



DIVISION FOR
PALESTINIAN RIGHTS

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

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I. UN SPECIAL COORDINATOR CONCERNED BY SURGE IN TENSIONS AND VIOLENCE IN THE OCCUPIED WEST BANK, INCLUDING EAST JERUSALEM

On 6 May, Tor Wennesland, Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, issued the following [statement](#).

I am deeply concerned by the surge in tensions and violence in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, since the beginning of the holy month of Ramadan.

In the past few days alone, two Palestinians, including a woman and a child, were killed in separate incidents, by Israeli security forces (ISF) in the context of clashes or attacks. An Israeli was killed by a Palestinian in a drive-by shooting and several others injured. I reiterate that ISF must exercise maximum restraint and use lethal force only when strictly unavoidable in order to protect life. Perpetrators of violence on all sides must be held accountable and swiftly brought to justice.

The latest developments related to the eviction of Palestine refugee families in Sheikh Jarrah and other neighbourhoods in occupied East Jerusalem are also very worrying. I urge Israel to cease demolitions and evictions, in line with its obligations under international humanitarian law.

I call on political, religious and community leaders on all sides to stand firmly against violence, incitement and inflammatory rhetoric. If unaddressed, the situation could spiral out of control.

II. QUARTET ENVOYS ISSUE JOINT STATEMENT ON THE SITUATION IN EAST JERUSALEM

On 8 May, the Middle East Quartet issued the following joint [press statement](#).

The Envoys of the Middle East Quartet from the European Union, Russia, the United States, and the United Nations are closely monitoring the situation in East Jerusalem, including in the Old City and Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood.

The Envoys express deep concern over the daily clashes and violence in East Jerusalem, in particular last night's confrontations between Palestinians and Israeli security forces at Haram Al-Sharif/Temple Mount. We are alarmed by the provocative statements made by some political groups, as well as the launching of rockets and the resumption of incendiary balloons from Gaza towards Israel, and attacks on Palestinian farmland in the West Bank.

The Envoys noted with serious concern the possible evictions of Palestinian families from homes they have lived in for generations in Sheikh Jarrah and Silwan neighbourhoods in East Jerusalem and voice opposition to unilateral actions, which will only escalate the already tense environment.

We call upon Israeli authorities to exercise restraint and to avoid measures that would further escalate the situation during this period of Muslim Holy Days. We call on all sides to uphold and respect the status quo at the holy sites. All leaders have a responsibility to act against extremists and to speak out against all acts of violence and incitement. In this context, the Quartet Envoys reiterated their commitment to a negotiated two state solution.

III. UN SECRETARY-GENERAL CALLS ON ISRAELI AUTHORITIES TO EXERCISE MAXIMUM RESTRAINT OVER VIOLENCE IN EAST JERUSALEM

On 9 May, the Spokesperson for António Guterres, United Nations Secretary-General issued the following press release ([SG/SM/20718](#)).

The Secretary-General expresses his deep concern over the continuing violence in occupied East Jerusalem, as well as the possible evictions of Palestinian families from their homes in the Sheikh Jarrah and Silwan neighbourhoods. He urges Israel to cease demolitions and evictions, in line with its obligations under international humanitarian and international human rights law.

Israeli authorities must exercise maximum restraint and respect the right to freedom of peaceful assembly. All leaders have a responsibility to act against extremists and to speak out against all acts of violence and incitement. The Secretary-General urges that the status quo at the holy sites be upheld and respected.

The Secretary-General reiterates his commitment, including through the Middle East Quartet, to supporting Palestinians and Israelis to resolve the conflict on the basis of relevant United Nations resolutions, international law and bilateral agreements.

IV. PALESTINIAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE EXPRESSING CONCERN OVER VIOLENCE AT AL-AQSA MOSQUE, ESCALATION IN GAZA, CALLS FOR EFFORTS TO SALVAGE PROSPECTS FOR PEACE

On 10 May, the Bureau of the United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (Palestinian Rights Committee) issued the following statement ([GA/PAL/1437](#)).

The Bureau, on behalf of the United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, expresses its deep alarm at the dramatic deterioration of the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory that includes the escalation of violence and acts of provocation and incitement, particularly by Israeli extremists in occupied East Jerusalem.

The Committee is gravely concerned at the violence today at Al-Aqsa Mosque compound, where over 200 Palestinian worshippers have been injured by the Israeli forces, who fired rubber-coated bullets, stun grenades and tear gas at unarmed civilians. The Committee condemns such acts against worshippers and all acts of provocation, incitement and inflammatory rhetoric.

The Committee is further alarmed by Israel's escalation in the Gaza Strip today, where missile strikes are reported to have killed at least nine Palestinians, among them three children. There is no justification for the taking of innocent lives. All indiscriminate attacks against civilians must stop.

The Committee is gravely concerned at the prospects of further destabilization and calls for immediate efforts to de-escalate this dangerous situation with the aim of bringing a halt to the violence, protecting innocent civilians lives and restoring calm. The Security Council bears particular responsibilities in this regard. The Council must act immediately to uphold its

resolutions on the question of Palestine and fulfil its duties under the United Nations Charter. It cannot remain paralysed in this situation, which constitutes a threat to international peace and security.

The Committee also expresses its deep concern about the imminent evictions of Palestinian families from their homes in the Sheikh Jarrah and Silwan neighbourhoods of occupied East Jerusalem. In Sheikh Jarrah, 169 people, including 46 children, face the immediate threat of eviction from the homes in which they have lived for generations, and being rendered homeless. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has warned that these actions — which constitute flagrant violations of Israel’s obligations as the occupying Power under international law and could lead to a risk of forcible transfer — must cease.

Responsible collective action is urgent for de-escalation and ensuring the necessary accountability for the violations of international law, including humanitarian and human rights law, being perpetrated by Israel for far too long in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. In this regard, the Committee reiterates its calls for a halt to all illegal Israeli policies and practices, including all settlement activities, home demolitions, evictions and all other acts of collective punishment against the Palestinian civilian population.

The Committee echoes the clear call by the Secretary-General for “Israel to cease demolitions and evictions in line with its obligations under international humanitarian and international human rights law”, as well as his call for the status quo at the holy sites in Jerusalem to be upheld and respected. This must include respect for the historic and legal status quo at Al-Aqsa Mosque compound and respect for the sanctity of this holy site and for the right of Muslims to peacefully worship there free from threats, intimidation and violence.

The Committee calls on the Secretary-General to continue utilizing his good offices and mediation capacities, as well as on all parties with influence, to act with urgency to de-escalate this volatile situation. The Committee further urges the Security Council and the Middle East Quartet to revitalize the stalled peace process in view of resuming meaningful negotiations towards the achievement of a just peace.

The international community has an abiding responsibility towards the question of Palestine until it is resolved in all aspects, in accordance with international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions, and must act without delay to salvage the prospects for a just solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and lasting peace and security.

V. UN SPECIAL RAPPORTEURS DEPLORE BRUTAL ISRAELI POLICE RESPONSE TO PROTESTS, URGE EVICTION THREATS TO BE LIFTED

On 11 May, Michael Lynk, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian Territory occupied since 1967, and Balakrishnan Rajagopal, Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, and on the right to non-discrimination in this context, issued the following [press release](#).

UN human rights experts today expressed grave concerns about Israel's aggressive response to protests in East Jerusalem, and called on Israel, as the occupying power, to immediately lift its threat to evict hundreds of Palestinian households from their legally-protected homes.

“Re-establishing calm in Jerusalem is important, but creating the conditions for justice and equality in the City are even more important,” the experts said. “Neither short-term calm nor long-term peace will be accomplished as long as the national and individual rights of the City's Palestinian population are routinely abrogated.”

Hundreds of Palestinians, as well as some Israeli police officers, have been injured in clashes over recent days. The experts called on Israel to exercise full restraint in its policing of the demonstrations by Palestinians in Jerusalem, and to respect the freedoms of assembly, expression and religious worship.

“The recent scenes of Israeli police and security forces attacking large crowds of Palestinian residents and worshipers is only intensifying a deeply inflammatory atmosphere in the City. A militarized response to civilian protests against discriminatory practices only deepens social divisions. Respecting rights is the only path forward.”

The ongoing and threatened evictions of Palestinian families from their homes, primarily in the East Jerusalem neighbourhoods of Sheikh Jarrah and Silwan, are based on two Israeli laws: the Absentee Property Law of 1950 and the Legal and Administrative Matters Law of 1970. The 1950 law prohibits Palestinians from reclaiming their properties lost in the 1947-49 war, while the 1970 law allows Israeli Jews to re-claim properties lost during the same war. Evictions of Palestinian families under these laws have recurred many times over the years, raising deep concerns about impunity and lack of accountability.

“These laws are inherently discriminatory, both in intent and in application, and they violate fundamental principles of both international humanitarian law and international human rights law,” said the experts. “An occupying power is prohibited from confiscating private property belonging to the protected population, and it must respect the body of existing laws which had governed the territory, unless it is absolutely necessary to alter them.

“The forced transfer of the population under occupation is a grave breach of the Fourth Geneva Convention, which contribute to the coercive environment now prevailing in East Jerusalem. As well, these evictions breach the right to adequate housing – a core human right in international law.”

“The proper step for Israel to take is to remove the threat of eviction, have the property rights of these Palestinian families respected and legal regularized, and annul all discriminatory legislation from its laws.”

Israel occupied East Jerusalem, along with the West Bank and Gaza, in 1967. Within weeks of the June 1967 war, it annexed East Jerusalem and parts of the West Bank. Over the past five decades, it has built 13 settlements, housing more than 220,000 Jewish settlers, in East Jerusalem.

The United Nations Security Council has repeatedly condemned both the annexation and the settlements as null and void under international law, and has demanded that Israel rescind its illegal acts. UN human rights experts have demanded repeatedly over the years that Israel comply with its international obligations and stop evictions, demolitions and forced removal of Palestinians from their lands. Israel has regularly stated that it has no intention of complying with the direction of the international community.

“The immediate source of the current tensions in East Jerusalem are the actions of Israeli settler organizations, whose stated aim is to turn Palestinian neighbourhoods into Jewish neighbourhoods. This demographic engineering has been abetted by the Jerusalem municipality, whose urban master plans have explicitly set a goal of limiting the City’s Palestinian population at 30 percent. Establishing official population targets such as this reinforce entrenched patterns of ethnic domination, which have no place in the modern world.”

VI. UN HUMANITARIAN COORDINATOR ON THE ESCALATION OF VIOLENCE IN OPT AND ISRAEL

On 11 May, Lynn Hastings, Deputy United Nations Special Coordinator, Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, issued the following [statement](#).

The recent escalation has already seen children and other civilians killed and injured; it must stop to avoid more deaths and injuries.

The situation will likely increase humanitarian needs, in particular in the Gaza Strip, following years of the Israeli blockade, Palestinian political divisions and recurrent escalations. The health sector, already struggling, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, must be able to respond to those who are injured.

Movement of humanitarian personnel and the entry of goods to Gaza – including fuel – must be continuously allowed: without further provision, fuel for the Gaza Power Plant is due to run out this Saturday, causing significant reduction in electricity supply, again impacting the availability of health, water and sanitation services.

All parties have obligations under international humanitarian law; the principles of distinction, precaution and proportionality in the use of force must be adhered to. Airstrikes in densely populated areas risk violating these principles. Rockets are indiscriminate by nature and as such violate international law. Israeli security forces in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, must refrain from using force against those peacefully exercising their rights to freedoms of expression, religion, association and assembly.

The humanitarian community, including UN agencies and the NGO partners, are continuing to deliver assistance to those in need and counts on the full support of all parties to respond to emerging humanitarian needs. The protection of civilians is of paramount importance.

VII. UN SECRETARY-GENERAL CALLS FOR IMMEDIATE HALT TO FIGHTING IN ISRAEL, GAZA

On 14 May, the Spokesperson for António Guterres, United Nations Secretary-General issued the following statement on his behalf ([SG/SM/20725](#)).

The Secretary-General appeals to all parties to immediately cease the fighting in Gaza and Israel.

The ongoing military escalation has caused great suffering and destruction. It has claimed scores of civilian lives, including, tragically, many children. The fighting has the potential to unleash an uncontrollable security and humanitarian crisis and to further foster extremism, not only in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and Israel, but in the region as a whole.

The parties must allow for mediation efforts to intensify with a view to ending the fighting immediately. The United Nations is actively involved in such efforts, which are also crucial for delivering much-needed humanitarian aid to the affected people in Gaza.

The Secretary-General reiterates that only a sustainable political solution will lead to lasting peace. He reiterates his commitment, including through the Middle East Quartet, to supporting Palestinians and Israelis to resolve the conflict on the basis of relevant United Nations resolutions, international law and bilateral agreements.

VIII. LEAGUE OF ARAB STATES ADOPTS RESOLUTION ON ISRAELI ACTIONS IN JERUSALEM

On 14 May, the League of Arab States adopted Resolution 8660 on Israeli aggression against the occupied city of Jerusalem and its people, including the Al-Aqsa Mosque and the Shaykh Jarrah neighbourhood. The resolution contained in a letter ([S/2021/462](#)) to the United Nations Secretary-General is replicated below.

Israeli aggression against the occupied city of Jerusalem and its people, including the holy Aqsa Mosque and the Shaykh Jarrah neighbourhood

On Tuesday, 29 Ramadan A.H. 1442 (11 May A.D. 2021), the Council of the League of the Arab States at the ministerial level, chaired by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Qatar (current chair of the Council of the League at the ministerial level), convened an extraordinary session via videoconference at the request of the State of Palestine, which was supported by the States members. At that session, in which the Ministers for Foreign Affairs, the heads of delegation and the Secretary-General participated, members discussed Arab and international response to the brutal crimes and acts of aggression committed by Israel against the lives, holy sites and property of the Palestinian people in the occupied city of

Jerusalem, the capital of the State of Palestine, including the ongoing brutal Israeli aggression aimed at displacing Palestinians from their homes and property in the Shaykh Jarrah neighbourhood and other neighbourhoods in the city, as well as the barbaric attacks against worshippers at the blessed Aqsa Mosque.

- *Reaffirming* the centrality of the question of Palestine to the entire Arab nation, that occupied East Jerusalem, the capital of the State of Palestine, is an integral part of the Palestinian territory occupied in 1967, and its complete solidarity with the Palestinian people and strong support for their steadfastness in the occupied city of Jerusalem in response to systematic Israeli policies and practices aimed at Judaizing the city and distorting its Arab identity, displacing its Palestinian Arab population and changing the legal and historical status of the city and its Islamic and Christian holy sites, including the blessed Aqsa Mosque, the first of the two *qiblahs* and the third holiest mosque,

- *Reaffirming* all its resolutions concerning the question of Palestine and the Arab-Israeli conflict, including those adopted at the summit and ministerial levels at its ordinary and extraordinary sessions,

- *Calling* attention to the importance of the efforts that led to the convening of a Security Council meeting on 10 May 2021 to discuss Israeli aggression against Jerusalem and violations of the sanctity of the Aqsa Mosque, a meeting that was convened in response to the initiative of Tunisia, the Arab member of the Security Council, acting in coordination with the State of Palestine and with the support of China, the current Chair of the Security Council, and most member States, and *highlighting* the deliberations that took place at that meeting, in the course of which participants reiterated their commitment to the two-State solution on the basis of the relevant United Nations resolutions and international terms of reference,

Decides to:

1. *Salute, hail and pay tribute* to the heroic and freeborn Palestinian people of Jerusalem, who remain steadfast in the occupied city of Jerusalem, as they defend, unarmed, the blessed Aqsa Mosque and Arab, Islamic and Christian holy sites and property against the brutal and systematic crimes and acts of aggression committed by the occupying Israeli forces in the Holy City;

2. *Condemn* unreservedly the crimes perpetrated by the occupying Israeli forces against unarmed Muslim worshipers in the blessed Aqsa Mosque, which have escalated seriously over the past few weeks and days of the holy month of Ramadan, leading to the injury and arrest of hundreds of worshipers and culminating in the storming of the blessed Aqsa Mosque and the violation of its sanctity; *warn* that these attacks and crimes are considered a flagrant act of provocation by the faithful across the Islamic world, and that they threaten to ignite a cycle of violence that will jeopardize security and stability in the region and around the world; and *deplore* strongly the occupying authorities' attempts to undermine freedom of worship at Islamic and Christian holy places in the city of Jerusalem, including attacking defenceless Christian worshipers in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre as they performed their religious sacraments;

3. *Condemn* unreservedly the decisions and measures taken by Israel, the occupying Power, and its unjust judicial system, as well as the terrorist campaigns organized by Israeli settlers with the support of the occupying army and police, all of which are aimed at displacing the people of occupied Jerusalem, including the families of the Shaykh Jarrah neighbourhood and other areas of the city, as part of an ethnic cleansing campaign sponsored by the occupying Israeli Government that is designed to perpetuate the apartheid regime;

4. *Condemn* unreservedly the broad-scale aggression committed by the Israeli occupiers against the Palestinian people throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including, in particular, the savage and deliberate bombardment of and use of excessive force against civilians in the besieged Gaza Strip, as a result of which many children and innocent civilians have been killed and wounded; and *call upon* the international community to take urgent action at all levels, in order to put an end to the reckless disregard displayed by the Israeli occupiers for the lives of Palestinian civilians and to stop the current aggression and prevent its recurrence;

5. *Hold* Israel, the occupying Power, responsible for the consequences of those crimes and actions, which constitute flagrant violations of United Nations resolutions, international law and international humanitarian law; and *call upon* the United Nations and specialized international organizations, including the Security Council, to assume their legal, moral and humanitarian responsibilities, in order to end immediately the Israeli aggression, provide international protection for the Palestinian people and uphold their right to freedom of worship, and maintain security and peace in the region and throughout world;

6. *Urge* member States to take the necessary steps and measures at all levels, including by engaging in intensive diplomatic action, such as writing letters, reaching out to contacts and holding bilateral meetings, in order to protect the city of Jerusalem, defend its Islamic and Christian holy sites, and support the political, social, economic and humanitarian rights of its people;

7. *Establish* an Arab ministerial committee consisting of Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Palestine, Qatar, Egypt, Morocco, the presidency of the Arab summit (in its capacity), the Arab member of the Security Council (in its capacity) and the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States. This committee will reach out to the permanent members of the Security Council and other internationally influential countries and urge them to take practical measures aimed at halting illegal Israeli policies and measures in the occupied city of Jerusalem. The Committee will present a report on the outcome of its efforts at an extraordinary session of the Council of the League to be convened for that purpose;

8. *Call upon* the International Criminal Court to proceed with its criminal investigation into war crimes and crimes against humanity committed by Israel against the defenceless Palestinian people, including the displacement of Palestinians from their homes in the Shaykh Jarrah neighbourhood and other occupied Palestinian areas and neighbourhoods; and *urge* the Court to make available all the material and human resources needed for this investigation and to give the investigation due priority;

9. *Reaffirm* the importance of the historical Hashemite custodianship of Islamic and Christian holy sites in Jerusalem and the significant role that it plays in protecting those

sites, maintaining their historical and legal status, and their Arab Islamic and Christian identities; and *reiterate* that the Jerusalem Waqf and Aqsa Mosque Affairs Administration of Jordan is the sole authority entrusted with administering the affairs of the blessed Aqsa Mosque/Haram al-Sharif.

10. *Draw attention* to the significant role played by the Al-Quds Committee, which is chaired by Morocco, in defending the Holy City and supporting the resilience of the Palestinian people, as well as to the efforts of the Bayt Mal al-Quds Agency, an affiliate of the Al-Quds Committee;

11. *Instruct* the secretariat of the League to coordinate action with the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, in order to protect the occupied city of Jerusalem from the systematic policies and attacks of Israel;

12. *Call upon* the Arab Parliament to take immediate action, in concert with parliaments in influential countries, to achieve the objectives of the present resolution;

13. *Instruct* the missions of the League and the councils of Arab ambassadors to launch an intensive diplomatic effort to convey the substance of the present resolution to the capitals of influential countries around the world;

14. *Instruct* the Group of Arab States at the United Nations in New York to initiate consultations and consider various measures with the President of the Security Council and the President of the General Assembly, including possibility of the resuming the tenth Emergency Special Session of the General Assembly on illegal Israeli actions in occupied East Jerusalem and other occupied Palestinian territories; and *furthermore instruct* the Group of Arab States in Geneva and Paris to initiate consultations and consider various measures with the Human Rights Council and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, with a view to addressing and stopping the systematic attacks being committed by and the policies of Israel in the occupied city of Jerusalem;

15. *Remain actively seized* of matters relating to the hostile Israeli plans; and *request* the Secretary-General to monitor implementation of the present resolution and submit a report in that regard to the Council of the League at its next session.

IX. UN HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS ON BLOODSHED, INCITEMENT, VOLATILITY IN OPT AND ISRAEL

On 15 May, Michelle Bachelet, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights issued the following [press release](#).

UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet on Saturday called for strict respect for international law and appealed to all sides to take steps to de-escalate the increasingly alarming situation in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

“Over the past 10 days, the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and Israel has deteriorated at an alarming rate. The situation in Sheikh Jarrah in occupied East Jerusalem,

triggered by threats of forced evictions of Palestinian families; the heavy presence of Israeli Security Forces and violence around the al Aqsa mosque during Ramadan; the severe escalation of attacks from and on Gaza; and the shocking incitement to racial hatred and violence in Israel have all led to vicious attacks and mounting casualties in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and in Israel,” High Commissioner Bachelet said.

“Rather than seeking to calm tensions, inflammatory rhetoric from leaders on all sides appears to be seeking to excite tensions rather than to calm them. Once again, we are seeing lives lost and terrified people being forced to flee or hide in their homes, subjected to attacks that are being carried out by both sides in what may amount to serious violations of international humanitarian law.”

Bachelet warned that the firing of large numbers of indiscriminate rockets by Palestinian armed groups into Israel, including densely populated areas, in clear violation of international humanitarian law, amounts to war crimes. In Gaza, where there have been extensive Israeli airstrikes and shelling from land and sea into densely-populated areas, there are concerns that some attacks by the Israeli Defence Forces have targeted civilian objects that, under international humanitarian law, do not meet the requirements to be considered as military objectives. The failure to adhere to the principles of distinction, proportionality and precaution in the conduct of military operations amounts to a serious violation of international humanitarian law and may constitute war crimes.

“I urge both sides to ensure strict respect for their obligations under international law. Israel, as the occupying power, also has a duty to ensure unimpeded access to humanitarian assistance to the Gaza strip,” the High Commissioner said. “Those found to be responsible for violations must be held to account.”

The High Commissioner also called on the Israeli Government to take measures to stem the disturbing outbreak of violence between ultra-right wing groups, including Israeli settlers, and Palestinian citizens of Israel, in cities including Lod, Jaffa, Ramle and Haifa. Of particular concern is the apparent highly organised nature of some attacks as well as inflammatory language that may amount to incitement to racial and religious hatred and violence. Reports indicate that in some instances, settlers arrived in organized convoys from Israeli settlements in the West Bank to join local groups. Violent attacks have also been perpetrated by some Palestinian citizens of Israel. Mob violence has taken place in Bat-Yam, Jaffa and Acre this week, including attacks on places of worship and cultural heritage.

“I am particularly concerned at reports that Israeli police failed to intervene where Palestinian citizens of Israel were being violently attacked, and that social media is being used by ultra-right wing groups to rally people to bring ‘weapons, knives, clubs, knuckledusters’ to use against Palestinian citizens of Israel,” the High Commissioner said. There are also reports of excessive and discriminatory use of force by police against Palestinian citizens of Israel, hundreds of whom have been detained in relation to incidents of violence.

“I remind the Israeli Government of its duty to protect all its residents and citizens without discrimination based on notions of ‘nationhood’, religious or ethnic origin, and to ensure equal treatment before the law,” Bachelet said. “Political leaders must refrain from

any action that will inflame tensions, but must take action to prevent and address incitement to hatred and violence and ensure all citizens of Israel are fully and equally protected, including by taking preventive action.”

The High Commissioner said she was also deeply disturbed by the reported use of live ammunition by Israeli Security Forces in the context of protests and clashes in the West Bank, resulting in the death of 10 Palestinians on 14 May alone. Any use of force by the ISF in the West Bank must adhere to the Basic Principles on the use of force and firearms by law enforcement, which state in particular that firearms can only be used against individuals representing an imminent threat to life or of serious injury, and only as a matter of last resort. In a situation of occupation, the unjustified and illegal resort to firearms by law enforcement officials may constitute a war crime.

Bachelet called for independent, transparent and thorough investigations into all allegations of violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law.

“We know from recent history how such a grave situation can advance with utterly catastrophic consequences for thousands of civilians,” Bachelet said. “There can be no winner, no sustainable peace resulting from the furtherance of the cycle of violence. I urge all sides – and States with influence – to take immediate measures to ensure respect for international law, ease tensions, and work to resolve – rather than fan – the conflict.”

X. UN SECRETARY-GENERAL AND SPECIAL COORDINATOR BRIEF A HIGH-LEVEL SECURITY COUNCIL MEETING

On 16 May, António Guterres, United Nations Secretary-General, and Tor Wennesland, Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, made remarks at a meeting of the Security Council on the situation in the Middle East including the Palestinian question. The Secretary-General’s [remarks](#) are replicated below. Click [here](#) for a full press release of the meeting. Foreign Ministers of China, Egypt, Ireland, Jordan, Norway, State of Palestine, Russian Federation and Tunisia participated in the meeting.

I thank the Chinese presidency for organizing this open meeting.

We meet today amid the most serious escalation in Gaza and Israel in years.

The current hostilities are utterly appalling. This latest round of violence only perpetuates the cycles of death, destruction and despair, and pushes farther to the horizon any hopes of coexistence and peace.

Fighting must stop. It must stop immediately. Rockets and mortars on one side and aerial and artillery bombardments on the other must stop. I appeal to all parties to heed this call.

The United Nations is actively engaging all sides towards an immediate ceasefire.

The hostilities have already caused unconscionable death, immense suffering and damage to vital infrastructure. I am appalled by the increasingly large numbers of

Palestinian civilian casualties, including many women and children, from Israeli strikes in Gaza. I also deplore Israeli fatalities from rockets launched from Gaza.

I am also deeply concerned by violent clashes between Israeli security forces and Palestinians across the occupied West Bank, including east Jerusalem, where some Palestinian families are under threat of eviction.

In Israel, violence by vigilante-style groups and mobs has added a further horrendous dimension to an already deteriorating crisis. Leaders on all sides have a responsibility to curb inflammatory rhetoric and calm the rising tensions.

The fighting risks dragging Israelis and Palestinians into a spiral of violence with devastating consequences for both communities and for the entire region.

It has the potential to unleash an uncontrollable security and humanitarian crisis and to further foster extremism, not only in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and Israel, but in the region as a whole, potentially creating a new locus of dangerous instability.

The hostilities have forced thousands of Palestinians to leave their homes in Gaza and shelter in schools, mosques and other places with limited access to water, food, hygiene or health services. Hospitals are already overstretched due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Meanwhile, Israeli civilians live in fear of rockets launched from Gaza.

I am appalled by the attack on a refugee camp in Gaza, in which 10 members of one family were killed. Humanitarian installations must be protected.

Journalists must be allowed to work free of fear and harassment. The destruction of media offices in Gaza is extremely concerning.

This senseless cycle of bloodshed, terror and destruction must stop immediately.

All parties must respect international humanitarian law and international human rights law.

The status quo at the holy sites must be upheld and respected.

My Special Coordinator will brief you today on the latest developments on the ground and our efforts to de-escalate the situation.

Let me reiterate that the United Nations remains deeply committed to working with Israelis and Palestinians and with our international and regional partners, including the Middle East Quartet, to realize a lasting and just peace.

We are in contact with many relevant interlocutors and I again call on the parties to allow mediation efforts to intensify and succeed.

The only way forward is to return to negotiations with the goal of a two-States solution, with two States living side-by-side in peace, security and mutual recognition, with Jerusalem

as the capital of both states, based on relevant UN resolutions, international law and prior agreements.

The longer this cycle of violence continues, the more challenging it will be to reach that ultimate goal.

Only a negotiated sustainable political solution will end, once and for all, these devastating cycles of violence and lead to a peaceful future for Palestinians and Israelis alike.

I thank you.

XI. UN SPECIAL RAPPORTEURS URGE END TO VIOLENCE IN GAZA-ISRAEL ESCALATION

On 18 May, Michael Lynk, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian Territory occupied since 1967, Clément Voule, Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association, Morris Tidball-Binz, Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, Fionnuala Ní Aoláin, Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights while countering terrorism, and Koumbou Boly Barry, Special Rapporteur on the right to education, issued the following [press release](#).

UN human rights experts called on the international community to demand an immediate end to the violence in Gaza and Israel, and to act decisively to address the underlying source of the conflict: the denial of collective and individual rights of the Palestinian people.

“This most recent violence has a depressingly familiar pattern to it,” said the experts. “Israel and Palestinian armed groups in Gaza exchange missiles and rockets following dispossession and the denial of rights in the occupied Palestinian territory, with Israel’s far greater firepower inflicting far higher death tolls and injuries and a much larger scale of property destruction.”

As of Monday, at least 211 Palestinians in Gaza, including at least 59 children, have been killed, along with 10 Israelis, including two children. At least 10 Palestinians in the West Bank protesting the violence in Gaza have also been killed by Israeli security forces. Almost 40,000 Palestinians have been displaced from their home, sheltering in UN compounds.

“The firing by Israel of missiles and shells into heavily populated areas of Gaza – particularly with the rising civilian toll and property destruction – constitute indiscriminate and disproportionate attacks against civilians and civilian property. These attacks likely violate the laws of war and constitute a war crime,” the experts said.

“Similarly, the firing of rockets by Palestinian armed groups deliberately or recklessly into Israeli urban areas likely violate international law and may well amount to a war crime. Armed groups in Gaza should also be held to account in their failure to take adequate precautions to protect the civilian population and civilian objects under their control against the effects of attacks.

“Both sides must strictly adhere to their responsibilities under international law, especially that of proportionality and necessity. There is no justification, including counter-terrorism or self-defence, to justify a wholesale abdication for the obligations of Parties to strictly obey international humanitarian law. The actions of both Israel and the Palestinian armed groups should be a matter for the International Criminal Court to investigate.”

In particular, Israel’s duties as the occupying power require it to allow humanitarian aid – including food, fuel and medical supplies – to enter unhindered into Gaza, the experts said. New reports indicate that fuel supplies in Gaza are almost completely depleted.

The experts condemned the Israeli attack on a civilian apartment building which housed the offices of several international news agencies. “Violence or threatened violence against journalists, particularly those reporting in a conflict zone, breaches the freedom of expression and the right of the media to report unhindered,” they said.

Gaza has been under a comprehensive 14-year-old blockade by Israel. Recent Secretaries General of the United Nations have called this a form of collective punishment, a prohibited act under the Fourth Geneva Convention.

“The world should be deeply concerned about the deteriorating humanitarian conditions in Gaza,” said the human rights experts. “Most alarmingly, its health care system is flat on its back. It has been starved of equipment, medicines and trained staff. It is buckling under the ravages of the COVID-19 pandemic. And now, it is trying to treat the more than 2,000 Palestinians injured during this latest violence.”

The experts noted with deep regret that the international community has not acted with more unity and more success to bring an immediate end to the violence. In particular, the inability of the UN Security Council to even issue a statement after three meetings is an abdication of duty. They observed that the United States has failed to employ its special relationship with Israel, with whom it enjoys a close military and diplomatic alliance, to enforce an immediate ceasefire.

“The underlying reality is that there is an occupying power, with one of the best equipped militaries in the world, ruling over an occupied people who have the right to be freed from an unwanted and protracted alien regime,” they said. “This struggle is deeply unequal. The 54-year-old Israeli occupation – already the longest occupation in the modern world – is becoming even more entrenched and even more abusive of fundamental human rights.

“After the last missile of this current violence has been fired, and after the tears from the last funeral have been shed, accountability must rise to the top of the agenda of the United Nations. The international community must ensure that Israel, the occupying power, complies fully with the more than 30 UN Security Council resolutions and the hundreds of General Assembly resolutions of which it is in breach.

“The enemies of accountability are impunity and exceptionalism,” the experts said. “It is folly to expect that the justice, peace, equality and security which both Palestinian Arabs and Israeli Jews have a right to enjoy can be achieved without imposing a meaningful cost on Israel, the occupying power, to fully end its illegal occupation.

“A brand new diplomatic playbook is needed, which leaves behind realpolitik. A rights-based approach must guide the diplomacy of the international community to secure a just and durable solution.”

XII. UN UNDER-SECRETARY-GENERAL FOR HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS URGES END TO HOSTILITIES, HUMANITARIAN ACCESS

On 18 May, Mark Lowcock, United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator issued the following [statement](#).

The current escalation of hostilities has caused immense suffering. I abhor the violence that has killed and injured scores of children and other civilians and caused extensive damage to homes and vital infrastructure.

The hostilities must stop. I echo the Secretary-General’s calls for the parties to stop the aerial and artillery bombardments and the indiscriminate launching of rockets. These acts have brought nothing but death, destruction and widespread trauma throughout the Occupied Palestinian territory and Israel.

The parties must respect international humanitarian law, including the fundamental principles of distinction, proportionality and precaution. All parties must take constant care to spare civilians and civilian objects from harm.

In Gaza, I am deeply troubled by reports of high-frequency Israeli bombardments. There is no safe place in Gaza, where 2 million people have been forcibly isolated from the rest of the world, for over 13 years. The indiscriminate launching of rockets by armed groups towards populated areas in Israel is unacceptable and must end.

The hostilities have displaced over 58,000 Palestinians, many of whom are seeking refuge in UNRWA schools across Gaza. I am concerned about the transmission of COVID-19 between vulnerable people huddled in crowded shelters and the inability of the health-care system to cope.

Damage to vital infrastructure and insufficient fuel supplies have affected water, sanitation and hygiene services for hundreds of thousands of people. Electrical power shortages, and the damage to the Gaza Ministry of Health Central Laboratory, hinder healthcare provision at dozens of centres throughout Gaza.

In order to respond to needs at the scale required, two critical issues must be addressed. First, we need adequate funding to enable a speedy response. The Humanitarian Coordinator, Lynn Hastings, hopes to release some US\$14 million from the OPT Humanitarian Fund. I call upon donors to accelerate their contributions to the Fund without delay. This is for immediate needs; the Secretary-General and I will be launching a fuller appeal shortly.

Second, access is paramount. Without this, the humanitarian community is unable to respond to the extent needed. The crossings with Gaza need to be opened and to remain as

such for the entrance of essential and humanitarian supplies, including fuel for basic services and supplies to curb the spread of COVID-19. Opening the crossings will also ensure the exit of patients who need life-saving treatment and the entry of special surgical emergency teams to tend to the wounded.

I recognize the efforts undertaken today to open Kerem Shalom crossing, allowing UNRWA fuel trucks to enter Gaza. Regrettably, other essential humanitarian cargo was unable to cross. I call for the sustainable opening of Kerem Shalom crossing for the entry of emergency essential and humanitarian supplies including fuel and the opening of Erez crossing to allow the evacuation of non-essential international staff and the entry of critical international humanitarian staff. I call upon all parties to allow and facilitate rapid and unimpeded passage of humanitarian relief for civilians in need.

I call on all parties to the hostilities to agree to a humanitarian pause to allow for emergency humanitarian relief distribution and for civilians to purchase food and water, seek medical care and attend to other emergency needs.

XIII. PALESTINIAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE CONVENES UN FORUM OF PARLIAMENTARIANS

On 18 May, the Palestinian Rights Committee convened a United Nations Forum on “International Parliamentarian Support to the Question of Palestine”. The [chair’s summary](#) is reproduced below.

The virtual United Nations Forum “**International Parliamentarian Support to the Question of Palestine**” took place on 18 May 2021, under the auspices of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (CEIRPP). The event was chaired by H.E. Ambassador Cheikh Niang, Chair of the Committee and Permanent Representative of Senegal to the UN, and moderated by Mr. Pedro Roque, Vice-President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean (PAM) and Member of the Parliament of Portugal.

The Forum consisted of an opening session – with remarks by H.E. Ambassador Cheikh Niang, H.E. Minister Riyad Mansour, Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine, and Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo, Under-Secretary-General of the Department for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs of the UN Secretariat – and two discussion panels. The first panel, on “Parliaments, Security Council Resolution 2334 (2016), and Israeli Settlements: Calls for Accountability”, consisted of Mr. Francisco Chahuán, Senator of Chile; Ms. Julie Elliott, Member of Parliament of the United Kingdom; and Mr. Hubert Julien-Laferrière, Member of the French National Assembly. The second panel, on “Parliamentarians and Support for Efforts to Achieve a Just Solution” comprised Mr. Alexandre Boulerice, Member of Parliament of Canada, and Mr. Solomon Lechesa Tsenoli, Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly of South Africa. The Forum, which was open to all Member States via the Interprefy platform with remote interpretation into five official UN languages, was livestreamed on UNTV and UN social media channels and registered more than 20,000 viewers that day.

In his introductory remarks, **the Chair** welcomed the participants and reiterated that the Committee mandate was to promote a just and peaceful settlement to the Israeli-Palestinian

conflict, an end to the Israeli occupation and to support the realization of the two-State solution and exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people including self-determination, sovereignty and right to return. He gave examples of the successful work of parliamentarians to advocate for the same, including recent letters from European members of parliament to call for their governments to impose sanctions on Israel over its annexation policy and to put pressure on Israel to stop the eviction of Palestinian families from their homes in East Jerusalem. The Chair also referred to the recent resolution approved by the Chilean Senate, calling on the President to adopt a law banning the import of settlement goods into the country, as well as to the support provided by South African parliamentarians to Palestinian solidarity movements and civil society groups in their advocacy at the UN Human Rights Council, among other bodies. He reiterated the commitment of the Committee to continue working with a variety of partners, and especially parliamentarians because of the important legislative and diplomatic work that they contribute on the question of Palestine. The Committee was deeply alarmed by the dramatic deterioration of the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT) and Israel's military actions in the Gaza Strip and reiterated the Committee's call for de-escalation.

Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo voiced her concern over the clashes and violence in occupied East Jerusalem as well as the launching of rockets from the Gaza Strip towards Israel, followed by Israeli airstrikes on Gaza – all of which had dramatically deteriorated an already fragile situation. These escalations were a tragic reminder of the urgency of a viable political path towards ending this conflict once and for all. She warned that the ongoing hostilities were also taking place against the backdrop of rising tensions and violence in occupied East Jerusalem, where hundreds of Palestinian residents of Sheikh Jarrah and Silwan neighbourhoods were under threat of eviction from their homes. The UN had been actively involved in mediation efforts with all sides with a view to ending the violence immediately. Echoing the Secretary-General's call on the parties to allow for the intensification of mediation efforts, which would be crucial for delivering the humanitarian assistance to the affected people in Gaza, she also called on the international community to do all it can to de-escalate the situation immediately, urge the parties to end the hostilities and chart a path toward negotiations.

Ms. DiCarlo expressed her hope that the Forum would create a shared understanding of the urgency to act resolutely on the question of Palestine. She underlined that parliamentarians could play a crucial role in reinforcing the global consensus on the two-State solution, in accordance with international law, relevant UN resolutions and bilateral agreements, based on the 1967 lines with Jerusalem as the capital of both states.

Minister Riyad Mansour highlighted tragic circumstances under which the event was taking place, with the Palestinian people facing Israeli aggression on both sides of the 1967 lines, and particularly in East Jerusalem and in the Gaza Strip. The violence had so far resulted in 213 deaths in the Gaza Strip, including 61 children, 36 women and 16 elderly, and close to 15,000 wounded, and with 7,000 buildings damaged or completely destroyed. He strongly criticised the Security Council for meeting several times and, despite the near-consensus on the need for a ceasefire, failing to speak with one voice and issue a single official document on the matter. He called on the international community, and especially parliamentarians, to help put an immediate stop to the aggression by putting pressure on their governments. He called on the Secretary-General to issue emergency assistance for the displaced Palestinians, highlighting the protection role of the United Nations Relief Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).

Voicing alarm about the number of deaths and pointing to the evictions pending in the Sheikh Jarrah and Silwan neighbourhoods of Jerusalem, he called on the International Criminal Court (ICC) to begin investigating Israeli war crimes. He warned that those who were fixated on Israel's "right to defend itself" should remember that Palestinians lived under a system of "apartheid and discrimination". Anything short of an end to the occupation would only be a preparation for the next cycle of violence. Israel could not continue to be treated as "above the law" as there had to be accountability for its crimes as an occupying Power. It remained the responsibility of the international community, and individual Member States, to end the occupation and support the establishment of a Palestinian state, beyond mere words and statements.

Mr. Pedro Roque said that the event came at a critical time and that the status quo of the Palestinian question was unacceptable as demonstrated once again by the recent surge in violence and military confrontation in the Middle East. He also warned that, in the absence of a permanent solution, the situation would continue to result in violence, anger, civilian suffering and violations of the rights of people to live in peace, security and dignity. He lauded the initiative of the Committee to turn to parliamentarians to mobilize the political momentum for respect of international law and the urgent need to resume efforts to reach a two-State solution, as parliamentary diplomacy remained a flexible and powerful tool that allowed for a constructive dialogue.

Ms. Julie Elliott underlined that the current situation in the OPT and Israel was a war between unequal parties, with civilians killed on both sides of the divide, yet overwhelmingly so on the Palestinian one, which was already disproportionately suffering under the Corona-19 pandemic. She spoke of recent issues related to the OPT that continued to emerge in the UK Parliament over the past year, including the importance to end a "creeping annexation through the back door" instead of advocating for a ceasefire and returning to the status quo. She underlined how annexation was increasingly making the two-State solution – "a solution we all want" – impossible to achieve. While a ceasefire would remain welcome, she invited Member States to address the underlying causes of the present situation in the region. As an example, she called on the UK to support the call for an investigation and prosecution by the International Criminal Court (ICC) of Israeli violations and human rights abuses including the freedom of assembly and worship in Al-Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem.

The firing of rockets by Hamas and other militant groups into civilian areas would also have to cease as it constituted a war crime, she insisted, and Israel was only to take actions in the Gaza Strip in full compliance with international law. She informed of the UK All-Party group's pressure on the government to end all arms sales that could be used for the subjugation of the Palestinian people in Israel and the OPT. She called on all parties to facilitate humanitarian assistance to the residents of Gaza as their humanitarian needs needed to be met, and on the international community to put pressure on governments to seize this moment to reach real peace in the region and strike a two-State solution as the only viable end to the conflict. She appealed for the end of the blockade on Gaza, support to UNRWA for its exceptional work in difficult circumstances and the holding of free and fair Palestinian elections throughout the OPT, including East Jerusalem.

Mr. Francisco Chahuán highlighted the need of a multilateral approach to solve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in accordance with the UN Charter. Recalling the main UN resolutions describing Israeli settlements as illegal, he said Israel had violated the latter and continued to

invoke the “law of the jungle” through the transfer of Israeli civilians into the occupied territory or the forced transfer of Palestinians out of it. He highlighted the economic effects of the occupation, which deprived Palestinians from benefiting from resource-rich areas, such as the Jordan Valley and the Dead Sea. Today, 10,000 Israeli settlers in the Jordan Valley consumed a third of the water of the 2.3 million Palestinians in the West Bank. Political prisoners were held under administrative detention without charges or any guarantee of due process, while many other civilians, including child detainees, were tried by Israeli military tribunals in infringement of basic human rights and key covenants. He associated the Separation Wall, which Israel built in 2002 and which was deemed illegal in an Advisory Opinion by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in 2004, to an “apartheid system” since the wall separated Palestinian families and cities, crossed villages and infringed on the freedom of movement.

Mr. Chahuán proposed recommendations for Member States that wished to stand in solidarity with Palestine, such as the establishment of a commission of inquiry to investigate the systematic oppression based on the domination of one racial group over another in the OPT and grave crimes of apartheid and persecution, and of a UN committee to follow-up on the commission’s investigations and identify measures to prosecute the perpetrators. He also called on Member States to revise trade treaties with Israel to ban once and for all the importation of products made in Israeli settlements and any tax benefits to companies and businesses involved in the settlements, and to take concrete measures against the discrimination of citizens that are not posing any security threat, including those of Palestinian origin, when they visit the OPT.

Mr. Hubert Julien-Laferrrière informed that a large majority in the French parliament supported the two-State solution with Jerusalem as the capital of both States and the recognition of the State of Palestine – a position which had yet to be taken up by the government. As Chair of the parliamentary group for France-Palestine friendship he reported on numerous initiatives such as the mobilization of 115 parliamentarians to call on the French government to oppose the annexation of the Jordan Valley, after an Israeli government announcement to the effect in May 2020. He had also coordinated an initiative against the Abraham Accords, because they did not include any elements to facilitate the creation of a Palestinian state. He stated that while France officially supported the two-State solution, it was “soft” on sanctions and a boycott of settlement products. He recalled the decision by the European Court of Justice (ECJ) that it was legal to label settlement products and lamented the inconsistency in the application of this decision, which deserved more sustained political pressure. Finally, he called on parliamentarians to continue mobilizing at national and regional levels to establish common grounds and prospects on issues related to the question of Palestine, as resolutions adopted by consensus at bodies such as the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) would prove helpful to the Palestinians.

Mr. Solomon Lechesa Tsenoli said the current violence in the OPT reminded South Africans of what apartheid had done to them. He called on Israelis to join in greater numbers the world’s disquiet and to object to “unsustainable violent and hegemonic imposition of all kinds” on the Palestinian people. He regretted that this continued to be the legacy of the provocative approach by the previous US administration. He recalled former President Nelson Mandela’s and his grandson’s commitment to the Palestinian cause, repeating the stance that “Our freedom in South Africa is dependent on the freedom of Palestinians.” As Israeli violations of international law and UN resolutions were unacceptable, he fully supported his government’s efforts in all multilateral bodies to pursue peace for the Middle East. In the name of his parliament, he reiterated its solidarity

with the Palestinian people and their right to self-determination and the full support for the establishment of a Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital. The situation on the ground could not be allowed to remain unchanged as it represented an impediment to the security, peace, stability and development of the broader Middle East.

Mr. Lechesa Tsenoli underlined the position of South Africa on ending the Israeli occupation, which would be in the interest of both Israel and Palestine and called on both parties to take concrete steps to that end. The outstanding final status issues would need to be resolved through negotiations between them with support from the international community and South Africa through international platforms and through engagement to resume the peace process for a lasting and just settlement of the Palestinian question. He stressed that any peace plan should not allow for the Palestinian State to become an entity devoid of territorial contiguity and economic viability. Solidarity from world parliaments and civil society would contribute significantly to prospects of peace.

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice said that the essential work in solidarity with the Palestinian people in the Canadian parliament was carried by the group of Palestine-Canada friends, of which he had been a member for many years. He had in 2018 accompanied a delegation of parliamentarians to the West Bank to meet Palestinian senior elected officials, humanitarian organizations and NGOs. The delegation saw the impact of the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territory and discrimination taking place on a daily basis for thousands of people, including how Palestinian olive groves and villages were disappearing because of the expansion of illegal settlements. The delegation also visited refugee camps that were practically towns since they were established in 1948, and had an “unsettling” visit to Hebron, where the settlements were protected by the Israeli soldiers. The parliamentarians then sent a report of the visit to the Prime Minister through the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

While the official position of Canada on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was principled, the refusal of the government to stand by it remained an issue, as the government was unwilling to apply pressure on Israel beyond a few words in press statements. In that context, he outlined his party’s recent demand to the House of Commons to put an end to Canadian support to Israel as long as the latter continued to violate international law and the rights of the Palestinians.

During the **Question and Answer** session, a representative of **Cuba** underlined that the event was taking place in an uncertain escalation of violence and Israel’s disproportionate use of force in the West Bank and East Jerusalem against its population. He informed that the Cuban parliament, through its Foreign Affairs Commission, had issued a declaration to express its strongest condemnation of the bombings of Palestinian people in Gaza, resulting in the deaths of hundreds of civilians including children, many more wounded and extensive material damage, and to demand an immediate cessation of the aggression by the Israeli military and of the country’s expansionist and colonialist policies. It had further denounced the continued support of the US government for crimes committed against the Palestinian civilian population and had called parliamentarians around the world to act decisively and force Israel to put an end to these crimes and to respect the UN Charter, international law and relevant Security Council resolutions. The representative of **Indonesia** called on the Committee to urge the immediate cessation of violence, respect of international law, facilitation of emergency humanitarian assistance and a push for the relaunch of negotiations for the realization of the two-State solution in line with agreed parameters.

He called on parliamentarians to work hand in hand with their governments on the question of Palestine and continue to raise awareness and put the necessary pressure on the relevant parties to reach a just settlement.

In the ensuing discussion, Mr. Boulerice expressed that he was ashamed to see his Government being so cautious with regards to condemning Israeli violations, given that historically Canada had shown leadership when it came to the situation in South Africa. The tragedy that was unfolding right now in Gaza before everyone's eyes should incite the international community to demand accountability. Mr. Julien-Laferrière said that the history of Israel's creation and the right of existence of the State of Israel made it difficult to impose sanctions against it, despite its breach of international laws. Ms. Elliot said that while the situation in Israel and the OPT was not identical to what had happened in South Africa, in the former areas there were rampant inequalities between children born within a half mile of each other, depending on whether they are Israeli or Palestinian, and governments around the world needed to take actions the way they did for South Africa.

Ambassador Cheikh Niang closed the event.

XIV. CHAIR OF THE PALESTINIAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE INTERVENES AT SESSION OF UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY TO ADDRESS DEVELOPMENTS IN OPT INCLUDING EAST JERUSALEM

On 20 May, Ambassador Cheikh Niang, Chair of the Palestinian Rights Committee delivered the following [remarks](#). António Guterres, United Nations Secretary-General also made the following remarks ([SG/SM/20732](#)) at the General Assembly meeting convened at the request of Niger and Algeria, in their capacities as chairs of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and the Arab Group, respectively, under agenda item "Question of Palestine". The full press release of the meeting can be found [here](#).

Allow me, at the outset, to express, on behalf of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, our appreciation to you, Mr. President, as well as to the Chairs of the OIC and the Arab Group and the Non-Aligned Movement, for mobilizing to convene an urgent plenary meeting on the question of Palestine in light of the quickly deteriorating situation in Palestine and in Israel.

The past week has seen the most severe and deadly escalation of violence since 2014, already claiming many innocent civilian lives, wounding thousands, and traumatizing millions. We have all been witness to the daily worsening of the already dire and volatile situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. This has been caused by the rise in tensions due to the ongoing threats of forced displacement and dispossession of Palestinians in East Jerusalem and the rest of the West Bank, the violent raids by Israeli forces on the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound in East Jerusalem, in which hundreds of Palestinian worshippers were injured, and also the violent clashes between Israeli forces and extremists settlers with Palestinians.

This was followed by an outbreak of fighting with the launching of rockets by Palestinian armed groups from Gaza towards Israel, and the disproportionate massive bombing by Israel's armed forces against Gaza, a deadly cycle of violence that we have witnessed too many times.

Today, we welcome the news of a ceasefire. At the same time, the recent escalation has caused great number of casualties, suffering and destruction. Based on current information, the fighting has tragically claimed the lives of many civilians, including women, children, and infants – with at least 245 Palestinians in Gaza, including at least 68 children and 37 women, killed by Israel airstrikes on civilian areas, with entire families being killed in some attacks, along with 12 persons killed in Israel, including two children, 1 Indian and 2 Thai nationals, by Palestinian militants' rockets.

Israeli forces have used excessive and lethal force against Palestinian civilians in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, where, since 7 May, 25 Palestinians have been killed, including children, and communal violence in Israel also continue to increase, with hateful, racist attacks being perpetrated daily and excessive force being used by Israeli police against Palestinian citizens, at least 800 of whom have been detained.

The Committee concurs with the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Tor Wennesland, that the toll of this deadly confrontation has been too high and the consequences for Palestinians and Israelis, as well for the region could be dangerous. The humanitarian situation in Gaza is becoming more dire by the day, aggravated by the 14-year blockade, intra-Palestinian divisions, recurring hostilities, and the Covid-19 pandemic. The hostilities have displaced over 58,000 Palestinians, who are by and large refugees from previous conflicts. Many of the newly displaced are seeking refuge in UNRWA schools across Gaza, having limited access to water and no access to health care or food or other basic human necessities. The damage to infrastructure is daunting, and the international community's capacity to support yet another Gaza rebuilding effort is limited by the current economic climate.

The Committee reiterated the Secretary-General's appeal for an immediately halt in hostilities and welcomes the ceasefire agreed by Israel and Palestine. The Committee hopes that the ceasefire will allow for delivery of much needed medical and humanitarian aid to the affected people in Gaza. We urge support for UNRWA and the other UN agencies valiantly providing assistance to the Palestinian people, including in this time of emergency.

In terms of accountability, the Committee reminds that indiscriminate, deliberate attacks on civilians and civilian areas constitute war crimes.

The parties who fail to respect international humanitarian law – including the fundamental principles of distinction, proportionality, and precaution – must be held accountable. The Committee commends Egypt's efforts with the parties to agree to a ceasefire. However, this is just a first step to stop the suffering on both sides. Concrete and immediate action must be taken to revive the stalled peace process to achieve the just solution that has eluded us for so long.

The Committee calls on Israel, the occupying Power, and the international community to ensure that the rights of the Palestinian people are respected and upheld, including the inalienable rights to security and to live in freedom and dignity in an independent and sovereign State. To this end, the Committee calls for Member States who have not yet done so, to urgently consider recognition of the State of Palestine as one way to advance towards the just and fair two-State solution of this long-standing conflict.

There is also an urgent need to act decisively to address the underlying root causes of the conflict: the prolonged Israeli occupation and the denial of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

The cycles of Israeli-Palestinian violence can only stop with a just political resolution of the conflict addressing all final status issues including Jerusalem and the plight of the Palestine refugees, with an end to the occupation, and the realization of a two-State solution on the basis of the pre-1967 lines, in accordance with UN resolutions, international law, and mutual agreements.

The Committee will continue to advocate for the rights of the Palestinian people, engage representatives of both sides of the divide, Palestinians and Israelis alike, and strengthen efforts to return and advance the realization of a just, lasting and comprehensive solution to this tragedy that has gone on for far too long.

I thank you.

XV. UN SECRETARY-GENERAL'S REMARKS FOLLOWING CEASEFIRE ANNOUNCEMENT BETWEEN GAZA AND ISRAEL

On 20 May, António Guterres, United Nations Secretary-General made the following [remarks](#) at a press stakeout.

I welcome the ceasefire between Gaza and Israel, after 11 days of deadly hostilities. I extend my deepest condolences to the victims of the violence and their loved ones.

I commend Egypt and Qatar for the efforts carried out, in close coordination with the UN, to help restore calm to Gaza and Israel. I call on all sides to observe the ceasefire.

I appeal to the international community to work with the United Nations on developing an integrated, robust package of support for a swift, sustainable reconstruction and recovery that supports the Palestinian people and strengthens their institutions. I stress that Israeli and Palestinian leaders have a responsibility beyond the restoration of calm to start a serious dialogue to address the root causes of the conflict. Gaza is an integral part of the future Palestinian state and no effort should be spared to bring about real national reconciliation that ends the division. I underscore the United Nations' deep commitment to working with Israelis and Palestinians, and with our international and regional partners, including through the Middle East Quartet, to return to the path of meaningful negotiations to end the occupation and allow for the realization of a two-State solution on the basis of the 1967 lines, UN resolutions, international law and mutual agreements.

XVI. UN SPECIAL RAPPORTEURS WELCOME CEASEFIRE, CALL FOR ICC PROBE

On 21 May, Balakrishnan Rajagopal, Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, and on the right to non-discrimination in this context; Michael Lynk, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian Territory occupied since 1967; Pedro Arrojo Agudo, Special Rapporteur on the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation; Koumbou Boly Barry, Special Rapporteur on the right to education; Michael Fakhri, Special Rapporteur on the right to food; Cecilia Jimenez-Damary, Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons; Irene Khan, Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression; Fionnuala Ní Aoláin, Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights while countering terrorism; and Morris Tidball-Binz, Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, issued the following [press release](#).

UN human rights experts today called on all parties to the conflict in Gaza and Israel to respect a ceasefire, and for an investigation by the International Criminal Court into the attacks on civilian populations and other gross violations of human rights.

The experts pointed to the forced evictions of Palestinian families living in Sheikh Jarrah and Silwan in Occupied East Jerusalem as the spark that set off a full-blown war. At least 222 people, including 63 children, were killed in Gaza and 12 people died in Israel as a result of the fighting. More than 450 buildings in the Gaza Strip were completely destroyed or damaged by missiles. Among them were six hospitals, nine healthcare centres and a water desalination plant, supplying around 250,000 Palestinians with clean drinking water, as well as a tower housing media offices such as Al Jazeera and Associated Press.

“Owing to the vast asymmetry of power, the victims of this conflict are disproportionately Palestinians in Gaza, of whom over 74,000 have been forcibly displaced and made homeless, mostly women and children,” the experts said.

“The conflict has led to a new wave of unprecedented mass destruction of civilian homes and infrastructure, including electrical grids in Gaza, and indiscriminate or deliberate missile attacks on civilians and residential areas in Israel and Gaza, that violate not only international human rights standards, but amount as well to crimes under international law for which there is individual and State responsibility.

“The indiscriminate or deliberate bombardment of civilians and towers housing civilians, media organizations and refugee camps in Gaza and Israel are war crimes that are, prima facie, not justified by the requirements of proportionality and necessity under international law. All parties who engage in such attacks must bear individual and State responsibility as appropriate.

“We urge Israel and the authorities in Gaza to restore electrical, fuel, water and food supply to Gaza, and to ensure that humanitarian aid assistance can enter into the Gaza Strip. There is an immediate need to offer emergency housing and restore homes that have been destroyed or rendered unusable.

“We call on all States, especially those who support Israel or the Palestinian authorities materially, to cease the export of all military weapons that fuel this conflict and condition all other assistance on compliance with human rights and humanitarian law.

“We urge all sides to commit to a credible process of negotiation that will aim for a durable peace in the framework of international law and human rights, end the occupation of Palestinian territories, forced evictions and housing demolitions, arbitrary displacement and unlawful transfer of population, and the construction of illegal settlements in the occupied territories.

“We also call on them to address discrimination and segregation experienced by residents in the occupied territories as well as by many Palestinian citizens within Israel, including in education, housing, the freedom of movement and choice of place of residence and other domains.”

The experts urged the ICC to investigate acts by all parties which violate the Rome Statute, especially war crimes, including targeting of civilians, the massive and indiscriminate violations of the right to adequate housing, and to investigate acts and policies that have taken place during the conflict, or have contributed to it, that may amount to the crime of apartheid and crimes against humanity.

“We also urge Israel, the State of Palestine and other States to investigate and prosecute these crimes according to their national law or based on the principle of universal jurisdiction, to begin the process of ending impunity,” the experts concluded.

XVII. UN RELEASES US\$22.5 MILLION FOR RISING HUMANITARIAN NEEDS IN GAZA

On 21 May, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs issued the following [press release](#).

Emergency Relief Coordinator Mark Lowcock today announced the release of US\$22.5 million towards the response to rising humanitarian needs in Gaza. The amount includes a US\$4.5 million allocation from the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) and up to US\$18 million from the Occupied Palestinian Territory Humanitarian Fund.

As of 21 May, the escalation of hostilities in Gaza has claimed the lives of at least 242 Palestinians, including 66 children and 38 women, and injured over 1,900 people. In Israel there were at least 12 fatalities, including two children, and hundreds of injuries.

The violence has displaced over 77,000 Palestinians who were seeking protection in 58 UNRWA schools, including in 23 designated emergency shelters. Following today’s ceasefire announcement, most of the displaced have returned home. However, about 1,000 people whose homes were destroyed or severely damaged still remain. There is concern about the transmission of COVID-19 between vulnerable people who huddled in crowded shelters and the health-care system’s inability to cope.

The hostilities have also caused serious damage to vital civilian infrastructure in Gaza, affecting water, sanitation and hygiene services for hundreds of thousands of people. Electrical

power shortages and the damage to the Gaza Ministry of Health Central Laboratory, which processes COVID-19 tests, hinder healthcare provision at dozens of centres throughout Gaza.

Hundreds of buildings and homes have been destroyed, damaged or rendered uninhabitable. The ceasefire in place since today is permitting repair teams to begin assessing the damage more accurately.

The funds released today will help provide affected people with essential services and humanitarian assistance and dispose of explosive ordnance.

The UN's Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Mark Lowcock, said: "Hostilities have exacerbated the needs of 2 million people in Gaza who have been debilitated by 13 years of forced isolation and the COVID-19 pandemic.

"I welcome the ceasefire and I reiterate my call on all parties to the hostilities to allow for emergency humanitarian relief distribution, and for civilians to purchase food and water, seek medical care and attend to other emergency needs."

CERF is one of the fastest and most effective ways to help people affected by crises. Since its creation, it has assisted hundreds of millions of people with over \$7 billion across more than 100 countries and territories.

Since its inception in 2013, the Occupied Palestinian Territory Humanitarian Fund has allocated \$132 million to humanitarian partners, including \$58.3 million to international NGOs and \$46 million to local and national partners on the front line of emergencies.

This would not have been possible without generous and consistent donor support.

XVIII. SECURITY COUNCIL WELCOMES GAZA CEASEFIRE

The United Nations Security Council issued the following press statement ([SC/14527](#)) on 22 May.

The following Security Council press statement was issued today by Council President Zhang Jun (China):

The members of the Security Council welcomed the announcement of a ceasefire beginning 21 May and recognized the important role Egypt, other regional countries, the United Nations, the Middle East Quartet and other international partners played in this regard. The Security Council called for the full adherence to the ceasefire.

The members of the Security Council mourned the loss of civilian lives resulting from the violence.

The members of the Security Council stressed the immediate need for humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian civilian population, particularly in Gaza, and supported the Secretary-General's call for the international community to work with the United Nations on developing an integrated, robust package of support for a swift, sustainable reconstruction and recovery.

The members of the Security Council stressed the urgency of the restoration of calm in full and reiterated the importance of achieving a comprehensive peace based on the vision of a region where two democratic States, Israel and Palestine, live side by side in peace with secure and recognized borders.

**XIX. UN CHILD RIGHTS COMMITTEE URGES
ISRAEL, PALESTINE AND INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY
TO BRING IMMEDIATE SUPPORT TO CHILDREN AND START BUILDING PEACE**

On 26 May, the Committee on the Rights of the Child issued the following [press release](#).

The Committee on the Rights of the Child joins the declaration of the Secretary General of the United Nations that “*Israeli & Palestinian leaders have a responsibility beyond the restoration of calm to start a serious dialogue to address the root causes of the conflict.*”

Beyond the unacceptable and tragic loss of more than 60 children’s lives, the recent hostilities have had long-lasting material and mentally traumatic consequences on many children and their families. More than 600 children have been injured. The Committee considers that the first priority, beyond the consolidation of the ceasefire, is to provide children with protection, mental health support and meet their basic and urgent needs.

In the longer term, the Committee strongly urges Israel and Palestine, and the entire international community, to work with determination to seek a negotiated, balanced and sustainable peace. Both Israel and Palestine are States parties to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and have an obligation to uphold their commitments to the human rights of children. As such, Ms. Mikiko Otani, Chair of the Committee on the Rights of the Child emphasizes that “they must respect rules of international humanitarian law applicable to children in armed conflict and take all feasible measures to ensure protection and care of children who are affected by an armed conflict.”

**XX. UN SPECIAL COORDINATOR BRIEFS THE SECURITY COUNCIL
ON RECENT ESCALATION**

Tor Wennesland, Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, made the following [remarks](#) at the Security Council meeting of 27 May.

As I brief you today, a cessation of hostilities is holding between Palestinian militants in Gaza and Israel following eleven days of the most intense hostilities we have witnessed in years. I welcome this agreement as it brings a halt to the violent escalation and allows us to address the most urgent humanitarian needs of the people in Gaza.

At the outset, I wish to thank this Council for the support expressed to the UN efforts to de-escalate the situation, address urgent needs and respond to the aftermath. I also wish to commend the crucial role of Egypt and the United States, and the work of Qatar, who all in close contact with the United Nations were instrumental in bringing this latest round of violence to an end.

The United Nations is coordinating the delivery of urgent humanitarian assistance to the people of Gaza and I highlight the 95 million USD humanitarian flash appeal launched today. At the same time, we remain focused on the important political steps that are needed to solidify the cessation of hostilities that began 21 May.

These recent events have made clear once again the costs of perpetual conflict and lost hope. The challenges in Gaza – like this conflict as a whole - require political solutions. As we look ahead, our approach cannot be business as usual and we cannot afford to repeat the mistakes of the past.

Given their magnitude, I will focus today’s briefing on the recent escalation and its consequences. Broader developments on the ground will be covered in the upcoming Report of the Secretary-General on UNSCR 2334.

The escalation that engulfed Gaza, the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and cities across Israel, led to terrible suffering and destruction and took the lives of too many civilians. I share my condolences with all who have lost loved ones or been affected by the fighting.

The hostilities spread amidst a spike in tensions in occupied East Jerusalem. Longstanding protests intensified over the potential eviction by Israeli authorities of several Palestinian families in the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood. In parallel, tensions escalated sharply between Palestinians and Israeli security forces (ISF), and civilians, in and around the Old City, including at the Holy Sites, during the month of Ramadan, leading to clashes and hundreds of arrests and injuries.

The violence was accompanied, and amplified, by inflammatory statements and incitement, including violent threats issued by senior Hamas leaders, racist chants by Israeli extremists marching near the Old City and provocative visits to Sheikh Jarrah by far-right Israeli Members of Knesset and their supporters.

On 10 May, amid heavy presence of Israeli security forces ahead of the Israeli organized Jerusalem Day march, thousands of Palestinians clashed with police in and around Jerusalem’s Old City. ISF reportedly shot and injured over 650 Palestinians with rubber-coated metal bullets and other crowd-control means. Thirty-two ISF personnel were injured.

Although Israeli authorities took steps to reduce tensions – including re-routing the march, postponing a Supreme Court hearing on the Sheikh Jarrah evictions and barring Jewish visits to the Holy Sites – the violence and heavy security presence continued. That very same day, Hamas fired seven rockets towards Jerusalem, causing some property damage and setting off the escalation of hostilities.

From 10 to 21 May, during ensuing hostilities between Israel and armed groups in Gaza, 253 Palestinians, including at least 66 children, 38 women and three persons with disabilities, were killed during Israeli airstrikes and shelling. At least 126 of these were civilians. One journalist was also killed. In some cases, entire families, including women, children and infants, were killed in their homes.

Over the same period, nine Israelis, including two children and five women, and three foreign nationals were killed by indiscriminate rockets and mortars launched by Hamas and other militants in Gaza, and one soldier was killed by an anti-tank missile fired near the Gaza perimeter fence.

Hamas and other militants fired more than 4000 rockets from Gaza at an unprecedented intensity and scope with a significant number intercepted by Iron Dome and others landing short inside Gaza. In Israel, direct hits were reported in multiple locations, causing damage to residential and commercial property, as well as a school and energy infrastructure, including power lines supplying Gaza. Hundreds of Israelis were injured in these attacks.

In Gaza, the IDF conducted over 1500 airstrikes against what it said were militant targets belonging to Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad. Nevertheless, there was significant damage to homes and civilian infrastructure. During the hostilities, the UN and partners reported that at least, 57 schools, nine hospitals and 19 primary healthcare centers sustained complete or partial damage. Initial reporting during the hostilities indicate that at least 258 buildings, including four high-rise towers – one hosting international media outlets – were damaged or destroyed. This translates to nearly 2000 housing and commercial units. The UN and partners are currently undertaking a rapid damage and needs assessment to understand the full scale of destruction and needs on the ground.

According to the Gaza Ministry of Health, 1,948 Palestinians were injured in these strikes and over 112,000 people were displaced, with some 77,000 sheltering in nearly 60 UNRWA schools, where they had limited access to water and nearly no access to health care or food. The vast majority have returned home, but approximately 9,000 people remain displaced, with their homes destroyed or uninhabitable.

The violence we have witnessed, and its tragic consequences are unacceptable. Civilians should never be the target of violence. Children, in particular, must never be put in harm's way. Journalists must be able to carry out their work without fear of attack and harassment.

Throughout the hostilities, the United Nations worked tirelessly with all sides to restore calm, including calls from the Secretary-General upon Israel and Palestinian armed groups to take immediate and decisive steps to de-escalate the situation and prevent any further loss of life. This Council convened four times to discuss ways to end the hostilities, and the General Assembly held a special debate on the crisis. The sustained attention of the international community provided crucial momentum to ceasefire efforts at decisive moments in time.

On 20 May, Israel and Hamas announced that they had agreed to a cessation of hostilities, which went into effect in the early morning hours on the 21st May. It has since held, with no further rockets or airstrikes reported.

The humanitarian impact of the fighting on Gaza has been devastating, compounding an already dire situation. Humanitarian access was limited to only five trucks of fuel for UNRWA installations, which entered via Kerem Shalom on 18 May. Due to rockets fired from Gaza, the majority of planned humanitarian supplies on that day were not able to cross.

Following the cessation of hostilities, on 21 May, 40 truckloads of humanitarian supplies were permitted entry. On 25 May, Israel announced the opening of the crossings for certain humanitarian goods and personnel, including a shipment of over 46,000 COVAX vaccines. It is

critical that a predictable schedule for the entry of all humanitarian materials and personnel is put in place at both crossings. In addition, Israel reinstated the fishing zone off the coast of Gaza on 25 May to six nautical miles, which had been fully closed during the hostilities.

Repair to some damaged sewage and water infrastructure has commenced. The entry of fuel purchased through the UN for the Gaza Power Plant has been barred by Israel since 10 May. Gaza authorities reported that fuel purchased from Egypt has been used to ensure that it continues to function, albeit at reduced capacity resulting in an average of 5 hours of electricity per day. The Gaza Power Plant is the only source of large-scale electricity supply within Gaza critical to ensuring that hospitals, health clinics, water and sanitation facilities can operate.

The health system, already overwhelmed by chronic drug shortages, inadequate equipment and the COVID-19 pandemic, will likely be unable to meet the needs of those injured during the violence.

Propelled by events in Gaza and East Jerusalem, there has also been a sharp rise in the number of clashes between ISF and Palestinians, settler-related violence, and Palestinian attacks against Israelis in the occupied West Bank as well as an apparent increase in the use of live ammunition by ISF against Palestinians participating in demonstrations.

I reiterate that all perpetrators of violence must be held accountable. Israeli forces must exercise maximum restraint and use lethal force only when strictly unavoidable in order to protect life.

Potential evictions in occupied East Jerusalem also continue to be a major concern. On 9 May, the Supreme Court temporarily postponed the eviction of several families from Sheikh Jarrah until a hearing is held on their appeal. Nevertheless, they and many others in Sheikh Jarrah and Silwan face the risk of displacement with eviction cases commenced by settler organizations currently pending before Israeli courts.

I reiterate that all settlement activity is illegal under international law; and I urge Israel to cease demolitions and seizures of Palestinian property, in line with its obligations under international humanitarian law, and to allow Palestinians in Area C and East Jerusalem to develop their communities.

The violence in Gaza has reverberated in the immediate region, particularly in Lebanon. Since my last briefing on 16 May, UNIFIL detected several rockets fired from southern Lebanon towards Israel on 17 and 19 May, one of which impacted east of Haifa. The IDF fired artillery rounds in response, impacting north of the Blue Line. No injuries or damage were reported. In addition, a number of demonstrations have been organized throughout Lebanon to express solidarity with Palestinians. On 23 May, over 900 protestors gathered in demonstrations in southern Lebanon, including close to the Blue Line. In the Shab'a area, several individuals crossed briefly south of the Blue Line and placed flags on the Israeli technical fence. Throughout, UNIFIL and UNSCOL have engaged the parties to defuse tensions. As a preventive measure, UNIFIL, in coordination with the Lebanese Armed Forces, has maintained a strong presence along the Blue Line and remained in close contact with both parties.

This is not the first time we are witnessing the end of a war in Gaza. Each time, those who lose the most are the civilians. The loss and trauma extend far beyond the period of hostilities. Ending the violence and taking steps to urgently address the humanitarian consequences are crucial, but we cannot stop there. This reality – and avoiding its repetition - should be the point of departure for all of us as we look toward sustainable, long-term solutions to this conflict.

I reiterate the Secretary-General's appeal to the international community to work with the United Nations on developing an integrated, robust package of support for a swift recovery and sustainable reconstruction that supports the Palestinian people and strengthens their institutions. I am committed to ensuring that the United Nations plays its part.

We must avoid the pull of short-term fixes and focus on how we can work toward resolving the deadlock in Gaza and the Palestinian divide – situations that have been left unresolved for over 14 years and require real political solutions.

Palestinian national unity and the return of a legitimate Palestinian Government to Gaza is needed to move forward sustainably. At the same time, we must create a political horizon that allows the parties to return to the path of meaningful negotiations. I remain in close contact with my fellow Envoys in the Middle East Quartet, with key Arab and international partners, as well as with Israeli and Palestinian leadership to this end.

At the end, it is the lack of the proverbial “light at the end of the tunnel” – of a political horizon – after decades of conflict, that kills hope and provides space for those not interested in sustainable peace.

Only through negotiations that end the occupation and create a viable two-State solution, on the basis of UN resolutions, international law and mutual agreements, with Jerusalem as the capital of both States, can we hope to bring a definitive end to these senseless and costly cycles of violence.

XXI. UN HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL ESTABLISHES INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

On 27 May, the UN Human Rights Council at its thirtieth special session adopted the following draft resolution ([A/HRC/RES/S-30/1](#)) by a vote of 24 in favour, 9 against and 14 abstentions.

S-30/1. Ensuring respect for international human rights law and international humanitarian law in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and in Israel

The Human Rights Council,

Guided by the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,

Reaffirming that all States have an obligation to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms, as affirmed in the Charter and in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenants on Human Rights and other applicable instruments,

Reaffirming also the applicability of international human rights law and international humanitarian law, in particular the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War of 12 August 1949, to the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem,

Reaffirming further that all High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention are under the obligation to respect and ensure respect for the obligations arising from the said Convention in relation to the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and recalling their obligations under articles 146, 147 and 148 with regard to penal sanctions and grave breaches,

Recalling all relevant resolutions of the Human Rights Council, the General Assembly and the Security Council,

Recalling also the report of the Secretary-General submitted to the General Assembly pursuant to Assembly resolution ES-10/20 of 13 June 2018,^{*} and the need for the operationalization of the protection options contained therein,

Recalling further the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, which place responsibilities on all business enterprises to respect human rights by, inter alia, refraining from contributing to human rights abuses arising from conflict,

Firmly convinced that justice and respect for the rule of law and human rights are the indispensable bases for peace, and stressing that long-standing and systemic impunity for international law violations has thwarted justice, created a protection crisis and undermined all efforts to achieve a just and peaceful solution that warrants action in line with international law and relevant United Nations resolutions,

1. *Decides* to urgently establish an ongoing independent, international commission of inquiry, to be appointed by the President of the Human Rights Council, to investigate in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and in Israel all alleged violations of international humanitarian law and all alleged violations and abuses of international human rights law leading up to and since 13 April 2021, and all underlying root causes of recurrent tensions, instability and protraction of conflict, including systematic discrimination and repression based on national, ethnic, racial or religious identity;

2. *Also decides* that the commission of inquiry shall:

(a) Establish the facts and circumstances that may amount to such violations and abuses and of crimes perpetrated;

(b) Collect, consolidate and analyse evidence of such violations and abuses and of crimes perpetrated, and systematically record and preserve all information, documentation and evidence, including interviews, witness testimony and forensic material, in accordance with international law standards, in order to maximize the possibility of its admissibility in legal proceedings;

^{*} A/ES-10/794.

(c) Have the capacity to document and verify relevant information and evidence, including through field engagement and by cooperating with judicial and other entities, as appropriate;

(d) Identify, where possible, those responsible, with a view to ensuring that perpetrators of violations are held accountable;

(e) Identify patterns of violations over time by analysing the similarities in the findings and recommendations of all United Nations fact-finding missions and commissions of inquiry on the situation;

(f) Make recommendations, in particular on accountability measures, all with a view to avoiding and ending impunity and ensuring legal accountability, including individual criminal and command responsibility, for such violations, and justice for victims;

(g) Make recommendations on measures to be taken by third States to ensure respect for international humanitarian law in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, in accordance with article 1 common to the Geneva Conventions, and in fulfilment of their obligations under articles 146, 147 and 148 of the Fourth Geneva Convention, including by ensuring that they do not aid or assist in the commission of internationally wrongful acts;

(h) Report on its main activities on an annual basis to the Human Rights Council under agenda item 2 as of its fiftieth session, and to the General Assembly as of its seventy-seventh session;

3. *Calls upon* all relevant parties to cooperate fully with the commission of inquiry and to facilitate its access;

4. *Calls upon* all States, and encourages civil society, the media and other relevant stakeholders, to cooperate fully with the commission of inquiry to allow it to effectively fulfil its mandate and, in particular, to provide it with any information or documentation they may possess or come to possess, as well as any other form of assistance pertaining to their respective mandates;

5. *Calls upon* relevant organs, bodies and agencies of the United Nations system to cooperate fully with the commission of inquiry and to respond promptly to any request made by it, including with regard to access to all relevant information and documentation;

6. *Requests* the Secretary-General to allocate the resources necessary for the implementation of the present resolution and for the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to provide the logistical and technical resources necessary to support the functioning of the commission of inquiry;

7. *Urges* all States to refrain from transferring arms when they assess, in accordance with applicable national procedures and international obligations and standards, that there is a clear risk that such arms might be used to commit or facilitate serious violations or abuses of international human rights law or serious violations of international humanitarian law;

8. *Calls upon* all States, international agencies and other donors to urgently mobilize humanitarian support for the Palestinian civilian population in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and to address their prevailing needs, and calls upon Israel, the occupying Power, to ensure the unimpeded delivery of that humanitarian assistance;

9. *Requests* the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to provide an oral update on the progress made in the implementation of the present resolution to the Human Rights Council at its forty-eighth session;

10. *Decides* to remain seized of the matter.
