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

Security Council
Seventy-sixth year

Identical letters dated 12 May 2021 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

The situation in Occupied Palestine, including East Jerusalem, is becoming graver by the hour as Israel, the occupying Power, continues its onslaught, unleashing all means of lethal military aggression against the defenseless Palestinian civilian population. Israel is committing war crimes and crimes against humanity in broad daylight, causing widespread human carnage and suffering and directly threatening regional and international peace and security.

We reiterate our appeals to the international community to act to stop Israel's slaughter of innocent civilians, including children and women, to protect Al-Aqsa Mosque/Al-Haram Al-Sharif from attacks by the occupying Power and its extremist settlers, and to stop the systematic expulsion of Palestinian families from their homes and their being ethnically cleansed from their land.

The Security Council has a paramount duty to act to uphold its Charter mandate to maintain international peace and security and in respect of its own resolutions. We call on the Council yet again – joined by countries and people all over the world, as evidenced by the many statements and appeals issued – to rise to its responsibility to stop these violations and to save innocent lives.

Since my letter yesterday, I regret to inform you that the casualty toll of Israel's military aggression against the Gaza Strip has continued to rise. As of the writing of the present letter, 65 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli air strikes deliberately targeting civilian areas, in grave breach of international law. Among those killed by the Israeli occupying forces are 16 children and 5 women, and several of the casualties are members of the same family. There can be no justification whatsoever for such barbaric attacks on a civilian population and such blatant disregard for human life.

As the Security Council remains silent, Israeli war planes have already today launched over 40 air strikes, preceded by over 100 air strikes over the past two days, terrorizing the entire population. In addition to the dead, more than 330 Palestinians



have been injured in these airstrikes, overwhelming hospitals in Gaza, which have already been depleted by years of Israel's illegal blockade and the impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. Also, as systematically committed by Israel in its continued aggression against Gaza, homes, including multi-story buildings, have been destroyed, displacing dozens of families, and civilian infrastructure continues to be hit, including the central warehouse of the Palestine Red Crescent Society in Gaza.

The occupying army also continues its violence against Palestinians in occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of Occupied Palestine, attacking peaceful protesters and causing more civilian casualties. A 16-year-old boy was shot in the head and chest and killed in an Israeli raid on the village of Tubas, and a 26-year-old young man was killed by Israeli soldiers in Al-Fawwar refugee camp. Another young Palestinian was run over by an Israeli army jeep and suffered multiple injuries, and at least 192 Palestinians have been injured by occupying forces across the occupied West Bank today, including in occupied East Jerusalem.

At the same time, Israeli colonial settlers continue their terror rampages, attacking Palestinian civilians, including Palestine Red Crescent Society medical teams attempting to tend to the injured. Extremist settlers and occupying forces also persist with their provocations, racist and hateful incitement and violence against Palestinian civilians who continue to gather in the Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood of occupied East Jerusalem in peaceful protest of Israel's criminal policies and the plans to forcibly displace Palestinian families from their homes, in what would constitute a blatant war crime.

We recall once again that Israel is not sovereign in occupied East Jerusalem, regardless of its claims or any recognition unlawfully bestowed upon it by any other country. There is absolutely no legitimacy to these claims. It is an occupying Power in our land, has no sovereignty rights whatsoever and is bound by international law, including humanitarian and human rights law, in any and all actions taken there. This includes at Al-Aqsa Mosque/Al-Haram Al-Sharif. Israel must cease its violations of the sanctity of this holy site and respect the historic and legal status quo in word and deed and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan's custodianship. It must cease its obstruction of the right of Muslim worshippers to peacefully pray there and cease its incessant intimidation, harassment and attacks on worshippers.

All such attacks, provocations and incitement by Israeli government officials, military commanders and forces, and colonial settlers constitute breaches of international law, for which they must be held fully accountable. The international community, particularly the Security Council, must act with immediacy to demand that Israel cease its attacks against the Palestinian civilian population, including in the Gaza Strip, and cease all other illegal Israeli actions and measures in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, including a halt to plans to forcibly displace and ethnically cleanse Palestinians from the City.

Moreover, we call on the international community as a whole to fulfil collective obligations, including as High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention, to undertake measures to uphold international law, including measures to compel Israel, the occupying Power, to abide by its legal obligations and to ensure protection to the occupied population. It is high time for the international community to seriously pursue measures to hold Israel accountable for its grave breaches, including, inter alia, at the International Criminal Court. The singling-out of Israel for exemption from the same rules and norms that the rest of the world is obligated to abide by must stop. Innocent lives and the prospect for a just, peaceful, secure future for all are dependent on this.

The present letter is in follow-up to our 715 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 11 May 2021 (A/ES-10/861-S/2021/455) 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 circulated 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
