



DIVISION FOR  
PALESTINIAN RIGHTS

# Bulletin

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

**July 2021**  
**Volume XLIV, Bulletin No. 7**

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## **I. PALESTINIAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE CONVENES INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON FORCED DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGE IN JERUSALEM – GRAVE BREACHES AND A THREAT TO PEACE**

*On 1 July, the UN Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (CEIRPP), with support from the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), organized the annual International Conference on the Question of Jerusalem. Please find below the [Chair summary](#) of the event:*

The International Conference on the Question of Jerusalem “**Forced demographic change in Jerusalem – grave breaches and a threat to peace**” was convened virtually, on 1 July 2021, under the auspices of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (CEIRPP) with support from the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC).

The event was chaired and moderated by Ambassador Cheikh Niang, Chair of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and Permanent Representative of Senegal to the United Nations. It consisted of an opening session with remarks by Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo, United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and representing Secretary-General António Guterres at the conference; Mr. Samir Bakr, Assistant Secretary-General for Palestine & Al-Quds Affairs of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation; and Mr. Riyad Mansour, Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations.

The panel speakers comprised of Ms. Lara Friedman, Foundation for Middle East Peace in Washington, D.C.; Mr. Michael Lynk, UN Special Rapporteur; Ms. Suma Qawasmi, Sheikh Jarrah community leader in East Jerusalem; Ms. Nivine Sandouka, “Hoqoqna – Our Rights” NGO in East Jerusalem; and Ms. Emily Schaeffer Omer-Man, Human Rights Attorney in Tel Aviv. Member States participated in the two-hour event on the WebEx platform. Viewers watched the conference on UN WebTV and UN YouTube and had an opportunity to make comments and pose questions to the panellists.

The Panellists highlighted decades-long Israeli policies and actions to promote Jewish settlement into and Palestinian emigration from Jerusalem, enabled by a legal system ignoring international law and excluding the political context of a power imbalance between Jewish Israelis and Palestinians. The young Palestinian representatives outlined their daily struggles and peaceful resistance, highlighting the power of social media and international support.

In his introductory remarks, **the Chair** underscored that the event was taking place amidst serious developments on the ground, and continued violent incidents in occupied East Jerusalem, particularly between the Israeli security forces and settlers, and Palestinian residents of the Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood.

He noted that this neighbourhood was experiencing repeated clashes, and Palestinian households still faced the imminent threat of eviction by the Israeli authorities from their homes. Jewish settlers had been evicting Palestinian residents from their homes under the protection of Israel’s security forces as thousands marched, yelling hate speech, through East Jerusalem up to the gates of the Old City’s Muslim, in an echo of the kind of events that had led to the violence in May that also engulfed the Gaza Strip.

Mr. Niang reiterated that Israel's settlement activities throughout the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem – including the neighbourhoods of Sheikh Jarrah, Batan al Hawa, and Silwan – presented a major obstacle to peace and were flagrant violations of UN resolutions and international law, threatening in particular Palestinians' rights to self-determination and return. He stressed that a two-State solution, leading to a long overdue Palestinian State with East Jerusalem as its capital, was the only viable way to achieve peace.

**Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo** highlighted the particular relevance of the conference's theme, as the forced displacement of Palestine refugee families in occupied East Jerusalem had catalysed events that culminated in 11 days of deadly armed conflict in May. The Gaza war, the third since 2008, had claimed many lives, predominantly Palestinians, she said, noting that Palestinian protests, Israel's heavy-handed response, and clashes around the Aqsa Mosque compound had brought tensions to a "whole new level".

The crisis was far from over, she said, describing Jerusalem as "a powder keg", with those who are willing to play with fire. She called on all sides to respect the status quo of Jerusalem holy sites revered by billions of believers worldwide. She implored Israel to cease demolitions, evictions, and illegal settlement activities, stressing that measures to change Jerusalem's status and demographic composition were without legal validity and should be firmly rejected by the international community.

Palestinians were not resigned to their fate of perpetual occupation. To this end, she urged Israeli and Palestinian leaders, supported by a revitalized Quartet on the Middle East, to recommit to credible negotiations that would address all outstanding permanent-status issues, ushering in the vision of two States, based on 1967 borders, with Jerusalem as a shared capital and Gaza fully integrated into the future Palestinian State through a credible, time-bound national reconciliation process.

**Ambassador Riyad Mansour** similarly pointed out that Palestinians – both in occupied East Jerusalem and throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory – were facing massive aggression at the hands of Israel's occupying authorities. This antagonism had extended to the neighbourhoods of Sheikh Jarrah and Silwan in occupied East Jerusalem and was indicative of an ethnic cleansing policy against Palestinians within both the Occupied Palestinian Territory and Israel itself.

If the international community was serious about adhering to international law, UN Resolutions 476/8 (1980) and Security Council resolution 2334 (2016), it could not merely reiterate these principles while the occupying Power committed crimes with impunity. Questioning what was being done – after 54 years of occupation – to defend international law and implement relevant Council resolutions, he called on the international community to act, rather than advocate for restraint as Israel killed civilians.

Otherwise, Amb. Mansour said, it was unfair to continue asking Palestinians to comply with demands from the international community, as they were frustrated and resentful under the current abhorrent system of occupation. "Enough is enough," he insisted, and added that it was time for the International Criminal Court to expedite its investigation into war crimes committed against the Palestinian people.

**Mr. Samir Bakr** likewise affirmed that the absence of dissuasive international measures had emboldened Israel to carry on with its violations of international law and norms. He called on the international community to activate legal mechanisms to guarantee Israel's accountability and take all measures necessary to pressure Israel into honouring its obligations under international law.

Emphasizing that Jerusalem has been an integral part of the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967 – and that its annexation was illegal, null and void – he cautioned against taking actions that legitimized Israel's pernicious moves to change the demographic, political, legal, and historical status of the holy city. The Security Council would have to ensure compliance with its resolutions, halt Israel's settlement and ethnic cleansing policies, and thereby avert dire repercussions that could plunge the already volatile region into a cycle of violence.

### **Panel Discussion**

**Ms. Lara Friedman** emphasized that the events unfolding in Jerusalem were not new; what was happening today had occurred, in various forms, daily since the 1967 War, when Israel took control of East Jerusalem and began its policy of demographic engineering. The current reality was the logical and inevitable result of Israel working with ideologically motivated actors both inside and outside the country to implement a systematic policy of demographic engineering with total impunity.

Events in Sheikh Jarrah and Silwan spoke directly to the question of who had the right to return, highlighting Israel's policy that Jewish Israelis could return to properties lost pre-1948, but Palestinians could not return to theirs. In 1967, when Israeli took over East Jerusalem, its Palestinian inhabitants could not be removed *en masse*, as had happened in 1948. The Palestinians remaining inside the Israeli borders after 1948 were given Israeli citizenship, but Palestinians in East Jerusalem were too many for Israeli demographic plans and thus would not be given citizenship, leaving them in the legal limbo of permanent, yet revocable, resident status. After 1967, various means were used to take land in East Jerusalem, which was then used to build government-backed Jewish settlements. Today, the absentee property law, along with the Jewish right of return, was being weaponized to take land, as is happening in East Jerusalem as well as in Hebron in the occupied West Bank. In addition, onerous requirements are used to revoke residency status, and housing limitations to prevent Palestinians from building or expanding homes in their own City.

She described events unfolding today as a clashing of Israeli policies that are reaching their logical conclusion after 54 years of impunity. Because the international community only offered empty rhetoric, it would be irrational to expect Israel to change course and heed international law. Any small gains made so far had been achieved on technicalities, rather than because Israel's collective punishment of Palestinians was illegal and immoral, underscoring a fundamental conflict between the rights of Palestinians, the obligations of international law, and what was happening on the ground.

**Ms. Suma Qawasmi** described events unfolding in the Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood where she lives as ethnic cleansing – and simply another chapter of Israel's modern military occupation. The neighbourhood was home to 28 Palestinian families (or 550 individuals) who have lived there

since 1956 following an agreement with Jordan, which provided the land. The families had originally been forcibly uprooted from their homes in historical Palestine in 1948, from which they were prevented to return under Israeli law and policies. Following Israel's illegal annexation of East Jerusalem in 1967, the neighbourhood had faced illicit ownership claims and forced displacement, backed by Israel's discriminatory policies, practices, and courts. "We are trying to prevent settlers from taking over Palestinian homes, in which we have lived for generations," she said, objecting to the unjustified use of force by Israel's security forces to stop her community from speaking up.

Ms. Qawasmi emphasized that digital grassroots activism – such as the "#SaveSheikhJarrah" campaign – was a key method to spread awareness, mobilize collective action, and connect with people in the international community. This, in turn, would allow to ramp up the pressure on Governments to help end forcible displacement in Sheik Jarrah and other Palestinian neighbourhoods. "We decided that we are going to help our parents and grandparents keep their houses," she said, stressing that the world could not continue to turn a blind eye to Palestinians' basic human rights and freedoms. Pointing out that her community had nowhere else to go and would not tolerate losing their Jerusalem IDs, she said "History cannot repeat itself; we don't want to experience the Nakba again."

**Ms. Emily Schaeffer Omer-Man** said the 100-plus legal proceedings over the years concerning Sheikh Jarrah could be roughly divided between the plight of those living in the eastern and western parts of the neighbourhood. In eastern Sheikh Jarrah, an agreement in place since the 1980s had created a protected tenancy – but not ownership rights – for the Palestinian residents and while this may have kept many in their homes, it had also allowed their residency to be subject to the will of settler committees that have already evicted many Palestinian inhabitants on procedural grounds. The western part, on the other hand, had been subject to a years-long battle to prove the status of the land, centred on competing claims of public ownership versus title granted to Jewish tenants by Jordanian authorities.

The problem inherent in discussing these details was that it required stepping into the Israeli legal framework, which treated the subject of Palestinian evictions as only a real-estate issue. This situation – rampant across the Occupied Palestinian Territory – was representative of a larger trend to rewrite international law out of the Israeli legal framework as its Government and institutions implemented a clear demographic policy through "creeping legal annexation" that starkly departed from international law. Ms. Schaeffer Omer-Man called on the international community to support the International Criminal Court in its investigations and on States to ensure that private actors were not complicit in these practices by implementing oversight and accountability regulations.

**Ms. Nivine Sandouka**, noting that the new Israeli Government's intentions towards East Jerusalem were as of yet unknown, pointed out that all previous Governments had emphasized the Jewish element of Israel's identity and worked to eliminate any mention of a Palestinian identity or narrative, for example in school curricula. Also, although Palestinians comprised 60 per cent of the population in East Jerusalem, they had only received 30 per cent of all building permits issued, and ever since the 1967 occupation Palestinian neighbourhoods had not been allowed to naturally expand. Palestinians living in East Jerusalem were considered residents – not citizens – so if they

lived or travelled outside the City for an extended period of time, or married a person with Palestinian citizenship, they had their residency revoked.

She also detailed the shrinking space for civil society actors in Jerusalem, pointing out that, since 2016, Palestinian civil society organizations had to report their sources of funding, and were subject to closure or prosecution if such funding came from places deemed unfriendly to Israel or if they expressed a viewpoint critical of Israeli policies. Stating that the United Nations had not assumed its responsibility to protect civilians in the Occupied Palestinian Territory – the “cornerstone of any peace process” – she called on the international community to provide funding to civil society and the opportunity for advocacy, to hold Israel accountable for the poor living conditions in East Jerusalem, and to support peace activists on the ground.

**Mr. Michael Lynk** outlined how Israeli settlements encircled Palestinian East Jerusalem, blocking off the West Bank like a fortress, while the Separation Wall’s route wove in such a way as to maximize its enclosure of Israeli settlements and minimize the number of Palestinians living within it. The overall Israeli goal was to make it demographically and politically impossible for Palestinians to gain East Jerusalem as the capital of their own State. This came against clear resolutions by the UN Security Council and the General Assembly that East Jerusalem was occupied territory, that its annexation by Israel was null and void, and that any attempts to change that area demographically violated the Fourth Geneva Convention.

In 1950, Israel’s parliament had passed the Absentee Property Law, decreeing that Palestinians who had fled their homes during the 1948 War could not recover their property. It then passed the Legal and Administrative Matters Law in 1970, ensuring that Jews who had lost their property in the 1948 War could reclaim their property. Israel’s courts did not recognize or apply international law, seldom protecting those who deserved protection under the Fourth Geneva Convention. Mr. Lynk then drew attention to Security Council resolution 476 (1980), which had ruled that Israel’s occupation – then only 13 years old – had at that point in time already been prolonged and that there was an “overwhelming necessity” to end it. The Council had already then condemned Israel’s defiance of its own resolutions; stated that any proposed annexation of East Jerusalem was illegal, null, and void; and threatened to enforce accountability. Yet, if that had already been the case in 1980 – three decades ago – “what are we to say now?”, he wondered, stressing that inaction by the international community had enabled Israel’s continued flaunting of international law and norms and thus shared responsibility for today’s situation.

In the ensuing discussion, the Chair relayed questions from the wider virtual audience about why the term “forced demographic change” was used more so than “illegal occupation”, and how to incorporate international law principles – and their violation of them – into the framework of the solution. The session also heard commentary by several delegates, with **Indonesia’s** representative underscoring the priority need to address Israel’s occupation. A solution could only be reached through multilateral dialogue and the revival of peace talks, he said, stressing that there should be no impunity for human rights violations.

The representative of **Egypt** said Israel’s continued unilateral measures – including settlement activities in East Jerusalem – jeopardized the two-State solution. He called on Israel to uphold its obligations under international law and to offer protection to Palestinians from extremist Jewish

groups. The escalation of violence had presented the need for a reinvigorated peace process and settlement of the Palestinian question, in line with resolution 2334 (2016), the Arab Peace Initiative and a two-State solution. He also underscored the importance of the United Nations in helping the International Quartet on Peace in the Middle East to advance negotiations.

The representative of **Turkey** warned that, unless the causes of violence were addressed, fighting would reoccur. She expressed concern over demolitions in Silwan and stressed that families in Sheikh Jarrah now faced eviction. She pointed to a Human Rights Council resolution adopted in May, which had established a commission of inquiry to investigate instances of repression based on national, racial, and religious identity, underscoring the need to pursue all possible avenues for accountability.

The representative of **Tunisia** recalled that administrative measures taken by the occupying Power to alter Jerusalem had no legal validity and expressed concern that looming evictions of Palestinians from Sheikh Jarrah and Silwan were only exacerbating the situation. He also called for an end to impunity.

**The Chair** concluded by thanking the speakers for taking the time to participate in the briefing, sharing valuable information and insights, and answering the questions from the participants and audience across the world.

The Chair closed the event.

*\*\*\*Note: This Summary attempts to provide an overall picture of the deliberations of the virtual Event. A [video](#) of the Event can be found on the webpage of the CEIRPP, [www.un.org/unispal](http://www.un.org/unispal), as well as on [UN Web TV](#).*

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

## **II. ATTACKS AGAINST PA CRITICS MUST STOP, THOSE RESPONSIBLE HELD ACCOUNTABLE – UN SPECIAL RAPPORTEURS**

*On 6 July, UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian Territory occupied since 1967 Mr. Michael Lynk, UN Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions Mr. Morris Tidball-Binz, and UN Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of freedom of opinion and expression Ms. Irene Khan released the following [statement](#):*

UN human rights experts today expressed serious concerns about a number of attacks by security forces against critics of the Palestinian Authority, including the death in custody, reportedly as a result of beatings, of a well-known commentator and opposition candidate.

“Nizar Banat’s death in the occupied West Bank shortly after his nighttime arrest on 24 June by Palestinian Security Forces has all the makings of a criminal act,” said the experts. “Initial reports indicate that he was badly beaten with steel batons during his arrest at home by Palestinian



Security Forces. After being taken away by the security forces, he died several hours later in their custody.

“His death must be investigated in a truly impartial and transparent manner and in compliance with the *Minnesota Protocol on the Investigation of Potentially Unlawful Death*. If the investigation reveals that his death was a homicide, those responsible must be held fully accountable, regardless of rank or command and full reparations must be granted to the family of Mr. Banat. The findings of the investigation, including the results of the autopsy on Mr. Banat’s body, must be published in full.”

Mr. Banat was a regular commentator on Palestinian social media, aiming his sharp criticisms at a range of figures in Palestinian political life. He raised issues involving allegations of corruption, the management of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the security relationship between the Palestinian Authority and the Israeli military and the misuse of public authority. He was also an opposition candidate in the recently-postponed Palestinian elections.

The Palestinian Security Forces have arrested Mr. Banat on a number of occasions. His home in the village of Dura had been recently shot at by unknown assailants, and he had received death threats.

“Mr. Banat’s public criticisms, however harsh, were protected by the basic human rights of freedom of expression and of association,” said the experts. “The Palestinian Authority has ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which guarantees the right to hold opinions without interference and the freedom to express information and ideas of all kinds.

“The ability for critics to exercise these freedoms and hold governments and public authorities to account is a vital means to measure how much, or how little, public freedoms are enjoyed in the society.”

Following the death of Mr. Banat, demonstrations erupted in Ramallah and other West Bank cities with protesters demanding justice and accountability. The demonstrations were met with – what appears to be – unwarranted and excessive force by Palestinian Security Forces.

“We are extremely concerned with the use of excessive force by Palestinian Security Forces against demonstrators, including allegations of attacks carried out by non-uniformed persons and the targeting of women present in the demonstrations,” the experts said.

Several days before Mr. Banat’s death, Palestinian forces arrested Issa Amro, an internationally respected human rights defender in Hebron, after he wrote a social media posting critical of the Palestinian Authority. He was released the following day. In recent years, Mr. Amro has been regularly harassed, detained and subject to security charges by both the Israeli military and the Palestinian Authority.

“The obligation to respect, protect and fulfill human rights rest with the competent authority exercising power. Notwithstanding a harsh occupation by Israel, Palestinian civil society has every right to demand that its own political and security leaders live up to their solemn promises to abide by international human rights commitments,” the experts said.

### **III. UN HUMANITARIAN COORDINATOR FOR THE OPT CALLS FOR EASING OF RESTRICTIONS INTO AND OUT OF GAZA**

*On 8 July, UN Humanitarian Coordinator for the Occupied Palestinian Territory Ms. Lynn Hastings released the following [statement](#):*

I visited Gaza today again, to see what progress has been made, now nine weeks since the beginning of the hostilities with Israel. Unfortunately, since the beginning of the escalation on 10 May, entry of goods through Kerem Shalom crossing has been limited to food, medical supplies, fuel, fodder, a few agricultural inputs, and other narrowly-defined items.

Without a return to regular and predictable entry of goods into Gaza, the capacity of the UN and our partners to deliver critical interventions is at risk, as are the livelihoods of and basic services for the people in Gaza. The UN currently estimates that 250,000 people are still without regular access to piped water, and that 185,000 are relying on unsafe water sources or paying higher prices for bottled water. The critical agricultural sector, a main source of food and income in Gaza is at risk, including the current planting season.

Meeting humanitarian needs, including the resumption of basic water, health and sanitation services, and the reconstruction of Gaza cannot progress without the entry of a broad range of supplies, including equipment, and construction materials necessary to support those repairs and humanitarian activities.

The cessation of the regular entry of commercial goods is impacting the work of hundreds of Gaza private sector businesses and the income of thousands of workers. Exports from Gaza, which are critical to livelihoods, are virtually halted. Obstacles facing the private sector need to be removed if it is to recover and resume its role as the main driver of growth and employment.

The tripartite Gaza Reconstruction Mechanism (“GRM”), established in the aftermath of the 2014 hostilities, has successfully enabled the entry of material and goods in an accountable and transparent manner, ensuring assistance is not diverted and only reaches the people of Gaza. Several large infrastructure projects, including those submitted and approved through the GRM, prior to the escalation, are currently on hold due to the restrictions on importing the needed materials. Such projects are key to restore and improve provision of basic services and the economy in Gaza.

Lastly, national staff are essential to humanitarian operations; the UN and our INGO partners need to revert to normal operations whereby staff can enter and exit on a regular and predictable basis.

Israel must fulfil its obligations under international humanitarian law; humanitarian assistance is not conditional.

I urge Israel to ease the restrictions on the movement of goods and people to and from Gaza, in line with UN Security Council resolution 1860 (2009), with the goal of ultimately lifting them. Only by fully lifting the debilitating closures can we hope to sustainably resolve the humanitarian crisis and contribute to longer term stability.

#### **IV. UN HUMANITARIAN COORDINATOR ON DEMOLITIONS AT HUMSA – AL BQAI'A**

*On 9 July, UN Humanitarian Coordinator for the Occupied Palestinian Territory Ms. Lynn Hastings released the following [statement](#):*

Confirmation of the mass demolition and confiscation of properties by Israeli forces in the Palestinian community of Humsa – Al Bqai'a in the northern West Bank on Tuesday this week is disturbing.

Throughout the demolition, Israeli forces blocked access of humanitarian personnel to the families. When they managed to access the community after the demolition, they found tents, food, water tanks and fodder had all been destroyed or confiscated, leaving people – including children – out in the open, in summer heat, with virtually no basic provisions; even milk, diapers, clothes and toys had been taken.

According to ongoing assessments, six families of 42 people, including 24 children have lost their homes, for the sixth time this year. Thirty-eight structures were demolished or confiscated, most alarmingly, water tanks.

Attempts to force this or any other community to relocate to an alternative location raise a serious risk of forcible transfer. While the Israeli authorities have tried to justify this citing their domestic designation of this area for military training, such measures by an occupying power are illegal under international law.

The Israeli authorities should immediately halt all further demolitions of Palestinian homes and possessions, allow the humanitarian community to provide shelter, food and water to this most vulnerable community and let these people rebuild their homes in their current location and stay there in safety and dignity.

#### **V. ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS SHOULD BE CLASSIFIED AS WAR CRIMES, SAYS UN SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR IN HIS LATEST REPORT**

*On 9 July, UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian Territory occupied since 1967 Mr. Michael Lynk issued the following [press release](#):*

The UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian Territory occupied since 1967, Michael Lynk, today called on the international community to designate the creation of Israeli settlements as a war crime under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

Lynk said the Israeli settlements violate the absolute prohibition against the transfer by an occupying power of parts of its civilian population into an occupied territory. The international community designated this practice as a war crime when it adopted the Rome Statute in 1998.

“For Israel, the settlements serve two related purposes. One is to guarantee that the occupied territory will remain under Israeli control in perpetuity. The second purpose is to ensure that there will never be a genuine Palestinian state,” Lynk told the Human Rights Council in Geneva.

“These are exactly the reasons why the international community agreed to prohibit the practice of settler implantation when it created the Fourth Geneva Convention in 1949 and the Rome Statute in 1998.”

He said the Israeli settlements were “the engine of Israel’s 54-year-old occupation, the longest in the modern world”. There are now close to 300 settlements in occupied East Jerusalem and the West Bank, with more than 680,000 Israeli settlers.

Lynk said that the illegality of the Israeli settlements is one of the most settled and uncontentious issues in modern international law and diplomacy. Their illegality has been confirmed by the United Nations Security Council, the General Assembly, the Human Rights Council, the International Court of Justice, the International Committee of the Red Cross, the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention and by many international and regional human rights organizations.

“It is a tragic paradox that, while the Israeli settlements are clearly prohibited by international law, the international community has been remarkably reluctant to enforce its own laws,” he said.

“In December 2016, the UN Security Council reiterated its long-standing demand in Resolution 2334 that Israel must immediately and completely cease all settlement activities. Yet, since early 2017, the UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process has reported to the Security Council on 18 consecutive occasions that Israel has taken no steps to comply with its obligations under Resolution 2334.”

In his [report](#), the Special Rapporteur called on the international community to adopt a plan of action:

1. Fully support the work of the Office of the Prosecutor of the ICC as it investigates whether the Israeli settlements violate the Rome Statute;
2. Call upon Israel to fully dismantle its settlements;
3. Develop a comprehensive menu of accountability measures to bring Israel in compliance with international law should it continue to defy the international community;
4. Ensure full accountability of Israeli political, military and administrative leaders who are responsible for grave breaches of international law in the Occupied Palestinian Territory; and
5. Call upon all UN member states to implement the injunction of the Security Council in 1980, in Resolution 465, not to provide Israel with any assistance to be used in connection with the settlements.

“The time for criticism of the Israeli settlements has passed,” said Lynk. “Former Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon has said only last week that it is the lack of any international legal accountability which has enabled Israel to ignore successive UN resolutions. A new approach grounded in international law is the only path to a just end to this perpetual occupation.”

## **VI. GERMANY AND UNDP PROVIDE SPECIALIZED MEDICAL EQUIPMENT TO SUPPORT HOSPITALS IN THE WEST BANK**

*On 13 July, the German Representative Office in Ramallah and the United Nations Development Programme issued the following press [release](#):*

The German Representative Office in Ramallah and the United Nations Development Programme handed over specialized medical equipment in support of critical health facilities in the West Bank to the Minister of Health, Dr Mai Al-Kaila today. The support provided is part of the Euro 17 million Investment Programme for Resilience (IPR) implemented across the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip financed by Germany through its Development Bank (KfW).

Her Excellency Dr Mai Al-Kaila Minister of Health thanked the Federal Republic of Germany for the continuous support provided to the Ministry of Health. “Today we received a shipment of medical equipment as part of the Euro 17 million Investment Programme allocation, which also supports the provision of temporary human resources from different specializations,” she added.

The US\$1.3 million worth of medical equipment included Computed Tomography (CT) Scan, Digital Radiography Machine, C-Arm X-Ray, bedside monitors, defibrillators monitor, suction machines, emergency patient beds (stretcher), real time Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) with software and computer, Automatic PCR System, and a fully automated Chemistry Analyzer.

“Germany has supported Palestine in times of crisis, when Corona hit the region. Today, we are glad to hand over crucial equipment and to contribute to the long-term capacities of the Palestinian health sector”, Michael Herold, Acting Head of the German Representative Office stated.

The medical equipment provided will be distributed across 16 health facilities and will enhance the Ministry of Health’s efforts to provide access to healthcare services, particularly COVID-19 response, to approximately 240,000 patients per month.

UNDP Special Representative of the Administrator, Yvonne Helle, acknowledged the longstanding partnership UNDP has with Germany in support of the Palestinian People. She highlighted that “COVID-19 has further deepened Palestinian vulnerabilities. This programme will not only address the health needs but it will also develop capacities and generate much needed employment for the people whose lives are most at risk”.

This new contribution will enable us to respond to the socio-economic impacts of the pandemic and build a better future together. Our transformative resilience approach is a key component in the sustainability of this programme and its impact on the lives of tens of thousands of people”.

In addition to the handing over of medical equipment, the ceremony included touring the Palestine Medical Complex in Ramallah, visiting the new CT-scan section, and meeting some of the health workers that were deployed and skills developed under the Investment Programme for Resilience. Through the programme, 1,050 health workers (45% women), including doctors,

nurses, and lab technicians, were deployed so far of which 837 are in the West Bank and 231 are in Gaza, generating approximately 147,468 workdays over an eight-month period.

This is not the first time that support is provided through the IPR during the pandemic. In December 2020, the programme provided laboratory supplies and testing kits that allowed for 23,000 tests to be carried out as a response to the COVID-19 outbreak in the Gaza Strip.

The Investment Programme for Resilience (IPR) is a Euro 17 million programme funded by the Government of Germany through its Development Bank (KfW), supports Palestinian communities respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, mitigates the medium to longer-term socio-economic effects in the areas of health and employment, and enhances access to sustainable and quality services. The programme targets most of the Palestinian population across the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip.

## **VII. FOLLOWING ISRAELI DEMOLITIONS EU REPRESENTATIVES VISIT HUMSA AL BQAI'A AND RAS AL TIN**

*On 19 July, the following [press release](#) was issued by the the Office of the European Union Representative (West Bank and Gaza Strip, UNRWA).*

Heads of Mission and representatives from Belgium, Denmark, EU, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and United Kingdom, visited the Humsa Al Bqai'a community near Tubas in the Jordan Valley and Ras Al Tin in the central West Bank. The visit followed the demolition of 30 residential, sanitation and livelihood structures by Israeli forces in Humsa Al Bqai'a that left 42 people including 24 children homeless, for the seventh time since last November. The UN has said that attempts made to relocate the community put the members at risk of forcible transfer. In Ras Al Tin UN has assessed that 84 people including 14 women and 53 children lost their homes.

British Consul General Diane Corner said: "The repeated demolition of donor-funded homes and structures in Humsa Al Bqai'a by Israeli forces are a serious concern. Such demolitions cause unnecessary suffering to vulnerable Palestinians. It is particularly troubling to see very young children without shelter. I urge the Israeli authorities to cease such actions."

During the visit, diplomats met residents, WBPC [West Bank Protection Consortium] partners, as well as representatives of civil society organisations active in the community. Local residents briefed the diplomats on recent events, and the impact of the destruction and confiscation of residential, livelihood and sanitation facilities, by Israeli forces. Many of the demolished structures were funded by the WBPC, the EU, other European and donor countries.

Recent demolitions and confiscations in Humsa come at a time when a number of other communities are facing the threat of eviction and demolition orders. Last week saw another gravely concerning instance of mass demolition and confiscation, in Ras al Tin in the central West Bank, also visited by the heads of mission today, where the UN assess that 84 people including 14 women and 53 children lost their homes.

So far in 2021, the Israeli authorities have demolished, seized or forced Palestinians to demolish at least 474 Palestinian-owned structures, including 150 funded by donors, displacing 656 people, including 359 children, across the West Bank. This represents a 32 per cent increase in number of structures demolished or seized, over 145 per cent increase in donor-funded structures, and a near 70 per cent increase in the number of people displaced, with a near 75 per cent increase in children, compared with the equivalent period in 2020. Since the new Israeli government was sworn in on 13 June 2021, 159 structures have been demolished, including 28 donor funded structures, displacing 231 Palestinians. This Includes two mass demolitions in one week. The number of total structures destroyed under the new Government has increased by 148 percent compared to the same period last year and 28 times more donor funded structures have been destroyed

WBPC members and likeminded countries urge Israel to halt settlement construction, demolitions and confiscation of Palestinian property. The continuation of this policy, in all but the most exceptional circumstances, violates international law, undermines the viability of the two-state solution and the prospect for a lasting peace in the region. We remain committed to protecting the rights of the Palestinians and to providing assistance to vulnerable populations in their current place of living in Area C.

Head of the EU Representative Office, Sven Kühn von Burgsdorff said: “It is with great despair that I again find myself visiting this community following a mass demolition where they have lost their homes and livelihoods, in the midst of the hottest summer months. Being a Bedouin community living under Israeli control in Area C, where they are not granted proper access to water or other infrastructure, they are already struggling to uphold their way of life. This latest demolition, where Israeli authorities seem determined to remove the community from the place where they have lived for decades, while hindering the delivery of humanitarian aid, is of course detrimental to the community, but also to the international community. As a representative of the EU and a member of the WBPC together with likeminded countries, we continue to demand that Israel ceases forcible transfers, evictions, demolitions and confiscations of homes, all of which constitute violations of international humanitarian law. The EU has also repeatedly called for the restitution or compensation of EU-funded humanitarian assets which have been demolished, dismantled or confiscated by Israel.”

## **VIII. PRESIDENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL APPOINTS MEMBERS OF COMMISSION OF INQUIRY**

*On 22 July, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights issued the following [press release](#):*

The President of the Human Rights Council, Ambassador Nazhat Shameem Khan (Fiji), today announced the appointment of Navi Pillay (South Africa), Miloon Kothari (India) and Chris Sidoti (Australia) to serve as the three members of the Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel. Ms Pillay will serve as Chair of the three-person Commission.

Through its [resolution](#) of 27 May 2021, adopted at its emergency special session, the Human Rights Council decided “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”.

The three-person Commission was also tasked with investigating “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”.

Through the same resolution, the 47-member body mandated the Commission to “establish the facts and circumstances that may amount to such violations and abuses and of crimes perpetrated” and “identify, where possible, those responsible, with a view to ensuring that perpetrators of violations are held accountable”.

The Commissioners, who will serve in their personal capacities, were also requested by the Council to “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”.

The Commission was requested to report on its main activities on an annual basis to the Human Rights Council as from June 2022. It is scheduled to present its first report to the Human Rights Council at its 50th session in June 2022.

### **Biographies of the members of the Commission of Inquiry**

**Navi Pillay** (South Africa) served as UN High Commissioner for Human Rights from 2008 to 2014. She is currently serving as Judge Ad Hoc of the International Court of Justice in the Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (The Gambia v Myanmar). She is also the President of the International Commission Against the Death Penalty based in Madrid, the President of the Advisory Council of the International Nuremburg Principles Academy and the Chair of the Quasi-Judicial Inquiry into Detention in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. In 1995, after the end of apartheid, Pillay was appointed acting judge on the South African High Court, and in the same year was elected by the UN General Assembly to be judge on the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, where she served a total of eight years (1999-2003), the last four as President. In 2003, she was appointed as a judge on the International Criminal Court in The Hague, where she served on the Appeals Chamber until 2008. Ms Pillay was the first woman to start a law practice in her home province of Natal in 1967 and acted as a defence lawyer for anti-apartheid activists, exposing torture, and helping establish rights for prisoners on Robben Island.

**Miloon Kothari** (India) served as the first UN Special Rapporteur on adequate housing (2000-2008). He has published widely on issues such as the Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review (UPR), housing and land rights, gender, forced evictions, globalization and its impact on human rights and the environment, civil society and trade. He regularly advises governments, UN agencies, research organizations and international and national civil society organizations on the human rights system, the UPR, as well as other human rights issues. He is the founding member of the Working Group on Human Rights in India and the UN – an Indian human rights coalition focussing on the UPR – and was the convenor from 2009 to 2014. He is also President of UPR



Info, since 2015. An architect by training, Mr Kothari has been a Guest Professor and Visiting Scholar to numerous universities and institutions, including the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Since February 2021, he has been a Visiting Professor at the Graduate Institute and Development Studies in Geneva.

**Chris Sidoti** (Australia) is an international human rights consultant and an expert in national human rights institutions and in international human rights law and mechanisms. Since February 2021, he is the founder and an International Expert of the Special Advisory Council for Myanmar. From 2017 to 2019, he served as one of the Members of the UN Independent International Fact Finding Mission on Myanmar. Since 2000, he has provided consultancy services on human rights law and practices to the OHCHR, UNDP, UNICEF, the Asia-Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions and several national human rights institutions. Sidoti also holds a number of academic positions. He was Executive Director of the International Service for Human Rights (ISHR; 2003-2007), served as Australian Human Rights Commissioner (1995-2000), Australian Law Reform Commissioner (1992-1995), and Founding Director of the Australian Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (1987-1992). From 1999 to 2013 he was principal facilitator and interlocutor in a human rights initiative between the Governments of Australia and Myanmar.

## **IX. ECSWA ISSUES REPORT ON IMPACT OF ISRAELI OCCUPATION**

*On 22 July, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ECSWA) issued the following [press release](#):*

The United Nations reiterated in its [periodic report](#) that it is quasi impossible to achieve sustainable development in the occupied Palestinian territory amid the ongoing Israeli occupation and its policies and practices. The report, which covers the period from April 2020 to March 2021, underscored the need to put an end to the measures standing in the way of the fight against COVID-19 pandemic and the provision of additional support to Palestinians; it also warned against further anticipated deterioration owing to the pandemic in addition to the fact that more than half of the Palestinians living under the occupation needed humanitarian aid and protection even prior to the pandemic.

According to the report, various Israeli policies and actions taking place in the Arab territories occupied since 1967, including the blockade of Gaza, the killing of demonstrators and settlement activity, are in violation of the international law. Some of these practices may include discrimination, collective punishment, forcible transfer, and the excessive and unlawful use of force. House demolition and resident eviction practices have soared throughout 2020 and the early months of 2021 compared to previous years, coupled with unfair expropriation of Palestinian-owned properties in East Jerusalem.

The report also focused on the Israeli policies that divided the West Bank into nearly 100 cantons and separated it from East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip, resulting in the development of distinct Palestinian economies and the deterioration of the Palestinians' economic and social situations. In fact, with a 11.5% contraction in 2020, the Palestinian economy recorded its worst recession since 2002. From this perspective, Gaza bears the largest burden, suffering from regression in development and the collapse of economic sectors, as unemployment rate reached 47% while three-quarters of the population suffers from food insecurity.

The report also reiterated the illegality of Israel's annexation of the occupied Syrian Golan and Israel's violations of the rights of and discrimination against Syrian citizens. It concluded that adherence to international law and the lack of impunity are prerequisites to achieve peace and for all peoples of the region.

The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) annually prepares the Secretary-General's report on the economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan.

Tarik Alami, Leader of the Governance and Conflict Prevention Cluster at ESCWA, presented the report to the Economic and Social Council on 21 July 2021. Accordingly, representatives of the Council's member Governments as well as representatives of Palestine and Syria discussed the report and proposed a draft resolution on it. The report will also be presented to the United Nations General Assembly during its next session for further consideration.

#### **X. FREE, FAIR, DEMOCRATIC AND CREDIBLE ELECTIONS MUST INCLUDE EAST JERUSALEM, UN SPECIAL RAPPORTEURS EMPHASIZE**

*On 26 July, UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian Territory occupied since 1967 Mr. Michael Lynk, UN Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of expression Ms. Irene Khan, and UN Special Rapporteur on rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association Mr. Clément Nyaletsossi Voule issued the following [press release](#):*

UN human rights experts today called upon the Palestinian Authority and Israel, the occupying power, to take all steps necessary within their respective powers to re-schedule the elections for the Palestinian presidency, the legislature and municipalities within a reasonably short timeframe and to ensure that these elections are free, fair, democratic, peaceful and credible.

The parliamentary and presidential elections had been scheduled for May and July respectively, but were postponed indefinitely on 29 April by Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas due to concerns about Palestinians' ability to vote in East Jerusalem.

"We are deeply concerned by the postponement of the scheduled elections in Palestine," the experts said.

"The Palestinian elections present a monumental opportunity to renew the democratic process, to address the long-standing internal political divisions, to strengthen accountable institutions and to take an important step towards achieving the fundamental national and individual rights of the Palestinian people.

"We call upon Israel to clearly state that it will allow the full democratic participation of Palestinians in East Jerusalem in the planned elections. As the occupying power in East Jerusalem, it must interfere as little as possible with the rights and daily lives of the Palestinians.

“Given the advances in technology and in remote and electronic voting, a variety of means to enable full democratic participation are available,” the experts stated.

The human rights experts noted that the Oslo Agreements provide for the right of Palestinians in East Jerusalem to participate in Palestinian elections. In previous Palestinian elections in 1996, 2005 and 2006, Palestinians in East Jerusalem were able to participate, although not without considerable difficulties.

“The international community has repeatedly stated, through the UN Security Council and the General Assembly, that all Israeli alterations to East Jerusalem’s demography and to its political and legal status are null and void,” they said. “Here is a golden opportunity for the world to affirm these commitments in the name of democracy and international law.”

The UN human rights experts called upon the Palestinian Authority to reschedule the elections for new dates in the very near future. When these elections are held, the democratic rights of voters, candidates, political parties and participants are to be fully respected by all, including the occupying power.

“The freedoms of expression, opinion, assembly, movement and association are core human rights, and they are particularly important in the democratic process,” they said. “As such, intimidation, arrests and detentions and the disruption of political meetings and campaigning by any governing authority are utterly incompatible with international human rights protections.”

Finally, the human rights experts called upon the Palestinian authorities who have established the rules for the upcoming elections to remove any legal barriers that inhibit the full and free participation of Palestinians in the democratic process.

“We are disturbed by some aspects of the eligibility rules for individuals and political lists who would wish to become active in the Palestinian elections. In particular, the requirement that each political list pay a \$20,000 (US) registration fee and that candidates working in the broad public sector, for international organizations and in civil society must resign from their current jobs in order to run appear to create unjustified obstacles to ensuring a democratic process,” the experts said.

“We call upon all parties to respect the independence and impartiality of the Central Election Commission. We also call for the creation of a specialized court which will decide challenges to the election process, as called for in the Cairo agreement.”

Half of the eligible voters in the occupied Palestinian territory are between the ages of 18 and 33 years old. Given that the last Palestinian elections were in January 2006, they have never voted in national Palestinian elections.

“We do not underestimate the challenges of holding free and fair democratic elections while under an entrenched and harsh occupation,” said the experts. “We welcome the assistance offered by the international community, particularly the European Union and the United Nations, to facilitate these elections. But the elections will only achieve credibility and open the door to political renewal, particularly among younger Palestinians, if all sides respect the values of democracy and human rights.

“As well, we call upon the international community and Israel to respect the outcome of the Palestinian elections when they are held, and to call upon all parties to act in accordance with international law.”

## **XI. UN DEPUTY SPECIAL COORDINATOR/HUMANITARIAN COORDINATOR HASTINGS BRIEFS SECURITY COUNCIL**

*On 28 July, the Deputy Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator for the Occupied Palestinian Territory Ms. Lynn Hastings briefed the Security Council on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question. Excerpts from her briefing appear below ([S/PV.8826](#)):*

I brief the Security Council today as the United Nations and its partners are providing urgent assistance to Gaza in the wake of the recent round of hostilities. Beyond the human tragedy for both Palestinians and Israelis and the physical damage of 11 days of fighting, the economic impact of the escalation in May has further exacerbated the existing humanitarian crisis and severely weakened Gaza's economy.

On 6 July, the United Nations, the World Bank and the European Union released the rapid damage and needs assessment. According to the assessment, damages in Gaza are estimated to be from \$290 to \$380 million, while economic losses may reach nearly \$200 million. The social sector was hit the hardest, significantly weakening the safety net for the most vulnerable. The immediate and short-term recovery and reconstruction needs are estimated at \$345 to \$485 million. The same day, a technical meeting of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee for the Coordination of the International Assistance to Palestinians was held to align donors' efforts to help address both the aftermath of the May escalation and the significant fiscal crisis facing the Palestinian Authority (PA).

International efforts coordinated by the United Nations to implement the humanitarian response and stabilize the situation on the ground in Gaza are well under way. Thus far, some \$45 million of the requested \$95 million dollars has been raised for the consolidated humanitarian flash appeal published by the United Nations in May. I thank donors for their generous support and urge additional contributions so that the numerous pressing needs can be addressed. The United Nations and its partners stand ready to implement urgently needed recovery and reconstruction initiatives in coordination with the Israeli and Palestinian authorities, Egypt, Qatar and other regional and international partners.

On 28 June, fuel deliveries for the Gaza power plant resumed through the Kerem Shalom crossing under the existing United Nations framework through the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), with support from Qatar. Electricity supply is now roughly 14 hours per day, critical for Gaza and its residents. On 24 June, the Israeli authorities expanded the Gaza fishing zone from six to nine nautical miles, and then once again on 12 July to 12 nautical miles. Additional restrictions on the import and export of certain goods were also lifted. However, on 25 July the fishing zone was restricted again to six nautical miles, following the launch of incendiary balloons from the Gaza Strip.

In that context, further steps are needed. It is essential that Israel implement additional measures to allow unhindered entry of all humanitarian assistance, including materials to

implement the 2021 humanitarian response plan and the flash appeal. Beyond the immediate humanitarian needs, without regular and predictable entry of goods into Gaza, the capacity of the United Nations and our partners to deliver critical interventions is at risk, as are the provision of basic services, the livelihoods of people and the wider Gaza economy.

In that context, the trilateral Gaza Reconstruction Mechanism — with the Government of Israel, the Palestinian Authority and the United Nations — established in 2014 and operated by UNOPS, remains best-placed to enable the entry and accountable delivery of a wide range of essential imports from Israel. Furthermore, for any durable stability, movement and access in and out of Gaza must be improved. Taking into consideration its legitimate security concerns, Israel should ease restrictions on the movement of goods and people to and from Gaza, in line with resolution 1860 (2009), with the goal of ultimately lifting them. Hamas and other armed groups must stop the launching of incendiary devices, rockets and mortars and end the militant build up.

In terms of looking ahead, with additional donor support, existing United Nations humanitarian cash assistance or other programmes could quickly be scaled up to reach tens or hundreds of thousands of Palestinians in Gaza. While urgent humanitarian interventions can provide critical relief in the short term, any sustainable future in Gaza requires political solutions. I once again reiterate the need for the return of a legitimate Palestinian Government to the Gaza Strip.

The Palestinian Authority's fiscal situation continues to be a source of significant concern. The budget gap is expected to be well over \$1 billion for the current budget year, and the Palestinian financial sector is exposed to serious liquidity risks. Compounding the PA's financial situation, on 11 July, the Israeli Security Cabinet approved the freezing of some 600 million Israeli shekels from the clearance revenues Israel collects on behalf of the PA.

The funds will be deducted in monthly instalments, in line with Israeli Knesset legislation from 2018, which authorizes the withholding of funds equal to the amount that Israeli authorities determine have been paid by the PA over the preceding year to security prisoners and detainees and the families of Palestinians killed while carrying out attacks. Palestinian Prime Minister Mohammad Shtayeh called the measures contrary to signed agreements and unjust. In order to address those challenges, the PA must implement much-needed reforms, including the so-called prisoner payment system, and strengthen the rule of law and accountability. Enhanced cooperation between Israel and the PA to address outstanding financial challenges on key fiscal and economic files will also be critical.

Violence continued across the occupied Palestinian territory throughout the reporting period.

In Gaza, while the cessation of hostilities reached between Israel and Hamas in May largely held, militants launched 13 incendiary balloons towards Israel, with several causing fires. In retaliation, the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) fired 18 missiles against what it said were Hamas targets in the Strip, resulting in damage but no injuries.

On 22 July, a Palestinian was killed and some 14 others were injured in an explosion in the Az-Zawiya marketplace, in Gaza City. The Israeli Security Forces (ISF) said the incident was an "internal matter" and that Israel had not been involved. Hamas has reportedly opened an investigation.

In the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, clashes, attacks, search-and-arrest operations and other incidents resulted in the death of four Palestinians, including a child, and injuries to 638 Palestinians, including 46 children and seven women. Five Israeli security personnel were injured during these events.

On 25 June, Israeli forces shot, injured and detained a Palestinian who they said was planning to carry out a stabbing attack near the settlement of Yitzhar, in the northern West Bank.

On 3 July, a Palestinian man was shot and killed by the ISF in the village of Qusra, near Nablus, following clashes between Israeli settlers and Palestinians. According to the ISF, the man was shot after throwing an object that exploded near Israeli soldiers.

On 14 July, a Palestinian man was shot and injured by the ISF after reportedly trying to enter the settlement of Yitzhar with a knife.

On 18 July, clashes broke out between Palestinians and the ISF in and around the holy sites, ahead of visits by hundreds of Jewish visitors observing the commemoration of Tisha B'Av. I reiterate that the status quo at Jerusalem's holy sites must be upheld and fully respected, and call upon community, religious and political leaders on all sides to refrain from provocative action and rhetoric in the interest of peace and stability.

On 23 July, the ISF shot and critically injured a 17-year-old Palestinian boy during clashes in the village of Nabi Saleh, in the West Bank. The boy later died of his wounds. According to the Palestinian Ministry of Health, the boy was shot in the stomach by an ISF foot patrol. The ISF said a soldier had opened fire after stones had been thrown towards him, threatening his life, and that it would investigate the incident.

Also on 23 July, a Palestinian man was reportedly shot and killed by Hamas security forces while driving through a checkpoint in Gaza City.

Meanwhile, settlers and other Israeli civilians in the occupied West Bank perpetrated some 36 attacks against Palestinians, resulting in 13 injuries and damage to property. Palestinians perpetrated 47 attacks against Israeli settlers and other civilians, resulting in eight injuries and damage to property.

On 26 June, settlers attacked Palestinians in the village of Al-Mughayyir, near Ramallah. Israeli forces intervened, resulting in the injury of 18 Palestinians.

I underscore that all perpetrators of violence must be held accountable and swiftly brought to justice.

I also call on Israeli security forces to ensure the protection of Palestinians, in line with Israel's obligations under international humanitarian law.

Following the death of political activist Nizar Banat on 24 June, Palestinians held demonstrations across the occupied West Bank. In Ramallah, on 26 June and 5 July, the Palestinian Security Forces beat protestors and indiscriminately fired tear gas and stun grenades. On 26 June, the Palestinian Security Forces also failed to stop violent acts by groups of non-uniformed persons, reported to be associated with security personnel, resulting in violence targeting journalists and

human-rights monitors, including a United Nations staff member. Women present at the demonstrations reported sexual harassment and gender-based threats on social media afterwards.

I call on the Palestinian Authority to ensure that the death of Nizar Banat and all allegations of the use of disproportionate force against protestors by the Palestinian Security Forces are investigated in a thorough, transparent and independent manner and those responsible held to account. The Palestinian people must be able to exercise their rights to freedom of expression, opinion and peaceful assembly. Arbitrary and politically motivated arrests must cease.

On 2 July, Israeli settlers, comprising some 50 families, left the illegal outpost of Evyatar following an agreement reached with the Israeli Government that IDF troops would re-establish a presence at the site. According to the agreement, the Israeli Civil Administration will conduct an accelerated land survey to determine land status. Areas found not to be privately owned by Palestinians will be declared “State land” and subsequently made available for building a religious school and staff residence. Any existing structures found to be outside “State land” will be demolished.

Following the evacuation, near-daily clashes continued during the reporting period between Palestinian residents of the nearby village of Beita and Israeli settlers and security forces, resulting in the death of a Palestinian, injury to some 460 others and damage to structures.

I reiterate that all settlements are illegal under international law. Settlement-related activities must cease, as they undermine the prospect of achieving a viable two-State solution in line with United Nations resolutions, international law and prior agreements.

Israeli demolitions of Palestinian homes and other structures continued throughout the reporting period.

Overall, Israeli authorities demolished or seized 113 Palestinian-owned structures in Area C of the occupied West Bank and 16 in East Jerusalem, displacing 177 Palestinians, including 38 women and 102 children, and affecting 1,934 others. The demolitions were carried out due to the lack of Israeli-issued building permits, which are nearly impossible for Palestinians to obtain.

During the reporting period, Israeli authorities demolished 31 structures in the Bedouin community of Humsa Al-Baqai’a, in Area C of the occupied West Bank. Some 18 of the structures demolished or confiscated were provided by donors following previous demolitions in February. As a result, seven Palestinian families, comprising 54 people, including 30 children, were again displaced. Despite repeated calls by the international community, Israeli authorities have continued to instruct the residents to move to a different location, citing the community’s presence in an Israeli-declared firing zone.

During the reporting period, Israeli forces confiscated at least 49 structures in another West Bank herding community, Ras Al-Tin, resulting in the displacement of 84 Palestinians, including 53 children and 14 women.

I urge Israel to cease the demolition and seizure of Palestinian property throughout the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, in line with its obligations under international humanitarian law, and to allow Palestinians to develop their communities.

...

I remain concerned about the financial situation of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). As of today, the projected shortfall under its programme budget amounts to \$100 million. The Agency also faces an imminent cash-flow crisis, which risks impacting the smooth opening of the school year for half a million girls and boys in Gaza. The absence of a fully funded programme budget also undermines UNRWA's capacity to conduct much needed humanitarian and early recovery activities in Gaza. I appeal once again to all donors, including those from the Arab region, to sustain the funding levels of past years and advance disbursements of funds as much as possible to avoid a disruption of essential services and humanitarian aid.

Following the explosive violence across the occupied Palestinian territory and Israel in May, on 30 June some 200 Israeli and Palestinian women's organizations and activists released a joint statement calling for immediate action, based on the principles of resolution 1325 (2000), to achieve long-term solutions to the conflict. Noting the particular importance of protecting women from all forms of violence and ensuring women's representation in decision-making positions, they urged broader efforts towards a negotiated long-term solution, and not just a temporary calm.

We in the international community should heed those important words. Urgent efforts to improve the situation in Gaza must move forward swiftly, but let us not lose sight of the broader goal — resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, ending the occupation and realizing the two-State solution on the basis of United Nations resolutions, international law and bilateral agreements.

The United Nations remains committed to continuing to support Palestinian and Israeli moves towards that political horizon. The United Nations will work with the parties and through the Middle East Quartet to pave the way forward to meaningful negotiations on all outstanding issues.

## **XII. CHAIR OF THE PALESTINIAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE ADDRESSES MESSAGE TO SECURITY COUNCIL**

*On 28 July, the Chair of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, Amb. Cheikh Niang, submitted the [following statement](#) to the Security Council.*

On behalf of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, at the outset I would like to congratulate France for its able presidency of the Security Council this month.

So far, 2021 has proven particularly challenging for the Palestinian people on all fronts. Not only have we witnessed terrible loss of life, a humanitarian crisis and destruction during an 11-day conflict in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem and particularly affecting the Gaza Strip, but cases of COVID-19 are raising in the Occupied Palestinian Territory due to the lack of access to vaccines.

The hostilities in May, the most severe and deadly escalation of violence since 2014, tragically claimed the lives of at least 245 Palestinians in Gaza, including 68 children and 37 women, killed



by Israel airstrikes on civilian areas, and 12 persons killed in Israel by indiscriminate rocket fire from Gaza. The Committee stresses the imperative of full respect for international humanitarian law and human rights law and the protection of civilian persons. The Committee calls on all parties to the conflict to respect the ceasefire and allow for unhindered humanitarian and reconstruction efforts, which are urgent to alleviate the dire socioeconomic conditions and hardships borne by the Palestinian population in Gaza.

On 10 May the Bureau, on behalf of the Committee, issued a statement expressing its deep alarm at the escalation of violence and acts of provocation and incitement, particularly by Israeli extremists in occupied East Jerusalem and at Al-Aqsa Mosque compound. It also condemned the planned evictions of Palestinian families from their homes in the Sheikh Jarrah and Silwan neighbourhoods of occupied East Jerusalem. The Committee further urged 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 on the basis of international law and the relevant UN resolutions that have long been at the heart of the international consensus on a just solution.

As we heard today from the Deputy Special Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator Lynn Hastings, the violent escalation has had severe humanitarian consequences for the civilian population, particularly in Gaza, which remains under a 14-year blockade by Israel, the occupying Power. The Committee reiterates its longstanding call for the lifting of the blockade and for the freedom of movement of persons and goods to be respected in accordance with international law. The Committee also calls on donors to support the reconstruction needs of the Strip as outlined in the Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment (RDNA) by the World Bank Group, the United Nations and European Union, in close cooperation with the Palestinian Authority which estimated recovery needs of up to US\$485 million during the first 24 months.

In this context, let me reiterate the Committee's full support for UNRWA and underscore our call for adequate and reliable funding to the Agency for its life saving activities in support of Palestine refugees.

We support the international community's swift and resolute response calling for respect of international law and accountability. Following a General Assembly debate on 20 May, when I delivered a statement on behalf of the Committee, the Human Rights Council through its resolution of 27 May at its emergency special session, decided "to urgently establish an ongoing independent, international commission of inquiry" 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. The Committee welcomes the appointment on 22 July, by the Human Rights Council, of Navi Pillay (South Africa), Miloon Kothari (India) and Chris Sidoti (Australia) to serve as the three members of the Commission of Inquiry. The Committee, once more, calls on Israel, the occupying Power, to abide by international law, including international humanitarian and human rights law, and urges it to cooperate fully with the Commission of Inquiry stressing that accountability is central for the achievement of justice and peace.

There is no doubt that the escalation in May was directly linked to the continuous human rights violations the Palestinian people are enduring as a result of the decades-long Israeli occupation of

their territory, leading to provocations and incitement in East Jerusalem and followed by a heavy response by Israeli security forces. In addition, arbitrary detentions of Palestinian civilians, restrictions to the freedom of movement, settler violence, demolitions and confiscation of Palestinian property across the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem continue relentlessly, affecting communities and displacing entire families. The Committee calls for a stop to ongoing Israeli violations in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in Al-Aqsa Mosque, which were among the root causes of the latest escalation.

Similarly, the Committee urges Israel, the occupying Power, to abide by its responsibilities under international humanitarian law to supply prompt and adequate vaccine protection to all in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, to avert further spread of the virus and damage to the health and well-being of the Palestinian population under occupation.

The inalienable rights of the Palestinian people continue to be denied, and the illegal occupation of Palestinian territory continue as well through, inter alia, the construction and expansion of illegal settlements despite provisions of Security Council resolution 2334 (2016), which so far have been disrespected.

At a time when the international community had generated momentum to revitalize the peace process, with the support of the Quartet plus other concerned partners, the hostilities brought the revival of a political process to another standstill, posing a real threat to the efforts to salvage the two-State solution on the pre-1967 borders.

Through its outreach to Member States, the Committee continues to encourage all supporters of the two-State solution to assist the parties to resume negotiations towards the achievement of a peaceful settlement in line with international law and the relevant UN resolutions.

The Committee also regrets the postponement of Parliamentary and Presidential elections in the State of Palestine and encourages the organization of the elections as soon as possible, including in East Jerusalem. We also call on Israel, the occupying Power, to uphold its obligations and commitments in this regard.

The Committee also reiterates its call for all Palestinian factions to accelerate reconciliation efforts towards the achievement of unity for the benefit of the Palestinian people.

The full realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian People, the idea of a just solution based on the relevant United Nations resolutions that ensures two States, Israel, and Palestine, live side by side in peace and security along the pre-1967 lines and with East Jerusalem as the capital of the Palestinian State, and a just solution for the Palestine refugees in line with resolution 194 (III), will require the cooperation of everyone in order to see the light. The Committee is committed to upholding its responsibilities towards this principled goal, in line with its General Assembly mandate.

The international community is called to engage with the parties aiming at de-escalation and maintaining the ceasefire in full compliance with international law, including respect for the human rights of the Palestinian people.

In the coming weeks, the international community, including an expanded Middle East Quartet, will be called to create the conditions with relevant stakeholders, including regional organizations, in view of garnering wider global support for the resolution of the question of Palestine and the realization of the two-State solution. The Committee will remain a reliable partner in the pursuit of the full realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including to selfdetermination and independence.

I thank you for your attention.

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