



# General Assembly Security Council

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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 9 November 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 write to once again draw attention to the critical situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, owing to the illegal policies and practices of Israel, the occupying Power, being perpetrated relentlessly and mercilessly against the Palestinian people.

As the world continues to grapple with the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and its vast short- and long-term effects, the Palestinian people have neither been spared nor been given a reprieve from Israel's oppression. On the contrary, the occupying Power has persisted with its attacks and violations with zero regard for international law or for the pandemic's severe impact on all, only worsening their plight. The escalation of these attacks and violations is clearly deliberate as Israel openly exploits the international community's immersion in the fight against the pandemic as a chance to further entrench its illegal 53-year occupation and colonial settlement regime.

Home demolitions, land appropriations, ethnic cleansing, arrests and detentions, and killings of civilians have not stopped. One might think that such policies would cease during a pandemic. However, judging by the historical record, one should not be surprised, as Israel has repeatedly demonstrated its complete disregard for international law, for the humanity of the Palestinian people and for the serious humanitarian impact of COVID-19. The failure to ensure accountability for such gross violations has only bolstered the Israeli Government's sense of impunity, allowing it to believe that it can continue to get away with its crimes even as a pandemic rages across the globe and highlights the many vulnerabilities of our human family and the need to uphold human rights in all circumstances.

On 25 October, a Palestinian boy died of his injuries after being beaten by Israeli occupying forces near Ramallah. Amer Abdul-Rahim Snobar, aged 18 years, was taken to a local hospital suffering from severe neck injuries sustained from the butts of the soldiers' rifles and died thereafter. As with most killings committed by Israeli



soldiers, we fear that the perpetrators of this murder will not be held accountable, perpetuating the sense of impunity and the degradation of Palestinian life. International humanitarian law places Israel under the legal obligation to provide for the welfare of the population living under its military occupation, and it is imperative that the international community remind Israel of its legal obligations and hold it to account.

Accountability is equally urgent with regard to Israel's illegal settlement regime and the violations committed by the hundreds of thousands of settlers whom it has illegally transferred to the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. Settler violence has sharply risen during the pandemic, harming Palestinian civilians, damaging properties and crops and hampering livelihoods, making this situation of occupation even more coercive and dangerous. As autumn marked the start of the olive harvest season in Palestine, fierce settler attacks have intensified, targeting communities whose well-being and sustenance are dependent on the harvest season. In this regard, we welcome the statement of 5 November by United Nations agencies and international non-governmental organizations in Occupied Palestine calling for the protection of Palestinian civilians from the violence, damage and theft being perpetrated by Israeli settlers and for Israel to abide by its international law obligations and to hold the perpetrators of these crimes accountable.

In recent weeks, settler attacks against Palestinian farmers have included burning fields, uprooting trees, stealing harvests, assaulting harvesters, including children, and vandalizing properties. All of this has been done under Israeli army protection. While millions of Palestinians are subject to the law of Israel's military rule, illegal settlers enjoy near-absolute impunity. Israel's desire to protect its illegal settlers under the pretext of security does not and should not justify its discriminatory, apartheid policies against Palestinians living under its occupation.

Equally rampant is Israel's proliferation of illegal settlements throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory in breach of international law and the Fourth Geneva Convention, as unequivocally reaffirmed in Security Council resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#). On the heels of its announcement of the construction of nearly 5,000 more settlement units, on 2 November Israel approved the destruction and confiscation of approximately 200 Palestinian businesses and buildings in occupied East Jerusalem as part of a plan to expand illegal settlement projects disguised as so-called "technology parks". The occupying Power has served dozens of eviction notices, indicating a deadline of 30 December to leave before the demolitions are carried out.

Such policies endanger the lives and livelihoods of many families who are now threatened with home demolition and forced displacement. Moreover, the advancement of such illegal policies will alter East Jerusalem's landscape and demographic composition through the inevitable transfer of Israeli settler populations and the appropriation of Palestinian land, resources, structures, assets and more, all in grave breach of the law and the rights of our people.

The occupying Power's policy of demolition of Palestinian homes and structures cannot be divorced from its ongoing attempts and plans to annex our land. Disregarding international law and the added sensitivity of the pandemic, Israel has intensified its inhumane practice of home demolitions and forced evictions, rendering hundreds more Palestinians homeless and violating countless human rights.

On 3 November, Israel demolished an entire community's residences in Khirbat Humsah, also known as Humsah al-Buqay'ah, leaving more than 70 people, among them 41 children, homeless and even more vulnerable in this time of pandemic. According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Israeli authorities demolished 76 structures, including homes, animal shelters, latrines and solar panels, making this the largest forced displacement operation in over four years,

adding to the thousands of properties destroyed and thousands of families displaced from their rightful homes.

Israel must immediately end its unlawful policy of demolitions and abide by its obligations as an occupying Power. The extensive destruction of property and forced transfer of protected people in an occupied territory are grave breaches of international law. Moreover, such cruel policies further impede the socioeconomic development of the Palestinian people, directly impacting their rights to shelter, health care, education, livelihoods, movement, safety and well-being. Although international condemnations have been issued, they will not be enough to stop Israel from continuing to carry out such inhumane policies. As long as accountability remains absent, Israel will persist with such demolitions and every other colonization measure, as its objective is clearly to devour more Palestinian land without Palestinian inhabitants. As the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs has reported, demolitions are a key means of creating an environment designed to coerce Palestinians to leave their homes.

It is time for the international community to act. This dangerous level of impunity by the Israeli Government is enabled by a lack of accountability. Israel's systematic violations are widely documented and reported, however, inaction has permitted the occupation to entrench itself, compounded by looming threats of annexation, ongoing settlement colonization, territorial expansion, ethnic cleansing and other heinous crimes, with a grave impact on the Palestinian people and the prospects for a just peace and security.

Israel's failure to comply with international law and relevant United Nations resolutions undermines the two-State solution on the 1967 lines, constitutes a threat to regional and international peace and security and goes against the core principles of the Charter of the United Nations. The international community cannot remain silent or indifferent in the face of these crimes. We therefore once again appeal for responsible and decisive action to be taken, including by the Security Council and the General Assembly, in order to align Israel's behaviour with international law and all relevant United Nations resolutions, including resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#).

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)* Riyadh **Mansour**  
Minister  
Permanent Observer