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

Security Council  
Seventy-seventh year

## Identical letters dated 14 January 2022 from the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council

I write again, just days since my letter dated 11 January ([A/ES-10/887-S/2022/25](#)), owing to the escalating repression and attacks against the Palestinian people by Israel, the occupying Power, in grave breach of international law.

Two weeks into 2022, and already there are no words to describe the barbarity of Israel's crimes and violations, as this illegal and cruel occupation continues to target young and old, making life unbearable for the Palestinian civilian population and causing immense human suffering and trauma.

In the early hours of 12 January, Israeli occupation forces killed an 80-year-old man, Omar Asaad, during a military raid on the village of Jiljilya, near Ramallah. The elderly man, born in 1941, was driving home from visiting relatives when he was arbitrarily and violently stopped by Israeli occupation forces, pulled from his vehicle and handcuffed, blindfolded, gagged, assaulted, dragged for 200 metres and thrown into an abandoned building, where he was left unconscious. Mr. Asaad was found dead on the cold floor of the building with his arms behind his back and a zip tie still around one wrist.

Omar Asaad, who suffered from pre-existing heart conditions, diabetes and hypertension, and had previously had open-heart surgery, was a Palestinian-American from Milwaukee. He had lived in the United States for decades with his children and grandchildren before returning to live in Palestine, in 2012, in his retirement. In what was supposed to be the final chapter of his life, spent in his homeland with his loved ones, Mr. Asaad's journey ended in a most depraved and unjustifiable way that explicitly reflects the reality of the suffering being endured by our people under this illegal occupation. We mourn the loss of Omar Asaad and extend our deepest condolences to his family, and we reiterate their demand for accountability for Israel's impunity.

Israel claims that Mr. Asaad was arrested for resisting a military search during a raid on Jiljilya by Israeli occupation forces. Regardless of Israel's typical victim-blaming and empty claims that its investigations are transparent and credible, these



questions must be asked: why were these soldiers harassing an 80-year-old man who was simply driving home in the evening? What kind of society breeds such sociopathic behaviour, such disrespect for elders and such complete disregard for human life? After such horror, how can these soldiers look their fathers and grandfathers in the eye without any sense of guilt? Only in a society that has dehumanized an entire people, such as that bred by the Israeli occupation, can such criminal and barbaric behaviour be normalized and excused.

Omar Asaad is not the only elderly Palestinian victim of Israeli violence and terror. As detailed in our previous letter, 75-year-old Suleiman al-Hathalin remains in a critical condition and is in an induced coma following brain surgery on fractures in his skull, after he was the victim of a car-ramming attack by an Israeli settler who dragged his body for several metres before fleeing the scene, in the open presence of Israeli soldiers.

Clearly, Israeli settlers and soldiers believe they can attack and kill Palestinians in the absolute certainty of not being held accountable. How can anyone genuinely believe Israel's claims of wanting peace? Thus, despite calls for "swift, thorough and transparent" investigations, there is minimal to no credence in a so-called justice system belonging to an occupation regime that shields impunity and makes a mockery of accountability. Unsurprisingly, the United Nations has documented deliberate and unlawful flaws in the occupation's so-called justice system, and even Israeli non-governmental organizations repeatedly highlight how Israeli investigations never lead to indictments and result in zero prosecutions.

We urge those calling for investigations and accountability to make the same calls upon the International Criminal Court to pursue its mandate and work on the situation in Palestine in the face of the countless war crimes that have been, and continue to be, perpetrated against the Palestinian people by the illegal Israeli occupation. If the international community truly believes in accountability and justice for Palestine, then it should be clear by now that these can only be achieved through the application of international law and not through obstructing or delaying its implementation, or worse, exempting and shielding the perpetrators. International action must include support for accountability mechanisms, including through the Security Council and legal action in courts such as the International Criminal Court and the International Court of Justice, as the most viable pathway to justice and peace.

Today, I must also draw attention to the critical situation being faced by Palestinian prisoners as their human rights continue to be violated under Israel's infamous policy of medical negligence. The international community must act to address, and to demand an end to, the occupation's systematic abuse and torture of Palestinian prisoners. A growing number of imprisoned Palestinians are literally fighting for their lives under excruciating conditions, including months-long hunger strikes, collective punishment, medical neglect and the widespread and unlawful practice of "administrative detention", by which Israeli occupation forces detain Palestinians indefinitely without charge or fair trial.

Nasser Abu Hamid has been detained since 2002 and suffers from a cancerous tumour in his lungs. Following the discovery of the tumour, in 2021, Israeli occupation authorities refused to provide any treatment to Nasser, whose health has significantly deteriorated. He is currently in a coma with his hands and feet shackled. Mr. Abu Hamid's family were given fewer than 10 minutes to see their son in this horrifying condition, as he dies before their eyes.

This inhumane policy of the slow murder of ill prisoners, leaving them to die without access to proper medical treatment, must be condemned, and the occupying Power must be called upon to cease all such practices and to comply with international law, including the Fourth Geneva Convention.

Abdel-Baset Maatan is another victim who has been imprisoned by Israel since October 2020. Abdel-Baset underwent several unsuccessful surgeries to remove two types of cancer that had reached a critical stage. This required additional treatment; however, the Israeli occupation forces imprisoned Abdel-Baset and blocked any treatment and medicine from reaching him, and the occupation's court refuses to provide any relief to a dying individual. The Maatan family stated the following regarding Abdel-Baset's deteriorating health: "The situation of the cancer-sick administrative detainee is difficult and it is getting worse day by day. His health is deteriorating and he may reach the same stage as Nasser Abu Hamid. His court date was on 20 December 2021, but the verdict was postponed for a week pending examinations and X-rays. Unfortunately, no examinations, no X-rays have been done, and no new court date has been set."

We thus make another urgent appeal to the international community, particularly the Security Council, to give urgent attention to the plight of the thousands of Palestinian civilians imprisoned by Israel, including children, women and the severely ill, and to act to ensure respect for international humanitarian law and to save lives.

Against a backdrop of inaction, the persistence and intensity of Israel's crimes prove that its intentions are to entrench its occupation and apartheid regime. The long-running practice of exempting Israel from the rules, allowing it to carry on as though it were a State above the law, emboldens such impunity and proves that repeated condemnations and reaffirmations of the law without action have prolonged and compounded this conflict and the suffering of the Palestinian people. It is high time for action and implementation to bring a halt to this impunity, to seek justice for the many victims of this illegal occupation and to open a horizon for a just and peaceful solution to this grave injustice.

Halfway through January, and as Israel's war crimes and human rights violations continue to intensify, the Security Council must not allow inaction and unaccountability to remain the regrettable norm, as seen in previous years. Year after year, the international community expects different results from the occupation, while knowing that Israeli intransigence and impunity obstruct peace and undermine the foundations of international law and the credibility of the United Nations. The Council and the international community at large cannot continue to approach such blatant defiance with appeasement and inaction. The only path forward is to simply have the will to follow through on implementation aimed at ending this historic injustice in line with international law and United Nations resolutions.

The present letter is in follow-up to our 740 letters regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which constitutes the territory of the State of Palestine. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 11 January 2022 (A/ES-10/887-S/2022/25) constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, acts of State terrorism and systematic human rights violations being committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators must be brought to justice.

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

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