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

Security Council
Seventy-sixth year

Identical letters dated 16 June 2021 from the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council

I write once again to draw urgent attention to the deepening hardships and vulnerabilities being endured by the Palestinian people as Israel, the occupying Power, escalates its illegal policies and practices in tandem with the rising lawlessness it has cultivated among the most extreme elements of its population, in particular the settlers illegally transferred to the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem.

Carrying on with its violations of the 21 May “ceasefire” – violations that have never in fact ceased – Israeli occupation forces have launched yet more brutal attacks against the defenceless Palestinian civilian population. This has included, on 15 June, yesterday, another round of terrorizing airstrikes against the Gaza Strip, as well as assaults on Palestinians in occupied East Jerusalem that left dozens of people wounded.

Israeli occupation forces brutally attacked Palestinians in the Old City of Jerusalem and forced Palestinian shops to shut down to make way for an anti-Palestinian march by extremist Israeli settlers and far-right politicians. Under the protection of Israeli occupation forces, mobs of settler extremists swarmed through the Old City, chanting hateful slogans and attacking Palestinian civilians and properties in a so-called “parade” to mark the anniversary of illegal occupation of East Jerusalem by Israel in 1967. These settler mobs received a so-called greenlight by the new Israeli Government to carry out such incitement and violent provocations, proving the ongoing intent to entrench this illegal colonial occupation, regardless of the political landscape of Israel. In addition, as the occupying Power continues to coordinate, sponsor and promote settler provocations, Jerusalem’s holy sites, in particular Aqsa Mosque/Haram al-Sharif, are becoming ever more caught in the dangerous crosshairs of settler extremism.

Such state-sponsored provocations are aggravating the high tensions in occupied East Jerusalem and threaten to reignite the cycle of violence, as the Old City has turned into a military zone to ensure protection for the most extreme components of Israeli society at the expense of the rights and presence of Palestinian Jerusalemites,



who are being increasingly repressed by the Israeli occupation forces. Palestinians are being confronted on a daily basis by extremist provocations, which are forcing them to remain in their homes while marauding settlers pound on doors and windows, shouting “*mavet la'aravim*” (“death to the Arabs”) and other hateful, racist slogans.

Here, we must reiterate that Israel is not the sovereign in occupied East Jerusalem or in any part of the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967 and has no right whatsoever to “route” or “re-route” such supremacist marches through Palestinian cities and no right to barricade areas throughout Jerusalem, including in the Sheikh Jarrah and Silwan neighbourhoods, turning them into military zones as it continuously attempts to assert its illegal control, colonization and judaization of the city.

The fact is that the illegal policies of Israel in Jerusalem are creating a living hell for Palestinians and are clearly part of broader efforts to drive them from their homes, including, inter alia, the persistent denial of their rights; forced displacement, home demolitions and residency revocations amounting to ethnic cleansing; desecration of holy sites and imposition of a two-tier system of laws that blatantly discriminate against Palestinians.

Here, we again recall Security Council resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#), by which the Council unequivocally condemned “all measures aimed at altering the demographic composition, character and status of the Palestinian Territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem, including, inter alia, the construction and expansion of settlements, transfer of Israeli settlers, confiscation of land, demolition of homes and displacement of Palestinian civilians, in violation of international humanitarian law and relevant resolutions”.

Previous letters have warned about the intensity of such systematic Israeli attacks and human rights violations perpetrated against the Palestinian people. Since our last letter, June has followed May’s lethal trajectory, as Israeli forces have already killed five Palestinians, including a child, in utter disregard for basic morality and international law. With absolute impunity and international inaction in its possession, Israel is taking its colonial occupation to new extremes, expediting the theft of more Palestinian property and land and expanding illegal settlements, in tandem with its campaign of military raids and arbitrary arrests, and other blatant violations being documented daily despite the “ceasefire”.

In a span of three days, Israeli occupation forces killed five Palestinians in different parts of the occupied West Bank. On 10 June, three Palestinians, including two officers, Adham Eleiwi, Tayseer Ayasa and Jamel al-Amori, were shot and killed by Israeli occupation forces during a military raid in Jenin. On 12 June, Ibtesam Kaabneh, 28 years of age, was shot and killed by Israeli occupation forces near Jerusalem, after soldiers alleged that she was “carrying a knife”. Eyewitnesses reported that Israeli soldiers deliberately left her to bleed to death by restricting access to medical personnel nearby. This shoot-to-kill policy is deeply rooted in the 54-year colonial apartheid occupation that has permitted its soldiers to indiscriminately target and kill Palestinians based solely on their identity as Palestinians and non-Jews.

The killing of 15-year-old Mohammad Hamayel by Israeli occupation forces is yet another a tragedy borne by yet another devastated Palestinian family. On 11 June, Israeli occupation forces killed Mohammad with live ammunition, shooting him directly in the chest. Like many Palestinian children killed by Israeli occupation forces, Mohammad did not pose any threat to the heavily armed Israeli soldiers who have become accustomed to indiscriminately firing at and killing Palestinians with zero consequences. Beita, Mohammad’s village, has become the scene of weekly demonstrations after Israeli settlers built an outpost in the village. Soldiers regularly fire live ammunition at the civilians protesting against the expropriation of the

village's land for the expansion of an illegal outpost, which will eventually and rapidly transform into yet another illegal Israeli settlement.

Mohammad is the eighth Palestinian child to be killed by Israeli occupation forces in the occupied West Bank just this year, and the third specifically in Beita. Such extrajudicial killings have become a systematic practice of the occupation, amounting to war crimes against the occupied population. Palestinian children, like all children around the world, have the right to live a safe, secure and peaceful childhood. The routine killing of Palestinian children by Israel should remind the international community, including the Security Council, that children are protected under the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War (Fourth Geneva Convention) and other provisions of international law, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child, to which Israel is a signatory. We call on the international community to act immediately to bring an end to the occupation's state-sponsored killing of Palestinian children, for which Israel must be fully held accountable.

The wave of mass arrests and large-scale raids by Israeli occupation forces has also intensified, with total disregard for the state of emergency that remains in place in the West Bank owing to the pandemic, undermining the safety and well-being of the Palestinian civilian population, in grave violation of international humanitarian law. In this regard, in the early hours of 9 June, Israeli occupation forces raided the main headquarters of the Health Work Committees in Al-Bireh, damaging and seizing medical and electronic equipment before issuing a military order to close the headquarters for six months. Israeli attacks on health organizations and centres is not new, as Health Work Committees' health centre was targeted in a previous raid on 8 March. According to Amnesty International, the targeting of Health Work Committees "is part of a wider attack by Israel against Palestinian civil society organizations. Instead of criminalizing organizations providing vital health services, the Israeli authorities should be ending their institutionalized discrimination and systematic oppression of Palestinians."

Last week, footage also emerged showing a raid in a prison in which Israeli occupation forces used excessive force in one of the most violent attacks against Palestinians being held captive in Israeli jails. Videos show more than 50 Palestinians tied and forcibly thrown onto the concrete floor on top of each other as Israeli occupation forces beat them with batons and beat them randomly, without any resistance from the victims. According to Israeli daily newspaper Haaretz, the evidence contradicts the claims by Israel of subduing so-called riots, as the footage clearly shows the abuse of prisoners. Israeli non-governmental organization B'Tselem stressed that "the case proves, yet again, that Palestinian victims of violence by Israeli security forces cannot achieve justice via Israeli systems and can hope to do so only in an international court."

Moreover, Israeli non-governmental organization HaMoked stated the following: "the incident is a case of brute, wholesale violence against tied, helpless people. The investigative authorities' attempt to shirk responsibility, despite the security camera footage, is a badge of shame for the national unit for investigating corrections officers and investigative bodies in general. When that's the reality, it's no wonder that the violence of security forces toward Palestinians is so common when that's how they handle complaints."

Moreover, just hours before becoming the new Israeli Prime Minister, Bennet doubled down on his anti-Palestinian rhetoric and occupation-entrenching views, proclaiming that the new Government would "strengthen settlements across the whole of the land of Israel." While many somehow believe the false portrayal of Israel as a "vibrant democracy" based on the emergence of a new Government, for millions of

Palestinians, the status quo of colonization, apartheid, blockade and repression remains the reality, imposed by this illegal occupation acting far from any semblance of democracy.

The attempts by Israel to normalize its occupation must be countered with measures that are capable of stopping such acts of aggression and protecting human lives. The Security Council must rise to its responsibilities and show the international community that the need for accountability outweighs the appeasement which has, until today, exempted Israel from being held to the same laws as every other State.

The Security Council's inaction only protracts this injustice, compounding the suffering of millions of people and precluding the realization of the peace and security that the Council is duty-bound to maintain. Therefore, the Council must ask itself, will it uphold its duties and resolutions towards ensuring that the right to self-determination is respected and that the historic injustice is ended? Or will it allow this untenable situation to go on, allowing the gross violation of human rights and fundamental freedoms in broad daylight? Ending the 54-year Israeli military occupation is the prerequisite for upholding the rule of law and bringing an end to the grave violations being perpetrated every day against the Palestinian people.

The Fourth Geneva Convention states that persons protected by the Convention are those who, at a given moment and in any manner whatsoever, find themselves, in case of a conflict or occupation, in the hands of a party to the conflict or occupying Power of which they are not nationals. Israel's belligerent occupation began as "temporary", deceiving the international community, as not a single Security Council resolution has been implemented by the occupying Power. The so-called "temporary" occupation entered its fifty-fourth year this month, proving that Israel has no intention whatsoever to end it. Faced with this reality, States and the Security Council must utilize all available diplomatic, political and legal mechanisms and capabilities to assert international law as a source of authority on the question of Palestine in order to make this regime of colonial occupation and apartheid costly and finally bring it to an end, which is the only path to justice for the Palestinian people and to Palestinian-Israeli peace and security.

This letter is in follow-up to our 724 letters regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which constitutes the territory of the State of Palestine. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 ([A/55/432-S/2000/921](#)) to 9 June 2021 ([A/ES-10/870-S/2021/544](#)) constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, acts of state terrorism and systematic human rights violations being committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators must be brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) **Riyad Mansour**
Minister
Permanent Observer