAE accord, Gaza tensions in briefing to Security Council	4
VII.	Palestinian Rights Committee holds international conference on "Annexation in Practice – Palestinian Youth in Jerusalem"	9
VIII.	UN Spokesperson addresses deteriorating situation in Gaza	14
IX.	UN Humanitarian Coordinator calls on Israel to allow entry of essential items, and Hamas to end destabilizing actions in Gaza	15

*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. UN SECRETARY-GENERAL APPOINTS LENI STENSETH DEPUTY COMMISSIONER-GENERAL OF UNRWA**

*On 4 August, António Guterres, United Nations Secretary-General, appointed Leni Stenseth of Norway as Deputy Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). A [press release](#) is replicated below.*

United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres announced on 18 June 2020 the appointment of Leni Stenseth of Norway as Deputy Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) at the level of Assistant Secretary-General.

Currently Norwegian Ambassador to Lebanon, Ms. Stenseth brings to the position nearly twenty years of experience in international politics, humanitarian action and crisis management, fifteen of which were in leadership positions with the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Norwegian Red Cross.

Prior to her role as Norwegian Ambassador to Lebanon, Ms. Stenseth held the post of Director of Humanitarian Affairs with the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs from 2016 to 2019, during which time she also served first as a Member, then as Chair of United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) Advisory Group. From 2013 to 2016 she was the Director of United Nations Affairs with overall responsibility for Norway's United Nations policy related to peace and security and sustainable development, as well as policy on Gender equality, while also managing Norway's financial support to the United Nations Funds and Programmes.

From 2008 to 2013, she held a number of senior roles with the Norwegian Red Cross. Prior to that, she served as a diplomat at the Norwegian Embassies in Amman and Washington D.C. She also worked as a researcher with FaFo Institute for Applied International Studies in 2000.

Ms. Stenseth holds a Bachelor's degree in Law and Political Science and a Master's degree in International Relations from the University of Oslo, Norway. She is married and has two children.

## **II. STATEMENT BY UN HUMANITARIAN COORDINATOR AND RESIDENT COORDINATOR ON THE OCCASION OF INTERNATIONAL YOUTH DAY**

*The Office of Jamie McGoldrick, United Nations Humanitarian Coordinator and Resident Coordinator in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, issued the following [statement](#) on 12 August.*

Today, the United Nations (UN) in Palestine celebrates International Youth Day under the global theme, "Youth Engagement for Global Action". This year's theme seeks to put the spotlight on the ways in which young people at the local, national and global levels are enriching national and multilateral institutions and processes, as well as draw lessons on how their representation and engagement in formal institutional politics can be significantly enhanced.

Active engagement and empowerment of young people is essential for the global community to achieve the goals of the 2030 Agenda. This is illustrated by the fact that more than one third of

the SDG targets directly or indirectly reference young people, with a focus on empowerment, participation and well-being.

As the UN marks its 75th anniversary, the UN75 campaign in Palestine has helped shed light on the positive role youth can play in reaching vulnerable groups in their communities. This was exemplified by their contribution in raising awareness on COVID-19 prevention in the most marginalized neighbourhoods of their communities.

While we have seen some positive steps to better engage and empower young people in Palestine, the reality remains dire as the physical and social barriers seem to increase on a daily basis. With youth comprising more than 30 per cent of the population, they struggle with high unemployment rates, low levels of political representation and inadequate access to opportunities that youth in other parts of the world take for granted. This reality has led to a sense of widespread hopelessness which could be a dangerous development unless we jointly take action to reverse this trend.

As we celebrate this year's International Youth Day, I encourage all of you to take action to include and empower young people to help them shape their own future.

### **III. UN SECRETARY-GENERAL WELCOMES JOINT STATEMENT SUSPENDING ISRAEL'S PLANS TO ANNEX WEST BANK**

*The following [statement](#) was issued on 13 August by the Spokesman for António Guterres, United Nations Secretary-General:*

Today's joint statement by United States President Donald J. Trump, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel and His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, suspends Israeli annexation plans over parts of the occupied West Bank, something the Secretary-General has consistently called for. Annexation would effectively close the door for a renewal of negotiations and destroy the prospect of a viable Palestinian State and the two-State solution.

The Secretary-General welcomes this agreement, hoping it will create an opportunity for Israeli and Palestinian leaders to re-engage in meaningful negotiations that will realize a two State-solution in line with relevant United Nations resolutions, international law and bilateral agreements.

Peace in the Middle East is more important than ever as the region confronts the grave threats of COVID-19 and radicalization. The Secretary-General will continue to work with all sides to open further possibilities for dialogue, peace and stability.

#### **IV. EU HIGH REPRESENTATIVE ISSUES DECLARATION ON ANNOUNCEMENT OF A NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS BETWEEN ISRAEL AND THE UAE**

*On 15 August, Josep Borrell, European Union (EU) High Representative and Vice President, issued a [declaration](#) on behalf of the EU replicated below.*

The EU welcomes the announcement on the normalisation of relations between Israel and the United Arab Emirates, and acknowledges the constructive role played by the US in this respect. The EU has for many years promoted the development of relations between Israel and the countries of the region. Israel and the United Arab Emirates are both important partners of the European Union. A normalisation of their bilateral relations will be beneficial to both countries and a fundamental step for the stabilisation of the region as a whole. We remain committed to a comprehensive and lasting peace for the entire region and stand ready to work to this end together with our regional and international partners.

Israel's commitment to suspend plans to unilaterally annex areas of the occupied Palestinian territory is a positive step. Any unilateral decision that undermines a lasting, agreed solution should be avoided. The EU remains firm in its commitment to a negotiated and viable two-state solution built upon the internationally agreed parameters and international law – and reaffirms its readiness to work towards the resumption of meaningful negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians, building also on the commitment by the parties of the joint statement to engage diplomatically and continue efforts to achieve a just, comprehensive and lasting peace.

#### **V. OIC REAFFIRMS ITS POSITION ON THE PALESTINIAN CAUSE**

*On 24 August, Yousef A. Al-Othaimen, Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), issued the following [press release](#).*

Secretary General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), Dr. Yousef A. Al-Othaimen, asserted that the issue of Palestine and al-Quds is the OIC's raison d'être, pivotal cause, and source of unity and strength. "It is at the heart of the OIC's joint Islamic action and the main consensus of all Member States, which all endeavor to end the Israeli occupation and help the Palestinian people realize their legitimate rights," stated al-Othaimen.

The Secretary-General confirmed that he had conducted many consultations with various stakeholders and what transpired is that the 2002 Arab Peace Initiative, with all its elements and natural sequence as adopted by the various Islamic Summits and successive Councils of Foreign Ministers (CFM), constitutes a strategic choice, a historical opportunity, and a common reference. "Any just and comprehensive peaceful solution geared towards ending the Arab-Israeli conflict must thus take it as a springboard," reiterated Al-Othaimen.

He affirmed that the OIC adheres to peace, which will always remain a strategic choice based on international law, international legitimacy decisions, the Arab Peace Initiative, and the vision of the two-state solution. "The peace process is an indivisible whole and normalizing the relations between Member States and the Israeli occupation state will never take place until after the end of the Israeli occupation of the Arab and Palestinian lands occupied since 1967, including al-Quds, and the establishment of the viable Palestinian State with East al-Quds as its capital. "The OIC

supports all efforts exerted to enable the Palestinian people to exercise their inalienable national rights, including the right of return, self-determination, and the establishment of their independent and sovereign state on the borders of June 4, 1967,” added Al-Othaimeen.

The Secretary-General also affirmed the illegality of any Israeli unilateral measures to annex Palestinian lands and build settlements that aim to change the political and legal situation on the Palestinian land under Israeli occupation and undermine the two-state solution. “The resolutions of the recent Islamic Summit and the OIC’s Executive Committee at the level of foreign ministers rejected any measures that may affect the historical, legal, or political status quo of East al-Quds. They also rejected the Israeli annexation plan for parts of the occupied lands of the State of Palestine. They reiterated that such illegal actions would undermine the chances of peace based on the two-state solution,” concluded the OIC’s Secretary-General noting that Member States appreciate any efforts aimed at stopping these unilateral measures.

## **VI. UN SPECIAL COORDINATOR ADDRESSES ISRAEL-UAE ACCORD, GAZA TENSIONS IN BRIEFING TO SECURITY COUNCIL**

*On 25 August, Nickolay Mladenov, UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, made the following [remarks](#) to the Security Council.*

I address you today following the agreement that was reached between Israel and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) that stops Israeli annexation plans over parts of the occupied West Bank and includes the normalization of relations between the two countries.

The Secretary-General has welcomed this agreement, hoping it will create an opportunity for Israeli and Palestinian leaders to re-engage.

Israel’s commitment to suspending annexation removes an immediate threat that had the potential to upend the peace process and regional stability. The Secretary-General has consistently called for Israel to abandon these plans. Annexation would constitute a most serious violation of international law, effectively close the door to a renewal of negotiations and destroy the prospect of a viable Palestinian State and the two-State solution itself.

The Israel-UAE deal also has the potential to change dynamics across the region. It creates new opportunities for cooperation at a time when the Middle East and the world face grave dangers from the Covid-19 pandemic and radicalization. It will create economic opportunities and opportunities for peace.

I hope it will inspire leaders on all sides to re-engage constructively in meaningful negotiations to resolve the Israeli Palestinian conflict. The terms of reference of resolving the conflict have not changed — they are based on the relevant UN resolutions, bilateral agreements and international law. Only a two-State solution, in which Israel and Palestine live side-by-side in peace, security and mutual recognition, can lead to sustainable peace.

Today is not the time to despair about the Palestinian cause. Annexation plans have been stopped. In fact, today is the time to redouble efforts, to reach out more actively than ever to leaders in the Middle East, and for the Palestinian and Israeli leadership to re-engage constructively.

Regrettably, we continue to confront a series of multi-layered challenges on the ground as the resurgence of the COVID-19 pandemic in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT) and in Israel continues to be a major concern.

The UN and its partners have continued to support Palestinians in responding to the pandemic, including by addressing critical gaps in medical supplies and equipment.

Meanwhile, the Palestinian economy is in freefall. Now that the imminent threat of annexation has been removed, I hope that the Palestinian leadership will resume accepting its clearance revenues and provide some breathing space for the battered economy.

Recently, the security situation in Gaza has also deteriorated; a trend which soon may become irreversible.

It is essential that the ceasefire agreement brokered by Egypt and the UN, which has proved effective since August 2018, be reaffirmed. Mediation efforts will continue; however, I am concerned that militant activity, incendiary balloons, rockets and a deteriorating humanitarian situation inside the Strip are rapidly eroding existing arrangements.

During the past months, Gaza's economy has deteriorated dramatically. Compounding the impact of continued closures, intra-Palestinian division and more than a decade of Hamas rule, COVID19-related restrictions have halted the crossing of workers and traders into Israel and inhibited revenue transfers to Gaza's exporters. The current absence of cooperation between the Palestinian Authority and Israel has also slowed implementation of critical infrastructure projects and jobs have been lost.

UNSCO continues to work with the UN Country Team (UNCT), donors, and the parties to address the needs in Gaza and the occupied West Bank. On 28 July, the UN Country Team released its COVID-19 Development System Response Plan, outlining critical interventions that the United Nations will implement in the coming 12 to 18 months in support of the Palestinian Government. I encourage Member States to support these efforts.

The UN is deeply engaged in efforts to mitigate the economic and humanitarian consequences of the PA's decision to halt all coordination with Israel in response to the threat of annexation.

As reported last month, the UN reached agreements with the Palestinian government to facilitate vital deliveries of humanitarian aid and related equipment. Agreements were also reached with Israel to streamline its administrative procedures for these imports in light of the COVID-19 crisis.

I am pleased to report that coordination between the UN and all sides on the importation of humanitarian supplies is proceeding well. But coordination levels between Israel and the PA remain far below normal. This has impacted the delivery of assistance as well as the provision of services to the Palestinian population.

Fortunately, after minor delays, a mechanism that supports the transfer of patients requiring medical treatment outside of Gaza has also been established.

Let me reiterate that any increased responsibilities for the UN should be limited and time-bound and not designed to replace the roles and responsibilities of the Palestinian Authority or of the Government of Israel.

I remain very concerned that the suspension of coordination and, in particular, revenue transfers cannot be sustained for much longer without severe humanitarian and economic consequences.

As I noted earlier, tensions in Gaza are rising again.

Over the reporting period, militants fired some 20 rockets towards Israel and launched some 270 balloons carrying incendiary devices, causing hundreds of fires and forcing some civilians to be evacuated from their homes.

Shrapnel from rockets, intercepted by the Iron Dome, damaged a car and two houses in the Israeli town of Sderot. Six civilians were lightly injured while running for shelter.

Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) responded by striking Hamas targets and agricultural fields, firing some 80 missiles and shells, with five people reported injured, including four children and one woman. Following one of these strikes, an unexploded Israeli missile was found in an UNRWA school in the ash-Shati refugee camp. The IDF has classified this as an accident that is under review.

I reiterate that the indiscriminate launching of rockets and incendiary devices towards Israeli population centers violates international law and must cease immediately. Likewise, children and schools should never be targeted by any party, nor should children be exposed to violence.

In response to the sharp rise in the number of incendiary balloons, on 11 August, Israel limited the transfer of some goods and halted the transfer of construction materials through the Kerem Shalom crossing into Gaza. On 12 August, Israeli authorities stopped all fuel deliveries until further notice, including donor-funded fuel. As a result, the Gaza Power Plant has shut down, sharply reducing electricity provision to three hours per day. This is severely impacting critical infrastructure, including sewage treatment and provision of clean drinking water. It is also affecting health facilities, schools, and conditions at some of the quarantine centers that are critical to efforts to prevent an outbreak of COVID19 in the Strip, particularly concerning given reports yesterday of the first identified cases of COVID-19 outside of quarantine centers in Gaza. Additionally, on 16 August, Israel closed the Gaza fishing zone completely.

Yesterday after hearing the news of the new COVID19 cases in Gaza, the UN asked Israel to reinstate the delivery of Qatari funded fuel for the Strip in order to help prevent a major health crisis.

This latest escalation has once again demonstrated the urgency of implementing long-term solutions for Gaza.

The Israeli population in proximity to the Strip live in constant fear, watching their lands burn and their children run for shelter. The Palestinian population in Gaza endure unbearable economic



conditions, no freedom of movement and political isolation. Closures and rounds of escalation have defined their lives for over a decade.

There is a moral imperative to end all militant activity in Gaza, restore Palestinian national unity and lift Israeli closures.

But the political solutions that must be provided by leaders are nowhere in sight. Instead, we have a day-to-day, month-to-month, year-to-year patchwork of crucial humanitarian efforts to prevent war and to try and sustain the lives of two million desperate Palestinians in Gaza.

Turning to the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, three Palestinians, including one child and one woman, were killed and 47 injured, including two children and one woman, in clashes, attacks, search and arrest operations, and other incidents. Seven Israelis, including two soldiers and one child, were injured during the reporting period.

In one tragic incident, a 23-year-old Palestinian woman was killed by live fire in her home in Jenin during an ISF operation and ensuing clashes with local Palestinian residents. There are contradictory claims over responsibility for the shooting, with ISF and local residents denying the use of live ammunition.

On 13 August, Israel's prosecution authorities filed an indictment against five Border Police officers on 14 counts of serious abuse, including assault and robbery. A video subsequently released showed unacceptable, vicious beatings and humiliation of Palestinian detainees.

On 16 August, an 18-year-old Palestinian was shot and injured by ISF while reportedly attempting to throw a Molotov cocktail at Rachel's Tomb near Bethlehem. The following day, another Palestinian man was shot and killed in Jerusalem's Old City while carrying out a stabbing attack against an Israeli Border Police officer, who was moderately injured.

In another unfortunate incident involving a disabled person, on 17 August, ISF shot and injured a 60-year-old Palestinian man with hearing and speech impediments at the Qalandiya checkpoint when he did not respond to their calls to halt.

On 20 August, a 16-year-old Palestinian boy died after reportedly being shot by ISF near the village of Deir Abu Mash'al, west of Ramallah. Two other Palestinians were reportedly injured. The ISF stated that the three were preparing to throw Molotov cocktails and set alight tires to attack passing vehicles.

I reiterate that lethal force should be used only as a last resort, against an imminent threat of death or serious injury and in accordance with the principle of proportionality. I call on Israeli authorities to investigate these incidents.

Amid the COVID-19 crisis, there has been a concerning increase in violent crime within Palestinian communities across the West Bank, including in East Jerusalem, as well as violent incidents involving Palestinian Security Forces (PSF) and civilians, with several people shot dead in recent weeks.

Palestinian organizations, meanwhile, focused on gender-based violence (GBV) in the West Bank have also reported a sharp increase in femicides. I urge Palestinian authorities, in line with their obligations, to enhance the protection of women and girls from GBV.

Meanwhile, settlers perpetrated 20 attacks against Palestinians, resulting in four injuries and damage to property.

On 12 August, settlers attacked Israeli Security Forces during an operation to demolish structures at an outpost near the settlement of Yitzhar.

Palestinians carried out 27 attacks against Israeli settlers and other civilians in the West Bank, resulting in five injuries and property damage.

During the reporting period, Israeli authorities demolished 72 Palestinian-owned structures in Area C and East Jerusalem, displacing some 89 people, including 32 women and 40 children, and affecting 20 others. In addition, 11 Palestinians self-demolished their structures to avoid additional fines.

On 10 August, Israel's High Court of Justice overturned an order to punitively demolish the home of a Palestinian accused of killing an Israeli soldier in May 2020. The Court emphasized that the rights of the perpetrator's wife and children would be disproportionately harmed if the demolition were to proceed.

Briefly turning to the region, in Lebanon, over 180 people are dead following the explosion in Beirut port on 4 August, with 30 persons still missing and several thousand injured. Almost 300,000 people are in need of shelter. A Lebanese investigation into the explosion is ongoing, with the assistance of experts from France, Russia, Turkey and the United States. Following the 9 August international donors' conference co-convened by France and the United Nations, at which nearly \$300 million in aid was pledged, a UN Flash Appeal launched on 14 August raised another \$565 million to help address humanitarian and recovery needs.

Popular protests continued, while informal consultations on the formation of a new Government are ongoing, following the resignation of Prime Minister Hassan Diab's Government on 10 August. At the same time, the COVID-19 outbreak has worsened, prompting a nationwide lockdown in Lebanon. On 18 August, the Special Tribunal for Lebanon delivered its verdict in the Ayyash et al case, concerning the 2005 attack that killed former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri and 21 others, convicting Ayyash, while acquitting the three other defendants for lack of evidence.

While the situation in the UNIFIL area of operations remained generally stable, tensions have been observed along the Blue Line, including a breach of the cessation of hostilities on 27 July. UNIFIL continues to maintain stability and defuse tensions, including through its liaison and coordination efforts with the parties.

On the Golan, tensions between Israel and Syria heightened on 2 and 3 August. On 2 August, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) carried out a strike killing four individuals from the Bravo side in the vicinity of the ceasefire line. The IDF informed UNDOF that they had carried out an attack on targets east of the Israeli technical fence to thwart an attempt to place explosives in that area. The following day, at the request of Syrian authorities, UNDOF facilitated the retrieval by the ICRC

Syria of the remains of the four individuals that were killed. The IDF, on 3 August, also fired missiles from a helicopter across the ceasefire line onto the Bravo side, informing UNDOF that the IDF struck Syrian armed forces targets in response to the attempted IED attack the night before. UNDOF continues to engage with both parties to prevent an escalation of the situation and to remind them of their obligation to respect the 1974 Disengagement of Forces Agreement.

In closing, let me urge that we not lose sight of the deteriorating dynamics on the ground. Gaza is teetering on the brink of another major escalation with Israel, the occupied West Bank is fracturing under a multitude of economic and political pressures, settlement expansion and demolitions continue, and the COVID-19 pandemic continues to have a devastating impact on Palestinian and Israeli societies.

This is the stark reality of the current situation.

Without resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, regional peace will not be complete. The legitimate national aspiration of five million Palestinians living in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and Gaza cannot be ignored.

It is well beyond time that we all work together with the parties for peace before it is too late. That is why every opening must be explored, every opportunity must be used, every idea must be discussed and debated if we are to get out of the cycle of statements, preventive diplomacy and conflict management and work towards a real solution that is sustainable and in line with relevant UN resolutions.

## **VII. PALESTINIAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE HOLDS INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON “ANNEXATION IN PRACTICE – PALESTINIAN YOUTH IN JERUSALEM”**

*On 27 August, the United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People held a second virtual international conference on the question of Jerusalem co-organized with the Organization of Islamic Cooperation on “Annexation in Practice – Palestinian Youth in Jerusalem”. The [Chair’s summary](#) is reproduced below.*

The International Conference on the Question of Jerusalem “**Annexation in Practice – Palestinian Youth in Jerusalem**”, **Part 2** was convened virtually, on 27 August 2020, under the auspices of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (CEIRPP) and co-organized with the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC).

The event was moderated by Mr. Samir Bakr, Assistant Secretary-General for Palestine and Al-Quds Affairs of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). It consisted of an opening session with remarks by Ambassador Cheikh Niang, Chair of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and Permanent Representative of Senegal to the United Nations and H.E. Mr. Fadi Hidmi, Minister of Jerusalem Affairs of the State of Palestine. The panel speaker comprised of Ms. Reem Natsheh, Field Researcher at the Women’s Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling (Jerusalem), Mr. Micha Kurz, co-founder of Breaking the Silence and Grassroots Jerusalem (Jerusalem), and Ms. Rochelle Watson, National organizer and lead of campaigns for Friends of Sabeel North America (USA). Member States participated in the two-

hour event on WebEx which was also livestreamed on UNTV and UN social media channels. A total of 10,828 viewers watched the conference on UN WebTV, Facebook, Twitter and YouTube where they had an opportunity to make comments and pose questions to the panellists.

At the opening, **Ambassador Niang** reiterated the Committee's commitment to achieving a negotiated two-State solution, despite Israel's successive unilateral actions aimed at altering the demographic and historical character of the City, and the Committee's principled position that annexation of any part of the occupied territory was illegal and that any initiative aimed at a just solution to the question of Palestine must consider the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people and engage the Palestinian leadership. The Chair called for the active engagement and empowerment of the post-Oslo generation as essential for the end to occupation. The Committee's events should continue to serve as platforms to bring together a diversity of voices from around the world.

In his introductory remarks, **Mr. Bakr** reminded that the seventh annual Conference on the Question of Jerusalem, in collaboration with the OIC, represents an opportune occasion for highlighting the hardships, needs, concerns and aspirations of Palestinian youth under Israeli occupation in East Jerusalem and for devising ways to build their capacities and to enhance their role in their society. He expressed his appreciation for the principled position of all Member States who explicitly rejected Israel's annexation of Palestinian lands since 1967 – considered as a blatant violation of international law and UN resolutions. He recalled the strategic plan for the development of Jerusalem prepared by the State of Palestine and adopted by the OIC detailing the needs, priorities and possible interventions to confront the challenges posed by the occupying power. The OIC has implemented some interventions in this regard through contributing to the development of the education sector and building the capacity of organizations serving youth in East Jerusalem. The OIC Summit also adopted a resolution on the socio-economic empowerment for the Palestinian People with a view to promoting steady and sustainable growth of the youth sector and to creating work opportunities for East Jerusalemite youth. Mr. Bakr highlighted the importance of twinning between youth institutions in Jerusalem and their counterparts in OIC Member States as an efficient tool to strengthen the steadfastness of Palestinian youth in their homeland and enhance their resilience. Finally, he reiterated the unflinching support of the OIC to the Palestinian people in their struggle to regain their inalienable rights in accordance with the relevant UN resolutions and the Arab Peace Initiative.

**Minister Hidmi** saluted the Palestinian youth, while describing them as the future of Palestine and protector of its history and civilization and reiterated his eagerness to see an end to Israeli occupation so that young Palestinians can live in dignity, safety in an independent homeland, with a just and peaceful future. The Minister commended the UN Secretary-General, the Chair of the Committee and its Member States, as well as the OIC for their constant support to the Palestinian cause and persistent efforts to support the realization of the Palestinian people's inalienable rights, ensure the achievement of a just and comprehensive peace in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, and guarantee security and stability in the Arab region. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Conference was held amid the intensification of violations by the occupying power against the Palestinian people, with the attempt to establish a "colonialist" regime and plans to annex parts of the occupied Palestinian lands including Jerusalem, Jordan Valley, areas North of the Dead Sea. The Minister spoke of Israel's continuing escalation of measures in implementation of its agenda of Judaization of the Holy City through excavation works under Al-Aqsa mosque and within the walls of the old City,

demolitions, land confiscation policies and enforced displacement in order to change the demographics, nature and status of the City. The Minister also spoke of the raids by Israeli authorities against arts and cultural centres that play an important role in the life of Palestinian youth.

On annexation, Minister Hidmi informed that Israel has approved the construction of 17,700 housing units in Jerusalem since the beginning of this year. He warned the international community to not “feel at ease” with Israel’s announced intention to “freeze” its annexation plans of parts of the West Bank, as the Israeli measures taken on the ground run counter to such stated intentions. Israel is seeking to annex major settlement blocs to East Jerusalem, including Ma’ale Adumim and Gush Etzion. The latter would eliminate any potential for a Palestinian state in the West Bank with East Jerusalem as its capital.

As for East Jerusalemite youth, the Minister underlined how they are affected by Israeli oppression in all fields of life including education, political and intellectual freedom and sustainable development, in addition to aggressions by settlers and Israeli occupation forces. This has resulted in a high level of hopelessness and frustration, aggravated by poor social services, economic stagnation and significant political and social tensions. High school dropouts and scarce employment opportunities in East Jerusalem have driven Palestinian youth to the Israeli labour market as a non-professional workforce. The Minister called on the international community to support Palestinian youth, who have proven to be agents of positive transformation, and to save the two-State solution, by shouldering its responsibilities to implement the relevant UN resolutions and to overcome the state of chronic impotence towards the Palestinian cause and Jerusalem. The Minister also called for the empowerment of young Palestinian women and girls for their engagement in the socio-economic and political sphere, which is vital for Palestine’s social fabrics and economic growth.

Following the opening, three panellists highlighted the lived reality of young Palestinians in East Jerusalem under Israeli occupation and discussed ways to support Palestinian youth-based civil society organizations while they grapple with Israeli occupation. Their core messages focused on the plight and hardship suffered by Palestinian youth in East Jerusalem under Israeli occupation and how they represent, along with solidarity movements, particularly in the US, important positive factors of change. Their actions and calls for solidarity as well as their struggles for peace and self-determination have contributed to make the question of Palestine a global one .

**Ms. Natsheh** spoke of her lived reality as a born and raised young Jerusalemite. She indicated that the prolonged Israeli occupation interferes in all aspects of her daily life. She described Israel’s systematic discrimination against East Jerusalemite Palestinians in municipal services, residency rights, employment, health care and education, in addition to them being confronted with the daily provoking presence of Israeli forces and settlers all over the City. In particular, youth are at the forefront of the struggle against the occupation, in terms of arrests, detention, injuries and the denial of their basic human rights. Their life chances are remarkably limited by the lack of opportunities, poverty, and socio-economic hardship directly linked to the Israeli occupation and its associated policies. She insisted that the situation is exacerbated for Palestinian female in East Jerusalem with young women being affected by a double oppression from the occupation and a patriarchal culture.

Palestinian women and girls across the OPT find themselves living in the shadow of occupation as their life decisions are all constrained by the human rights crisis dominating their lives in the OPT. Indeed, occupation is disproportionately affecting Palestinian women, especially when Israeli violations such as house demolitions, extra judicial killing or arrest of the breadwinner in the family force them into poverty and maltreatment due to the financial pressure. Most importantly, Palestinian women are left to bear the constraints imposed by the Israeli discriminatory policies, leading to their low living standards and impoverishment aggravated by the restriction of movement imposed by the annexation wall, land zoning and planning and the poor delivery of basic services. Furthermore, girls' right to education has been compromised by the Israeli policies and practices, with a high level of dropouts and early marriages. She also highlighted the plight of Palestinian youth civil society, which lack space and resources and are constantly hindered in their action by the occupation. All of these are the direct result of Israel's systematic lack of accountability and failure to meet its obligations as an occupying power under international law and its pursuance of a clear policy of pressuring East Jerusalemites to force them out their City or ultimately to emigrate.

**Mr. Kurz**, representing a pro-Palestinian Israeli voice and focusing on Israeli practices in East Jerusalem, explained that the Oslo generation, also wrongly dubbed the "peace generation" for its high expectations of a new Middle East, witnessed the erection of military checkpoints and Jewish supremacist colonies in the midst of cities in the West Bank. He blamed the Israeli education system for preparing Israeli youth from an early age to consider Palestinians as "enemies". He stressed that his own experience with the Israeli military service was the actual eye-opener on the lived realities of Palestinian youth. He also criticized the Israeli government's censorship on topics such as the Nakba and annexation wall, which is instead called the Israeli security barrier. He regretted that the latter has caused massive unemployment among Palestinian youth by heading the Palestinian workforce off from the central business district in Jerusalem.

**Ms. Watson** introduced Sabeel as a Christian theological liberation centre in Jerusalem, which led to the establishment of Friends of Sabeel North America (FOSNA), in recognition that there is a standing morale obligation for US citizens to stand alongside the Palestinians facing oppression necessitated, to a large extent, by US complicity through its massive annual military aid to Israel. The release of the 2009 Kairos document from Palestinian Christians to Christians around the World contributed to strengthen the resolve of many US Christians to follow the call to take economic measures to help end the Israeli occupation. She explained the place of this conflict in the US society as the same actions defining Palestinian rights are the ones necessary to uphold democracy, personal safety, personal wellbeing in the United States and around the world. She further spoke of the similarities between the experiences of the lived realities of Palestinian youth in Jerusalem and those of minorities in the US, sighting as an example the calls of The Black Lives Matter movement. Grassroot networks dedicated to the work for justice in Palestine have emerged in dozens of Christian denominations in the United States and taken critical actions in response to Palestinian calls for solidarity. She mentioned the example of the Presbyterian Church USA, which in 2014, managed to vote to divest 21 million dollars from three corporations profiting off the Israeli occupation after three years of advocacy and education with their church body. Denominations have also strongly advocated for the rights of children and youth from the inhumane treatment and abuse of the Israeli military. As another example sighted by Ms. Watson was the Congress resolution conditioning military aid to Israel introduced last month and for which Christian groups have joined to sensitize on the need for Israel accountability. She nonetheless

warned against the use of Christian ideology on the question of Palestine and the status of Jerusalem, to propagate hate speech and messages.

**Ambassador Riyad Mansour**, the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations, reiterated the need for the international community to continue defending the global consensus on the two-State solution, with the end of occupation as the core requirement and based on international law, Security Council resolutions and Arab Peace Initiative. He referred to the postponement of Israel's annexation plans as a result of the steadfastness of the Palestinian people and the firmness of its leadership, and the global rejection of Israeli illegal annexation of parts of the OPT. Mr. Mansour restated the key messages about rejection of the annexation from the Security Council debate on the Middle East of 25 August 2020. On the issue of Israeli accountability, Mr Mansour noted that the observer status acquired by the State of Palestine is considered as an important step in joining the International Criminal Court (ICC), which announced a war crimes probe regarding the situation of Palestine and alleged crimes committed in the OPT. Mr Mansour further noted that the legislation of Security Council resolution 2334 and its operative paragraph 5 and the publication of the UN database of businesses in Israeli illegal settlements would allow for further practical steps to hold Israel accountable for its violations of international law. He called on the civil society partners to support advocacy efforts to bring accountability for these violations.

During the **Question and Answer** session, representatives of Egypt, Indonesia, Senegal, South Africa reiterated their countries' commitment to supporting a solution of the question of Palestine based on international law and relevant UN resolutions. The Committee Chair highlighted the continuing validity of the global consensus renewed every year by the members of the United Nations and the international community, despite of repeated attempts by others to deflate the Palestinian cause. Also, the Chair reminded about the commitments of UN bodies to the question of Palestine, including the efforts of the Human Rights Council on human rights investigations and the International Criminal Court which decided on the launch of an investigation into the situation in the OPT.

The ensuing discussion focused on the likely impact of an annexation on the lives of Palestinian youth and how it would further exacerbate the already dire socio-economic situation in the OPT. In response to a query on the validity of the two-State model and the role of youth in its realization, a representative of UNFPA stressed that the international community should also focus on the implementation of the rights of the Palestinian youth as a people, to focus on the challenges of meeting their daily needs and ensure their inclusion and participation in political dialogue and discussions around the two-State vs. the one-State solution. A speaker added that Palestinian self-determination should foremost continue to be defended.

In the face of all these difficulties stemming from the Israeli occupation, Minister Hidmi, in his closing remarks, indicated that the Palestinian government has laid down national strategies that include support for young Jerusalemites in various sectors of its society. He reminded the participants that despite of the gloomy picture drawn throughout the 2<sup>nd</sup> Jerusalem Conference discussion, the Palestinian people continue to inject new ideas and to think "outside the box" to overcome the limitations posed by occupation and the threats of annexation. . Some speakers called on the Member States to support, among other ideas, the Boycott, Disinvest and Sanction (BDS)

movement as part of their efforts to achieve Israel's accountability for its violations in the OPT as it was done during the South

Assistant Secretary-General Bakr closed the event.

*\*\*\*Note: This Summary attempts to provide an overall picture of the deliberations of the virtual Event. A [video](#) of the Event can be found on the [webpage](#) of the CEIRPP, <https://www.un.org/unispal/> as well as in its official [Facebook](#) page and [YouTube](#) account.*

*\*\*\*Note: The views and opinions expressed in this summary are those of the speakers and do not necessarily reflect the official position of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.*

## **VIII. UN SPOKESPERSON ADDRESSES DETERIORATING SITUATION IN GAZA**

*On 28 August, Stéphane Dujarric, Spokesman for the Secretary-General, [addressed questions](#) on the rising tension in Gaza, as replicated below.*

On the situation in Gaza, the Secretary-General's Special Envoy for the Middle East peace process, Nickolay Mladenov, tweeted today that the situation in and around Gaza is rapidly deteriorating.

He said that militants continue to launch projectiles and incendiary devices. The tightening of closures is making life inside the Strip unbearable, with electricity down to 3 hours a day and hospitals barely functioning.

Mr. Mladenov noted that, while the situation in Gaza gets worse, there is a rapid increase of COVID-19 cases. With a failing health system, no electricity, unemployment soaring, continuing militant activity and closures, he said that he is very concerned that escalation is imminent.

Mr. Mladenov stressed that the Palestinian militants must immediately stop the launching of projectiles and incendiary devices.

He also said that Israel must restore fuel deliveries for electricity. Under the current circumstances, no mediation efforts to prevent escalation and improve the situation can succeed in these circumstances.

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**IX. UN HUMANITARIAN COORDINATOR CALLS ON ISRAEL  
TO ALLOW ENTRY OF ESSENTIAL ITEMS,  
AND HAMAS TO END DESTABILIZING ACTIONS IN GAZA**

*On 31 August, Jamie McGoldrick, United Nations Humanitarian Coordinator and Resident Coordinator in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, issued the following [statement](#):*

The deterioration witnessed in recent weeks in the Gaza Strip is of grave concern. In the context of an escalation of hostilities with Palestinian armed groups launching projectiles into Israel, Israel has limited the transfer of certain goods into the blockaded coastal enclave, reduced the permissible fishing area and prevented fuel deliveries, including the UN-facilitated fuel for Gaza's sole Power Plant. As a result, the Gaza Power Plant ceased operations on 18 August, sharply reducing electricity provision to nearly 2 million Palestinians.

In addition, and marking a significant deterioration in the health situation, on 24 August, the first cases of COVID-19 outside the quarantine facilities were confirmed. Thus far, there are 280 known active cases, 243 of which are from community transmission.

At present, people have access to rolling electricity supply for a maximum of four hours per day, a difficult situation at any point, but especially serious given efforts to contain the outbreak of COVID-19. The situation is hindering the provision of services in the quarantine facilities and the capacity of the health system to cope with the increased demands, such as the ability to detect new COVID-19 cases. Power outages in hospitals are having serious repercussions, with patients in intensive care, chronic and emergency cases particularly vulnerable.

The reduction in electricity supply is also severely undermining other critical infrastructure, including the operations of all water wells, sewage pumping stations, wastewater treatment plants, and some desalination plants. The supply of clean water and wastewater treatment is impacted. There is now a high risk of sewage flooding populated areas, increased pollution into the Mediterranean Sea and along the coast, and further pollution to the aquifer.

The humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip is already dire, following 13 years of Israeli blockade and internal Palestinian political division, alongside recurrent hostilities. Swift action is required to alleviate the humanitarian situation, prevent further deterioration and increase respect for international humanitarian law and international human rights law.

In the context of this rapidly deteriorating humanitarian situation, I call on Israel to immediately allow the resumption of fuel into the Gaza Strip, in line with its obligations as an occupying power, to ensure that the basic needs of people are met and to prevent a collapse of basic services.

I call on the Hamas authorities to cease and prevent the launching of incendiary balloons, rockets and other actions that risk further destabilizing the situation.

All parties must show utmost restraint and act to protect civilians, with full respect for their dignity and human rights.