



DIVISION FOR  
PALESTINIAN RIGHTS

# Bulletin

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

**November 2021**  
**Volume XLIV, Bulletin No. 11**

<i>Contents</i>	<i>Page</i>
I. UN Special Rapporteurs say Israeli settlement expansion tramples upon humanitarian, human rights law	1
II. Belgium supports WFP operations in Palestine	2
III. UN agencies and Association of International Development Agencies stand by civil society organisations in OPT	2
IV. UN human rights experts alarmed by rise in settler violence	3
V. Secretary-General calls for support to UNRWA	5
VI. Aid coordination committee meets in Oslo	6
VII. Quartet Envoys meet, issue statement	8
VIII. 200,000 women and girls to benefit from new safe public space	9
IX. EU issues six-month report on settlements	10
X. EU six-month report on demolitions	11

XI.	UN Secretary-General sends message on Solidarity Day	12
XII.	Special Coordinator briefs Security Council	12

*The Bulletin can be found in the United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine (UNISPAL) on the Internet at:  
<https://www.un.org/unispal/data-collection/monthly-bulletin/>*

*Disclaimer: The texts cited in this Monthly Bulletin have been reproduced in their original form. The Division for Palestinian Rights is consequently not responsible for the views, positions or discrepancies contained in these texts.*



<http://www.facebook.com/UN.palestinianrights>



<http://www.twitter.com/UNISPAL>



<http://www.youtube.com/UNpalestinianrights>



<https://www.instagram.com/unispal/>

## **I. UN SPECIAL RAPPORTEURS SAY ISRAELI SETTLEMENT EXPANSION TRAMPLES UPON HUMANITARIAN, HUMAN RIGHTS LAW**

*On 3 November 2021, Michael Lynk, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian Territory occupied since 1967, and Balakrishnan Rajagopal, Special Rapporteur on adequate housing, issued the following [statement](#).*

UN human rights experts today sharply condemned the recent announcement by the Israeli Government that it is advancing plans to build thousands of new housing units in its West Bank and East Jerusalem settlements.

“The United Nations has repeatedly stated that the Israeli settlements in occupied Palestinian territory are a ‘flagrant violation under international law’, and it has demanded that Israel cease its settlement expansion and remove its settlements,” said the experts. The illegality of the Israeli settlements is one of the most widely-accepted issues in modern international law.

“As well, the Israeli settlements are a presumptive war crime under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, and should be treated as such by the international community.”

In East Jerusalem, various bodies within the Israeli Government have approved plans in recent weeks for more than 1,700 new housing units in the East Jerusalem settlements of Givat Hamatos and Pisgat Zeev. Plans are also being advanced for an estimated 9,000 settler housing units in Atarot, as well as approximately 3,400 settler homes in the E1 area just east of Jerusalem. In the West Bank, plans for the construction of approximately 3,000 housing units in a number of settlements are also being advanced. As well, recent reports indicate that the Israeli Government is planning to retroactively legalize several settlement outposts.

“The very *raison d’être* of the Israeli settlements in occupied territory – the creation of demographic facts on the ground to solidify a permanent presence, a consolidation of alien political control and an unlawful claim of sovereignty – tramples upon the fundamental precepts of humanitarian and human rights law,” the experts said.

They said there are now close to 700,000 Israeli settlers living in illegal settlements in East Jerusalem and the West Bank. “The Israeli settlements are the engine of the occupation,” the experts said. “They are responsible for a wide range of human rights violations against the Palestinians, including land confiscation, resource alienation, severe restrictions on freedom of movement, mounting settler violence, and racial and ethnic discrimination.

“Most seriously, the purpose of settler implantation – rupturing the relationship between a native people and its territory – is the denial of the right to self-determination, which is at the very core of modern human rights law.”

The experts welcomed the diplomatic criticism regarding the Israeli plans for settlement expansion issued by leading actors in the international community in recent weeks, including by the United States and the European Union.

“However, criticism without consequences means little in these circumstances,” they said. “Israel has paid a miniscule cost over the past five decades for building its 300 settlements and defying international law.”

The experts called upon the international community to support the current investigation into the Israeli settlements by the Office of the Prosecutor at the International Criminal Court. They also called upon UN member states to ensure that corporations and institutions under their respective jurisdiction have no involvement in aiding, assisting or investing in the settlements. “An occupying power that initiates and expands civilian settlements in defiance of international law and the Rome Statute cannot be serious about peace,” the experts said. “Equally, an international community that does not impose accountability measures on a defiant occupying power contrary to international law cannot be serious about its own laws.”

## **II. BELGIUM SUPPORTS WFP OPERATIONS IN PALESTINE**

*On 9 November 2021, the World Food Programme (WFP) issued the following [press release](#).*

Belgium’s support comes at a time when WFP is strapped for funds in the five countries. This timely donation is allowing WFP to continue to provide critical assistance to millions of people in Africa and the Middle East who have been affected by conflicts, displacement, and economic downturn.

Belgium is supporting WFP operations in Palestine with €2 million to provide assistance for 157,600 of the poorest and most food insecure people in the Gaza Strip, more than 70 percent of them are women and children. While already living on the edge unable to put food on their table, tens of thousands of families in the Gaza Strip rely on WFP food assistance as their only safety net to cope with hardships and eroding access to national social allowances. WFP is providing assistance via cash-based transfer in the form of electronic food vouchers to the majority of families and a small percentage receive monthly food rations.

## **III. UN AGENCIES AND ASSOCIATION OF INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCIES STAND BY CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS IN OPT**

*On 9 November 2021, UN development and humanitarian entities, agencies funds and programs and the Association of International Development Agencies reiterated their support for civil society organisations in the Occupied Palestinian Territory in the following [press release](#).*

The decision on 7 November of the Military Commander in the West Bank to declare by Military Orders the six Palestinian NGOs as unauthorized in the West Bank deepens the concern of the UN Agencies and the Association International Development Agencies (AIDA), working in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT). The decision is a further erosion of civic and humanitarian space and stands to significantly constrain the work of the six organisations which have worked with the international community, including the UN, for decades, providing essential services to countless Palestinians.

“These allegations are taken very seriously. To date, none of the UN agencies nor AIDA organisations have received written documentation which could serve as a basis for the allegations”, said United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for the OPT, Lynn Hastings. She added that “we will continue to engage with all relevant partners for more information”.

Counter-terrorism legislation must be in accordance with obligations under international humanitarian law and international human rights law, which include full respect for the rights to freedom of association and expression. It cannot be applied to legitimate human rights and humanitarian work; the breadth of the Israeli 2016 Anti-Terrorism legislation and its impact on the presumption of innocence present serious concerns under international law.

With our strong commitment to the indispensable role of civil society in democratic life and in finding peaceful solutions to conflict, many of us work with and some financially support these organizations. Past allegations of misuse of our funds by Palestinian civil society organization partners have not been substantiated. We will continue to stand by international law and civil society organizations that promote international humanitarian law, human rights and democratic values.

#### **IV. UN HUMAN RIGHTS EXPERTS ALARMED BY RISE IN SETTLER VIOLENCE**

*On 10 November 2021, Michael Lynk, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian Territory occupied since 1967, Jelena Aparac (Chair-Rapporteur), Ravindran Daniel, Chris Kwaj, and Sorch MacLeod of the Working Group on the Use of Mercenaries issued the following [statement](#).*

UN human rights experts have expressed alarm at the rising rate of violence directed by Israeli settlers towards Palestinians in the occupied Palestinian territory.

“Settler violence has always been an extremely disturbing feature of the Israeli occupation,” said the experts. “But in 2021, we are witnessing the highest recorded levels of violence in recent years and more severe incidents.

“The Israeli Government and its military have done far too little to curb this violence and to protect the Palestinians under siege. In several cases, Israeli security forces and outsourced private security companies stand by and take no action to prevent the violence; instead, they respond to settler-related violence by ordering Palestinians to leave the area, including Palestinian-owned land, or even actively support the settlers.”

According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), already in the first 10 months of 2021, there have been 410 attacks by settlers against Palestinians (302 against property and 108 against individuals). Four Palestinians were killed by settlers this year. In 2020, there was a total of 358 recorded attacks. In 2019, there were 335 such attacks.

These settler attacks are primarily directed against rural Palestinian families living on small farms or in villages and towns in the occupied West Bank located in close proximity to Israeli

settlements. Many of these Palestinians reside in the so-called “Area C” of the West Bank, which is under complete Israeli security and civil control, and where Israel’s de facto annexation stratagem is most evident.

The experts noted that settler violence has taken many forms, including physical violence, shooting with live ammunition, torching of fields and livestock, theft and vandalization of property, trees and crops, stone-throwing and tenacious intimidation of herders and their families. In the autumn, it is often directed towards Palestinians engaged in the olive harvest. Harvested olives are stolen or ruined. Olive trees are destroyed. Harvesters are attacked with rocks and pipes, or threatened with weapons.

On other occasions, settlers have seized private or public Palestinian land and brought sheep and cattle to graze on the land, as an initial step to drive Palestinians away from their land. If Palestinians attempt to keep their land, they are frequently met with violence.

“The ubiquity of these attacks, and the credible reports of the Israeli military’s passivity in combating this violence, has deepened the atmosphere of fear and coercion throughout the West Bank,” said the experts.

“We are very troubled by the failure of Israel, the occupying power, to exercise its substantial obligations under the Fourth Geneva Convention, including Article 27, to protect the population under occupation.”

According to Yesh Din, an Israeli human rights organization, 91 percent of investigations into settler attacks against Palestinians between 2005 and 2019 were closed by the Israeli authorities with no charges filed. Yesh Din has also reported that more than 40 percent of the Palestinians who have contacted the organization since 2018 to report settler violence have chosen not to file complaints with the Israeli authorities because they have no expectation that justice will be served.

“This precipitous rise in settler violence is not simply the result of a few ‘bad apples’ among the settler population,” the experts said. “The deep state support provided by Israel to the illegal settlement enterprise, including to the more than 140 settlement outposts established throughout the West Bank in defiance of even Israel’s own laws, has fueled this coercive environment and encouraged violence.

“In an atmosphere where the rights of the protected population are ignored, where settler violence is met with complicity and the prevailing political message from the occupying power is that this land belongs to only one people, the international community has a solemn responsibility to impose accountability measures to end this climate of impunity and to insist upon respect for the international rule of law.”

## V. SECRETARY-GENERAL CALLS FOR SUPPORT TO UNRWA

*On 16 November 2021, UN Secretary-General António Guterres addressed a [video message](#) to the Ministerial Conference on the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) held in Brussels.*

I am pleased to join you in this critical conference in support of UNRWA. My thanks to the Governments of Jordan and Sweden for organizing this event and to all of you for being here.

You understand the essential role that UNRWA plays in the lives of generations of Palestine refugees.

UNRWA today is providing more than half a million children with high-quality education; investing in human development; ensuring that Palestine refugees — children, youth, the elderly and persons with disabilities — have lifelines of hope and opportunity; managing the impact of shocks on the most vulnerable; and empowering millions, despite the many obstacles and difficult conditions in which they live.

Through all of these efforts and more, UNRWA is also enabling many of them to make extraordinary contributions to their communities and to the world at large. And UNRWA is playing a pivotal role in promoting regional stability.

UN Member States have agreed on UNRWA's comprehensive mandate for decades. And yet UNRWA continues to face an existential crisis.

We need to protect UNRWA from being used as a political pawn and focus on its ability to carry out its General Assembly mandate and its unrelenting commitment to humanitarian principles and shared United Nations values.

Despite widely recognized achievements, UNRWA is prevented from assisting Palestine refugees in a predictable way. Overwhelming support for UNRWA is not adequately matched by sufficient funding for its operations.

These recurring funding crises have led UNRWA to introduce austerity measures. But these have reached their limits. What UNRWA really needs is adequate resources, including human resources.

I have put forward a proposal to the General Assembly for additional posts from the United Nations regular budget as a step to increase the core capacity of the Agency.

Today, I have two specific requests:

First, we need urgent and decisive support to maintain UNRWA's ability to operate this year. We must bridge the immediate funding gap. UNRWA's essential health, education and services must not be interrupted.

A disruption of services and salaries would have a crippling impact — especially in a region already struggling with the consequences of the pandemic. These repeated funding crises affect the quality of UNRWA's services and impose immense stress on Palestine refugees.

Second, I urge Member States to step up longer-term commitments and solidarity and match the generosity of the countries that host Palestine refugees.

We need to collectively find a path towards more predictable, sufficient and sustainable funding for the Agency, including through multi-year commitments. I ask for your support.

Finally, I know you join me in expressing deep admiration for UNRWA's work — day in, day out. The teachers, the doctors and nurses, the sanitation workers, the engineers and so many others — all are working under extreme duress to provide Palestine refugees with access to basic services that all of us take for granted.

I am grateful to all UNRWA staff for their tireless efforts to deliver, protect the rights of Palestine refugees and support their human development.

Let's help them help Palestine refugees. An investment in UNRWA is an investment in peace and hope.

## **VI. AID COORDINATION COMMITTEE MEETS IN OSLO**

*On 17 November 2021, the Ad-Hoc Liaison Committee (AHLC) met in Oslo at ministerial level. The Chair of AHLC (Norway) issued the following [chair summary](#).*

The AHLC met in Oslo at ministerial level on 17 November 2021, with physical and virtual participation. To prepare for the meeting, all AHLC delegations met at senior-official level for consultations in Oslo. We commend the Parties and key international partners for their invaluable leadership in contributing to the meeting.

The AHLC was established to promote cooperation between the parties and the donor community in support of the two-state solution, development of the Palestinian economy, and institution-building for a Palestinian state.

This AHLC meeting comes at a critical point. The guarded optimism expressed in the February 2021 meeting of the AHLC has given way to deep concern. Destabilization may be caused by either lack of access to financial resources for the Palestinian government, the financial crisis in the UNRWA, the continuing high levels of friction in the West Bank and in East Jerusalem, or a breakdown of the ceasefire understanding between Israel and the militant groups in Gaza – or a combination of these and other factors. Neither the West Bank nor Gaza are stable, and measures should be taken to calm down tensions.

Statements to this meeting stressed that urgent steps are still necessary, but not enough. Therefore, the AHLC welcomed that both parties came to the meeting with constructive measures and a practical attitude to address the entrenched Palestinian financial deficit. The meeting urged the parties to translate this attitude into real changes; the Palestinians by implementing reforms and Israel by delivering on their stated commitments.

The Palestinian government was commended for managing its finances under exceptional circumstances. The AHLC expressed its appreciation for the recent steps by the Israeli government to strengthen the Palestinian economy.



Structural constraints for a sustainable development of the Palestinian economy remain and must be removed. Resolving the fiscal issues under discussion is vital to increasing revenues and help stabilize the economy.

Against this backdrop, the meeting expressed support for a set of recommendations that the AHLC will follow up on at its next meeting:

- For the parties to avoid all unilateral actions that could further aggravate tensions and undermine the prospects for resuming negotiations and the two-state solution, and for both parties to respect signed agreements.
- For the parties to continue progress on the outstanding fiscal files with particular focus on the E-VAT mechanism, handling fees, the Allenby exit fees, exemption of excise tax on Palestinian fuel purchased from Israel, and improved customs processes.
- For the parties to work on minimizing risks to the corresponding banking relations, including the alarming excess cash shekel surplus accumulating in Palestinian banks.
- For the parties to resume meeting in technical committees relevant for making progress on projects, including updating A1 and A2 lists.
- For the parties to follow up on their agreement to meet in the Joint Economic Committee.
- For the parties to expand trade between Jordan and Palestine, and between Gaza and the West Bank, Israel and other countries, and to expand the door-to-door facility.
- For the PA to implement reforms to the wage bill, limit net lending, enhance control in the health system referrals and strengthen its cost recovery for services.
- For Israel to expand access and movement, including access for Palestinian workers to the Israeli labor market and supply lines of medical goods, relevant equipment, materials, humanitarian workers especially to Gaza, while taking security concerns into account.
- For the parties to agree on outstanding telecommunication issues and the allocation of adequate frequencies for Palestinian operators.

For the donor community and development partners:

- to increase the financial support, commensurate with Palestinian fiscal reforms, and to increase multiyear financial support.
- to continue humanitarian and development support to both the West Bank and Gaza, including cash for work programmes, to support the UN package of critical interventions in Gaza aimed at maintaining calm, and to increase support to UNRWA.
- to finance the Gaza Reconstruction Mechanism for entry of critical materials for projects and private sector development.
- to continue strengthening the Palestinian public health system and provision of adequate medical supplies and medicines.
- to provide expert support to increase the PA's institutional capacity for implementing its reforms, and for the IMF to resume preparing reports to the AHLC and help design a medium-term macroeconomic and fiscal framework.
- to cover outstanding funding gaps for ongoing, critical infrastructure project, including within the energy, water and wastewater sectors, with particular focus on the four

projects presented at the AHLC, and the parties to proceed with all necessary agreements.

The AHLC welcomed the promise to receive a full report from the IMF for the next meeting, which will promote transparency and increase our understanding of the financial situation.

The Palestinian economy cannot reach its full potential before the Palestinians get full access to their land and resources, and they can move and trade inside and outside their own territory. The donors urged Israelis and Palestinians to reach understandings on crucial economic projects and initiatives that will benefit the Palestinian population. Therefore, the international donor community urges the parties to demonstrate, through policies and actions, a genuine commitment to create a path back to meaningful negotiations on a comprehensive political settlement.

## **VII. QUARTET ENVOYS MEET, ISSUE A STATEMENT**

*On 17 November 2021, the Envoys of the Middle East Quartet met in Oslo on the side-lines of the Ad-Hoc Liaison Committee. A joint [press statement](#) was issued.*

The Envoys of the Middle East Quartet from the European Union, the Russian Federation, the United States, and the United Nations met in person in Oslo, Norway following an important meeting of the Ad-Hoc Liaison Committee addressing the Palestinian economic situation.

The Envoys welcome steps announced by Israel to reach out to the Palestinian Authority and to assist with the fiscal crisis. The Envoys remain deeply concerned by developments in the West Bank, Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip, including ongoing acts of violence in the West Bank, the advancement of new settlement units, the untenable fiscal crisis within the Palestinian Authority and threats of violence from the Gaza Strip.

In this context, the Quartet highlights the urgent need for all parties to take additional steps to address these challenges directly through fiscal and other reforms, as well as to avoid unilateral steps that exacerbate tensions and undermine the prospects for peace.

The Envoys noted the pressing need to address the fragile situation in Gaza -- with the support of all relevant stakeholders, including in the region -- by ensuring continued humanitarian efforts and an easing of access and movement restrictions for people and goods.

The Quartet Envoys highlighted the urgency of the situation and the importance of taking constructive steps to advance a two-State solution. They further underscored the importance of respect for human rights and the actions of civil society groups.

Finally, the Envoys agreed to work toward a resolution of the conflict and continue consultations with the parties and key regional actors.

## VIII. 200,000 WOMEN AND GIRLS TO BENEFIT FROM NEW SAFE PUBLIC SPACE

*On 19 November 2021, the HAYA Joint Programme (implemented by UN Women, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), UN-Habitat, and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)) issued a [press release](#) saying that 200,000 women and girls are to benefit from new safe public space by UN and partners in Gaza.*

Through the HAYA Joint Programme funded by the Government of Canada, UN-Habitat, in close cooperation with the Palestinian Ministry of Local Government, Khan Younis Municipality, and the Palestinian Housing Council, inaugurated a new safe, inclusive, and accessible public space entitled the “Haya Promenade” for women, girls, and families in Khan Younis.

Design of the promenade began early this year following a city-wide public space assessment<sup>1</sup> measuring the quality of 134 public spaces in Khan Younis and the limitations affecting the use of these spaces by women and girls. With 14 per cent of Khan Younis public spaces associated with high levels of harassment and crime and 50 per cent deemed unsafe by residents, safe public spaces are especially needed. Located by the Mediterranean Sea, the new promenade provides a comfortable space where the city’s more than 200,000 women and girls can easily and safely exercise their rights to the city.

Engaging various groups within the Khan Younis community, design of the promenade included the assistance of four architectural university students through site specific assessments and innovative tools and approaches to engage the local community, such as utilizing the Minecraft computer game. These approaches included the participation of 40 young community representatives, promoting their skills and knowledge in decision making and leadership.

“Standing in the garden where each element is inspired by our designs, I can say that this unique experience has encouraged our interest and willingness to participate in community development and other types of public engagement,” says 17-year-old community representative Reem Bashir. “We are very proud of our contribution in decreasing the gender-based violence in our city by designing safe and inclusive public spaces.”

One of the most disadvantaged areas in terms of infrastructure and public facilities, the 8.2-kilometre coastal area of Khan Younis previously lacked a safe, well-designed public space for women and girls to engage in social activities.

Mr. Zeyad Elshakra, Head of UN-Habitat Country Programme in Palestine stressed the importance of these spaces. “We emphasize our commitment to building a better, sustainable, and inclusive urban environment that promotes the equal use and enjoyment of cities without discrimination of any kind, especially for the most marginalized segments in the society, namely women and girls.”

Khan Younis Municipality Mayor Dr. Alaa El Batta emphasized the importance of new partnerships with local and international organizations in implementing development projects serving the most marginalized segments of the community, particularly women and girls. “We should provide a space for youth and women to raise their voices and advance their right to being

---

<sup>1</sup> UN-Habitat, Khan Younis [City Wide Assessment](#) 2021

a vital part of the development process,” says Dr. El Batta. “This newly inaugurated public space serves as great evidence that the development process can be more successful when local communities are heavily engaged in the planning and implementation processes.”

The Haya Promenade promotes equity and inclusiveness for women and girls, as well as children and people with disabilities, through provision of adequate facilities such as baby care rooms, accessible bathrooms, and service rooms. Environmental and social factors, as well as continuous operation and maintenance, were also taken into consideration throughout the design process to ensure the long-term sustainability and longevity of the promenade.

Through the development of gender responsive policies and strategies, UN-Habitat continues to strive to strengthen the capacity of national and local governments to promote safe, inclusive, accessible, and gender-based violence-free public spaces.

## **IX. EU ISSUES SIX-MONTH REPORT ON SETTLEMENTS**

*On 22 November 2021, the Office of the European Union Representative (West Bank and Gaza Strip, UNRWA) issued a Six-Month Report on Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem for the reporting period of 1 July - 31 December 2020. The summary of the [report](#) is reproduced below.*

Advancement of plans for settlement units in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem continued in the second half of 2020 (July-December), albeit at a lower rate than in the first half of 2020 (January-July). 8,058 settlement units were advanced in different stages of the planning and implementation process (plans and tenders). 3,010 of the units pertain to settlements located in occupied East Jerusalem, and 4,948 to settlements located in other parts of the West Bank, including in locations deep in the West Bank. The total number of settlement units advanced through plans and tenders recorded in 2020 (22,448) is close to double the number recorded in 2019 (11,427), making 2020 a “record year” in terms of advanced settlements units in the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem seen over the past five years.

In East Jerusalem a tender for 1,257 units was announced (an increase from the 1,077 units announced in February) for the previously frozen and very sensitive project, to create an entirely new settlement in Givat Hamatos. In addition, road infrastructure projects were advanced in and around occupied East Jerusalem including in the West Bank that mainly serve to connect the settlements to one another and to Jerusalem.

Other trends and developments contributing to settlement expansion in the reporting period included advancements of infrastructure and road projects as well as the establishment of new illegal so called outpost farms.

As stated in numerous EU Foreign Affairs Council conclusions, settlements are illegal under international law, constitute an obstacle to peace and threaten to make a two-state solution impossible. The EU has reiterated its strong opposition to Israel's settlement policy and actions taken in this context, such as building the separation barrier beyond the 1967 line, demolitions and confiscation — including of EU funded projects — evictions, forced transfers including of Bedouins, illegal outposts and restrictions of movement and access. The EU has also urged Israel

to end all settlement activity and to dismantle the outposts, in line with prior obligations, and maintains that settlement activity in East Jerusalem seriously jeopardizes the possibility of Jerusalem serving as the future capital of both States.

## **X. EU SIX-MONTH REPORT ON DEMOLITIONS**

*On 22 November 2021, the Office of the European Union Representative (West Bank and Gaza Strip, UNRWA) issued a Six-Month Report on Demolitions and Seizures in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem for the reporting period: 1 July - 31 December 2020<sup>1</sup>. The summary of the [report](#) is reproduced below.*

Despite a temporary freeze on home demolitions announced by the Israeli Authorities at the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, the number of demolitions and seizures of Palestinian property by Israeli authorities in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, skyrocketed during the reporting period in comparison to the previous one. 536 Palestinian owned structures were demolished or seized, and 627 people (including 318 children) were displaced. Of the structures targeted in the six-month reporting period, 84 structures were funded by the EU or EU Member States with a value of nearly EUR 175,508.

The total number of demolitions in 2020 (January-December) amounted to 854 structures, of which 122 were EU funded humanitarian aid structures (valued at EUR 300,233), a 25 percent increase in the demolition of EU funded structures compared to 2019. Overall, 2020 saw a 36% increase in demolitions and a 10% increase in displacements, compared to 2019, marking a four-year high in demolitions and displacements, including incidents affecting EU-funded structures.

A major trend observed during the reporting period was the increased use of military orders and other legislation, preventing or limiting people's ability to legally challenge the targeting of their homes and sources of livelihood in Israeli courts<sup>2</sup>. In Area C, there was an increase in the seizure of structures with little or no prior notice through the use of military orders. In East Jerusalem, Palestinian homeowners were forced to demolish their own property to avoid financial penalties and/or imprisonment as a result of increasing pressure from the Jerusalem Municipality.

---

<sup>1</sup> UN OCHA (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs) Demolition Database last accessed 12 October 2021. All information disclosed in this report is susceptible to change at any time depending on new available data.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/peak-demolitions-and-confiscations-amidst-increasing-denial-right-justice>

## **XI. UN SECRETARY-GENERAL'S MESSAGE ON SOLIDARITY DAY**

*On 23 November 2021, Secretary-General António Guterres sent a [message](#) on occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People to be observed on 29 November 2021.*

On this International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory — including East Jerusalem — continues to pose a significant challenge to international peace and security. Persistent violations of the rights of Palestinians along with the expansion of settlements risk eroding the prospect of a two-State solution.

As the international community strives to re-start Israeli-Palestinian dialogue, I am encouraged by recent engagements between senior Israeli and Palestinian officials. However, containing the situation is not sufficient. The overall goal remains two States living side by side in peace and security, fulfilling the legitimate national aspirations of both peoples, with borders based on the 1967 lines and Jerusalem as the capital of both States.

I call on the parties to avoid unilateral steps that would undermine the chances for a peaceful resolution of the conflict based on international law and relevant United Nations resolutions. I further call on the parties to engage constructively to end the closure of Gaza and improve the living conditions of all Palestinians under occupation.

I commend the generous donors who support the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and call for Member States to provide timely and predictable funding to allow the Agency to conduct its vital work.

Together, let us reaffirm our unwavering commitment to the Palestinian people in their quest to achieve their inalienable rights and build a future of peace, justice, security and dignity for both Palestinians and Israelis.

## **XII. SPECIAL COORDINATOR BRIEFS SECURITY COUNCIL**

*On 30 November 2021, Tor Wennesland, Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, gave a [briefing](#) to the Security Council on the Situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question, reproduced below.*

I brief the Security Council today as we face a series of heightened and interrelated risks across the occupied Palestinian territory.

In the West Bank, a severe financial and economic crisis is threatening the stability of Palestinian institutions. At the same time, ongoing violence and unilateral steps, including Israeli settlement expansions and demolitions, continue to raise tensions, feed hopelessness, erode the Palestinian Authority's standing and further diminish the prospect of a return to meaningful negotiations.

In Gaza, the fragile cessation of hostilities continues to hold, but further steps on the part of all parties are needed to ensure a sustainable solution that will ultimately enable a return of legitimate Palestinian Government institutions to the Strip.

Amid these concerning developments, on 17 November the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee for the Coordination of the International Assistance to Palestinians met in Oslo at the ministerial level. Participants commended the parties for approaching the meeting with a constructive attitude, urging them to implement reforms and follow through on commitments to help stabilize the Palestinian economy and strengthen its institutions. Participants expressed support for a package of recommended steps for the parties and the donor community.

On the margins, I met with my fellow Middle East Quartet Envoys. In a joint statement, the Quartet Envoys expressed concern regarding negative developments across the occupied Palestinian territory, including ongoing acts of violence in the West Bank, the advancement of new settlement units, an untenable fiscal crisis within the Palestinian Authority and threats of violence from the Gaza Strip.

The Quartet Envoys also reiterated the need to take constructive steps to advance the two-State solution and called on all parties to help address the current urgent challenges through fiscal and other reforms, as well by avoiding unilateral steps that could exacerbate tensions and undermine the prospects for peace.

In the meantime, violence continued daily throughout the occupied Palestinian territory. In the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, clashes, attacks, search-and-arrest operations and other incidents resulted in the deaths of four Palestinians, including two children, and injuries to 90 Palestinians, including 12 children, caused by the Israeli security forces. One Israeli civilian was killed and nine civilians, including one woman and one child, and six members of the Israeli security forces were injured in the course of these events.

On 5 November, Israeli security forces shot and killed a 15-year-old Palestinian boy during clashes near Nablus. According to the Israeli Defense Forces, the incident is being investigated.

On 16 November, Israeli security forces shot and killed a 26-year-old Palestinian during a search operation and subsequent clashes in Tubas. The Israeli security forces stated their personnel had returned fire after they were shot at and that an improvised explosive device was thrown at them from a passing vehicle. No Israeli security forces were injured in that operation. Palestinian Islamic Jihad later claimed the man as a member.

Tensions and clashes between Palestinians and the Israeli security forces also heightened in and around Jerusalem's Old City. On 17 November, a 16-year-old Palestinian from the Al-Issawiya neighbourhood, in occupied East Jerusalem, stabbed and injured two Israeli security forces personnel in Jerusalem's Old City. In response, an Israeli civilian and the Israeli security forces shot the perpetrator, who was pronounced dead shortly afterwards. According to eyewitnesses, the perpetrator was being restrained when shot.

On 21 November, a Palestinian man opened fire at Israeli civilians in Jerusalem's Old City, killing one Israeli civilian and injuring two others. Israeli security forces returned fire and killed the attacker. Two Israeli security forces were injured. Hamas claimed the assailant as one its

members. Following the attack, the Israeli security forces reportedly conducted search and-arrest operations in the Shu'fat refugee camp, where the perpetrator lived, detaining several of his family members. All were later released.

Violent attacks and acts of terrorism can never be justified and must be condemned by all.

Settler-related violence remains at alarmingly high levels amid continued tensions over settlement expansion and the annual olive harvest season. Since the harvest began on 4 October, some 3,000 olive trees have been damaged or have had their harvest stolen. Physical attacks on Palestinian farmers, volunteers and humanitarian staff have also been recorded, some reportedly having taken place in the presence of Israeli security forces.

Overall, settlers and other Israeli civilians in the occupied West Bank perpetrated some 54 attacks against Palestinians, resulting in 26 injuries, including to five children, and damage to property. Palestinians perpetrated 41 attacks against Israeli settlers and other civilians, resulting, as I reported earlier, in one death and nine injuries, including to one child and one woman, and damage to property. Most incidents resulting in injury or damage were caused by stones and Molotov cocktails thrown at civilian vehicles and buses.

On 24 November, a Palestinian man was critically injured and his 10-year-old son injured after their car overturned near Al-Mughayyir village in the West Bank, due to an object thrown from an oncoming car. According to witnesses, the car was hit by objects thrown by Israeli settlers. Israeli authorities have opened an investigation into the incident.

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

On 24 October, Israeli authorities announced tenders for some 1,350 housing units in settlements. About half are in the settlement of Ariel, at the heart of the northern West Bank. The announcement also included a reissuance of tenders for some 80 units in the settlement of Givat Hamatos, where construction would further risk severing the link between East Jerusalem and Bethlehem.

On 27 October, after a hiatus of some eight months, Israeli authorities advanced plans for some 3,200 housing units in Area C, with many located in outlying settlements. I reiterate that all settlements are illegal under international law and remain a substantial obstacle to peace.

Meanwhile, in a rare development, on 28 October and 1 November, Israeli authorities advanced plans for some 6,000 housing units for Palestinians in the occupied East Jerusalem neighbourhood of Al-Issawiya and some 1,300 housing units for Palestinians in Area C. While such steps are welcome, I urge Israel to advance more such plans and issue building permits for all previously approved plans for Palestinians in Area C and East Jerusalem.

Israeli demolitions and confiscations of Palestinian homes and other structures continued during the reporting period. Overall, Israeli authorities demolished, seized or forced owners to demolish 84 Palestinian owned structures in Area C and 17 in East Jerusalem, displacing 83 Palestinians, including 24 women and 39 children. The demolitions were carried out due to the lack of Israeli-issued building permits, which are nearly impossible for Palestinians to obtain.



On 25 October in Hammamat Al-Maleh, in the northern Jordan Valley, Israeli authorities confiscated a medical clinic serving five communities.

On 2 November, four Palestinian families in the East Jerusalem neighbourhood of Sheikh Jarrah rejected a proposal by Israel's Supreme Court that would have recognized them as protected tenants in exchange for nominal rent, payable to the settler corporation seeking to evict them, significantly delaying their eviction. The settler corporation also reportedly raised reservations to the Court's proposal. The Court had previously announced that if the parties did not accept its proposal, it would issue a ruling on the case.

I urge Israel to cease demolitions and evictions, in line its obligations under international humanitarian law.

In another concerning development, on 22 October the Israeli Ministry of Defence announced the designation of six Palestinian non-governmental organizations (NGOs) as terrorist organizations. The Ministry accused them of constituting "an inseparable arm" of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, an organization designated as terrorist by Israel, the United States, Australia, Canada, Japan and the European Union. The Israeli Defense Forces extended the applicability of the designations to the occupied West Bank through military orders on 7 November. These designated NGOs work closely with the United Nations and the international community, including on human rights and humanitarian response, and several receive a significant portion of their funding from Member States.

The legal implications of the designations are potentially wide-ranging and add to increasing pressures on civil society organizations across the occupied Palestinian territory. The Secretary-General has expressed concern about shrinking space for civil society around the world, including in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory. The United Nations has engaged with Israeli authorities, the designated NGOs and donors to receive more information about the allegations and their implications.

I turn now to Gaza. Humanitarian recovery and reconstruction efforts continued, alongside steps to further stabilize the situation on the ground. In October, some 9,406 truckloads of goods entered Gaza through the Israeli-controlled Kerem Shalom crossing, some 20 per cent above the pre-escalation monthly average. In addition, almost 3,000 truckloads entered Gaza through the Egyptian-controlled Rafah crossing. As of the end of the reporting period, some 8,500 permits had been issued for traders and merchants in Gaza to enter into Israel.

While the gradual easing of restrictions on the entry of materials and the flow of goods and people into Gaza is encouraging, the economic, security and humanitarian situation in the Strip remains of serious concern. The goal remains the lifting of all closures, in line with resolution 1860 (2009).

In the meantime, the Gaza Reconstruction Mechanism continues to play an important role in facilitating access for items and materials that would otherwise not be allowed into Gaza. In a positive development, on 5 November, Israel began providing additional water to Gaza through the new Bani Said connection point, allowing an increase of 5 million cubic metres of water per year into Gaza.

I welcome the strong support expressed to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) at the ministerial conference co-hosted by Jordan and Sweden earlier this month. Despite welcome additional pledges, I am concerned that UNRWA still lacks \$60 million to sustain essential services to 2 million Palestine refugees across the region until the end of the year. The Agency has yet to pay the November salaries of over 28,000 United Nations personnel, including teachers, doctors, nurses and sanitation workers, many of whom support extended families, particularly in Gaza, where unemployment is high. I call on Member States to do everything possible to protect services by urgently advancing the disbursement of announced pledges and by providing additional contributions in the coming days and weeks.

Both parties sent high-level delegations to the twenty-sixth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Glasgow. There is growing Israeli, Palestinian and regional interest in cooperating on shared environmental threats and climate change action. In that regard, the renewed direct engagement, after an extended hiatus, between Israeli and Palestinian environment ministers is a welcome step. In a separate positive development, on 7 November, the Israeli Government approved the issuance of some 500 permits over the next three years for Palestinians to work in the Israeli technology sector.

I was encouraged by the engagement between Israeli and Palestinian delegations at the meeting of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee for the Coordination of the International Assistance to Palestinians in Oslo and took note of the concerns shared by all parties about the fiscal crisis facing the Palestinian Authority. Moreover, nearly all participants expressed serious concerns about the overall trajectory of the conflict.

It is essential that the parties avoid unilateral steps, reduce flashpoints and violence across the occupied Palestinian territory, solidify the cessation of hostilities and support economic development in the Gaza Strip. Furthermore, steps by all parties are urgently needed to shore up the economic and institutional stability of the PA, including through the implementation of needed reforms.

But even a full and immediate financial package may not be sufficient or come quickly enough — if at all — to help buffer the consequences of the current crisis. I therefore emphasize again the importance of concerted efforts by the parties to calm things on the ground. I am concerned that, if we do not act quickly and decisively, we risk plunging into another deadly escalation of violence.

Recent developments on the ground are worrisome. We need a coordinated approach to encourage all parties to implement policy shifts and reforms; address quickly and in parallel the key conflict drivers at the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, in Gaza and those facing the PA; and restore a political horizon that will help stop the endless cycle of crisis management and move back towards meaningful negotiations to end the occupation and resolve the conflict on the basis of United Nations resolutions, international law and previous agreements.

The Quartet will continue its consultations with the parties and key regional actors.