



DIVISION FOR
PALESTINIAN RIGHTS

Bulletin

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

January 2022
Volume XLV, Bulletin No. 1

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I. SECURITY COUNCIL HOLDS MINISTERIAL LEVEL QUARTERLY OPEN DEBATE ON THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST, INCLUDING THE PALESTINIAN QUESTION

On 19 January, the Security Council held its quarterly open debate on “The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question”. The [briefing](#) by Special Coordinator Tor Wennesland is reproduced below. Please also see [S/PV.8950](#) for the text of the briefing and other interventions.

In my recent briefings, I have highlighted the ongoing deterioration of the economic, security and political situation across the occupied Palestinian territory. Regrettably, that trend continues, and urgent steps are required to prevent the situation from worsening.

The Palestinian Authority’s (PA) fiscal situation continues to be dire, threatening its institutional stability and its ability to provide services to its people. Violence continues unabated across the occupied Palestinian territory, including settler violence, leading to numerous Palestinian and Israeli casualties and increasing the risk of a broader escalation. Settlement activity, demolitions and evictions also continue, fuelling hopelessness and further diminishing prospects for a negotiated solution.

We must be frank about what is needed to reverse those trends and provide momentum towards a reinvigorated peace process. Piecemeal approaches and half measures will only ensure that the underlying issues perpetuating the conflict continue to fester and worsen over time. Unilateral steps and conflict drivers must stop. Political and economic reforms must be implemented to ensure the PA’s continued ability to function effectively, while boosting donor confidence and support.

Above all, efforts by the parties and the international community to stabilize and improve conditions on the ground should be linked to a political framework.

Without a realistic prospect of an end to the occupation and the realization of a two-State solution based on United Nations resolutions, international law and previous agreements, it is only a matter of time before we face an irreversible, dangerous collapse and widespread instability.

Daily violence continued throughout the occupied Palestinian territory during the reporting period. In Gaza on 29 December, a Palestinian opened fire towards the Gaza perimeter fence, injuring an Israeli civilian. In retaliation, Israeli forces fired several tank shells at what they said were Hamas observation posts in the northern Gaza Strip. Four Palestinian civilians were reportedly injured, including a 16-year-old boy.

On 1 January, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) announced that two rockets fired from Gaza had landed off the coast of central Israel. Israeli forces subsequently carried out air strikes against what they said were facilities belonging to militant groups in Gaza. No injuries were reported.

In the occupied West Bank, six Palestinian men were killed by Israeli security forces, and another died in unclear circumstances in the context of demonstrations, clashes, search

and arrest operations, attacks and alleged attacks against Israelis, as well as in other incidents. Two hundred and forty-nine Palestinians, including four women and 46 children, were injured.

Settlers and other Israeli civilians perpetrated 28 attacks against Palestinians, resulting in six injured and damage to property. Two Palestinians were killed under unclear circumstances involving Israeli civilian vehicles. In all, Palestinians perpetrated some 89 attacks against Israeli settlers and other civilians, resulting in 15 Israeli civilians injured and damage to property in clashes, shootings, stabbings and ramming attacks, as well as incidents involving the throwing of stones and Molotov cocktails and other incidents. Five members of the Israeli security forces were also injured.

On 29 December, a Palestinian man who reportedly attempted to carry out a ramming attack against Israeli security forces near the Mevo Dotan settlement, in the northern West Bank, was killed by Israeli security forces.

On 22 December, a Palestinian man was killed by Israeli security forces near the Al-Amari refugee camp near Ramallah. According to Israeli security forces, the man had opened fire from a vehicle at Israeli forces conducting a search and arrest operation in the area.

On 31 December, a Palestinian man reportedly attempted to carry out a stabbing attack against Israeli soldiers and civilians near the village of Salfit. He was shot by Israeli security forces and later succumbed to his wounds.

On 6 January, a 21-year-old Palestinian man was killed during armed exchanges with Israeli security forces as they conducted a search and arrest operation in the Balata refugee camp, near Nablus in Area A.

On 5 January, a tow truck under supervision by Israeli police hit and severely injured a 70-year-old Palestinian activist man in Un Al-Khail, south of Hebron, during a police operation to confiscate unregistered vehicles. The man subsequently died from his injuries on 17 January. Police reported that a driver was injured in the head by stones thrown at him and required medical attention.

On 12 January, an 80-year-old Palestinian man died in the context of an Israeli security forces operation near Ramallah, in which the victim was reportedly handcuffed, blindfolded and physically assaulted by the security forces. According to the IDF, the man was released alive. I note that Israeli authorities have initiated an investigation and called for a swift, thorough and transparent outcome.

On 17 January, Israeli security forces reported that a Palestinian man attempted to stab an IDF soldier with a knife near Hebron. Israeli security forces shot and killed the alleged assailant. No injuries were reported among the Israeli security forces. Another Palestinian who had been driving the vehicle of the alleged assailant later turned himself in to the Israeli security forces.

Settler-related violence remained a serious concern throughout the reporting period. From 23 to 25 December 2021, 156 Palestinians were injured by rubber bullets from Israeli forces and 15 from live ammunition in confrontations that erupted in and around Burqa, near Nablus, after settlers repeatedly raided the village, vandalized property and clashed with the local residents. That occurred as part of settler protests against the killing of an Israeli settler in that area on 16 December 2021 and demands to re-establish the adjacent settlement of Homesh, which had been officially evacuated in 2005.

On several occasions during reporting period, Israeli security forces and Israeli settlers clashed in the context of efforts by the security forces to dismantle unauthorized structures set up by Israeli settlers in Homesh and other outposts, which are also illegal under Israeli law. All perpetrators of violence must be held accountable and brought swiftly to justice.

Turning to settlement-related developments, on 5 January Israeli authorities postponed a planned discussion on objections to two plans for some 3,500 housing units in the controversial E-1 Area on the West Bank. A new date for the discussion has not been set. The same day, Israeli authorities published tenders for some 300 settlement housing units in the Talpiot East neighbourhood in occupied East Jerusalem.

On 10 January, the Israeli District Planning Committee advanced a plan, pending revision, to build some 800 housing units in place of an existing 182 units in the East Jerusalem settlement of Gilo. On 17 January, the Jerusalem District Planning Committee advanced a plan for some 1,200 housing units next to Kibbutz Ramat Rachel, in the southern Jerusalem area, a significant number of which are intended for construction across the Green Line in East Jerusalem. I reiterate that all settlements are illegal under international law and remain a substantial obstacle to peace. I call on the Government of Israel to cease the advancement of all settlement activities immediately.

Israeli authorities demolished, seized and forced owners to demolish 54 Palestinian-owned structures in Area C and 23 in occupied East Jerusalem, thereby displacing 102 Palestinians, including 26 women and 47 children. The demolitions were carried out due to the lack of Israeli-issued building permits, which are nearly impossible for Palestinians to obtain.

On 19 January, Israeli forces evicted a Palestinian family and demolished their home in the occupied East Jerusalem neighbourhood of Sheikh Jarrah, which displaced 12 Palestinians and reportedly resulted in a number of arrests. According to the Jerusalem Municipality, the structures were built illegally in recent years and the land was cleared to build a special needs school to serve Palestinian children from East Jerusalem.

I remain concerned about the potential eviction of a number of Palestinian families from homes in which they have lived for decades in the Sheikh Jarrah and Silwan neighbourhoods of East Jerusalem and the risk that such actions pose for escalating violence. I call on Israeli authorities to end the displacement and eviction of Palestinians, in line with its obligations under international law, and to approve additional plans that would enable Palestinian communities to build legally and address their development needs.

On 28 December 2021, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas met with Israeli Defence Minister Benjamin Gantz for the second time in four months. Following the meeting, Israel announced several measures, including updating the registration of some 9,500 Palestinians on the West Bank in Gaza, an advance of 100 million Israeli shekels against the clearance revenue that Israel collects on behalf of the PA and additional entry permits for Palestinian officials and businessmen. I welcome the ongoing high-level engagement between Israel and Palestinian officials and the recent steps that have been announced. I urge both sides to continue to expand that engagement to end past underlying political issues.

Following the designation by Israel of six Palestinian non-governmental organizations as terrorist organizations, the United Nations continues to engage with all relevant parties to receive more information about the allegations and their implications.

On 12 January, the Palestinian Central Elections Commission concluded voter registration for a second phase of local council elections, scheduled for 26 March. However, on 17 January, the Palestinian Cabinet postponed local council elections in Gaza over procedural disputes. On 14 January, the Envoys of the Middle East Quartet met virtually to discuss the most recent political developments and the situation on the ground.

Turning to Gaza, during the month of January Israeli authorities completed the issuance of permits to approximately 10,000 Gazan merchants and traders — some 12,000 total approved permits, the highest number in years. I welcome the stated willingness of the Government of Israel, in line with the commitments made in November 2021 at the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee meeting in Oslo, to increase the movement of goods and people into and out of the Gaza Strip and the steps taken in that regard. At the same time, I reiterate that more such measures are needed for durable economic benefits to materialize. I urge both parties to engage with the United Nations to find concrete ways to further enhance access and trade, including facilitating the entry of dual-use materials for key sectors of the economy under the Gaza Reconstruction Mechanism.

On 27 December 2021, the State of Qatar announced that it had signed an agreement with the PA and the Gaza Electricity Distribution Corporation to advance the construction of a natural gas pipeline from Israel to Gaza. The pipeline aims to reduce costs and increase efficiency and electricity generation at the Gaza power plant. I urge all parties to facilitate the implementation of that important project.

On 28 December 2021, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) announced the start of cash assistance allocation of \$8.2 million to families whose homes were damaged during the May 2021 escalation. Thanks to exceptional financial contributions, an advance on 2022 contributions, a Central Emergency Response Fund loan and debt carried into 2022, UNRWA was able to sustain critical education, health care and humanitarian services for millions of Palestinian refugees in the occupied Palestinian territories and throughout the region. For 2022, UNRWA is again presenting a zerogrowth core programme budget, despite the increased needs of Palestinian refugees. The Agency is confronted with a serious financial existential threat that can affect the rights and well-being of refugees and regional stability. I therefore urge Member States to continue and expand their contribution to UNRWA.

Turning briefly to the region, in the Golan, while the ceasefire between Israel and Syria has generally been maintained, violations of the 1974 Disengagement of Forces Agreement by the parties continue to increase tensions. It is important that the parties respect the obligations under the terms of the Agreement and refrain from taking unilateral steps in the occupied Golan that further erode peace and stability in the region.

During a visit to Lebanon in December, the Secretary-General expressed solidarity with the Lebanese people in the context of the country's difficult socioeconomic situation. He reiterated the need for political leaders to work together to urgently find a solution to the crisis.

Parliamentary elections have been announced for 15 May. The full reactivation of the Cabinet will be important, including to reliably support election preparations.

The situation in the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) area of operations remains relatively stable, despite isolated incidents of aggressive behaviour against peacekeepers. UNIFIL remains engaged with the parties to contain incidents and defuse tension along the Blue Line.

In closing, allow me to reiterate the urgent need for a coordinated approach to addressing the political, economic and institutional obstacles blocking the way for a meaningful peace process. Alongside key reforms and steps by all parties to defuse tensions, we must focus on providing a political context that will ensure that the positive engagement that we have witnessed in recent months is not squandered.

Partners, including those in the region, have a vital role to play. Efforts must also be made to continue to encourage all Palestinian political factions to move towards political consensus and bring Gaza and the occupied West Bank under one legitimate democratic Palestinian Authority.

Gaza remains integral to a future Palestinian State as a part of the two-State solution. Short-term challenges and urgent crises must be addressed. Yet, at the same time, we must ensure that the solution put in place advances our ultimate goal: an end to occupation and the achievement of a two-State solution on the basis of United Nations resolutions, international law and previous agreements.

The United Nations will continue to actively engage, along with its counterparts in the Middle East Quartet, regional and international partners and Israeli and Palestinian leaders, to reach a just comprehensive and lasting settlement of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

II. VICE-CHAIR OF THE PALESTINIAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE ADDRESSES SECURITY COUNCIL OPEN DEBATE

On 19 January, during the Security Council quarterly open debate on “The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question”, H.E. Mr. Arrmanatha Nasir, Permanent Representative of Indonesia and Vice-Chair of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, made the following [statement](#).

On behalf of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, at the outset I would like to congratulate Norway for its able presidency of the Security Council this month. We are grateful this meeting is taking place at ministerial level.

Once more, we would like to call the attention of this Council on the critical situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and highlight the need for a swift and just resolution on the question of Palestine on the basis of international law and the relevant UN resolutions.

On 7 December, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet, briefed our Committee on the human rights situation in the OPT, describing it as “disastrous,” with severe violations – including killings, arbitrary detentions including of children, restrictions to fundamental freedoms and discrimination affecting millions of Palestinians.

On 10 November, UN human rights experts expressed alarm at the rising incidents of violence by Israeli settlers towards Palestinians in the OPT alongside rising tensions related to ongoing illegal Israeli settlement expansion in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, threatening the contiguity and viability of the Palestinian State.

The Committee remains concerned at the resulting increase in the number of injuries and fatalities, with 6 Palestinians reportedly killed and 1,138 others injured between 19 October 2021 and 14 January 2022. Reports that new rules of engagement for Israeli Security Forces regarding the use of live ammunition in the West Bank could lead to an even larger number of injuries and fatalities among Palestinian civilians are deeply disturbing.

Palestinian families are facing expulsion from homes they have lived in for decades and across generations in the Sheikh Jarrah and Silwan neighborhoods of occupied East Jerusalem. According to OCHA, since October 2021, 232 Palestinian-owned homes and structures have been demolished across the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, displacing 283 persons and affecting 5,329 women, children and men.

The Committee calls on Israel to respect its obligations under international humanitarian law and international human rights law, and to cease forthwith the demolition and seizure of Palestinian property throughout the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem.

The economic situation in the State of Palestine remains also of grave concern. In November 2021, the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process highlighted the urgency to address the continuing economic and fiscal crisis faced by the Palestinian Authority and Palestinian people.

For this reason, the Committee supports the US\$510 million Humanitarian Response Plan launched by the Humanitarian Coordinator for the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Lynn Hastings, to support 1.6 million of the most vulnerable people in Gaza and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, during 2022.

At the November 2021 Advisory Commission Meeting, UNRWA Commissioner General Philippe Lazzarini also highlighted the decline of available resources since 2013 despite growing humanitarian needs of the Palestine refugees. The welcome return of the United States as a partner and donor to the Agency, however, has been offset by a reduction of funding from other large donors and the absence of new funding sources. The Committee reiterates its calls to the international community to ensure sufficient and reliable funding for the Agency to deliver its crucial services to over 5.8 million Palestine refugees and to maintain its vital contribution to regional stability.

Palestinians living in Gaza need urgent humanitarian relief and economic assistance allowing them to have a dignified life and a sustainable future. Needs remain acute following the deadly escalation in the Strip last May as hundreds of families remain displaced and thousands of homes and structures require reconstruction and repair. Let me reiterate, however, that Gaza requires not only economic support for reconstruction but a complete lifting of the illegal Israeli blockade, in line with UN Security Council resolution 1860 (2009), and the return of the legitimate Palestinian Government to Gaza. Gaza remains an integral part of the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967 and must be part of an independent, sovereign Palestinian State.

Ultimately, as much as we agree with the need to focus on improving the livelihood of Palestinians, the Committee believes that this cannot genuinely happen without a political horizon ensuring justice and rights, including self-determination, for the Palestinian people, the definitive end of the occupation and the achievement of the independence of the Palestinian state.

Palestinian civil society organizations continue to face restrictions to their freedoms of expression, assembly, and association.

The Bureau of the Committee joined the Secretary-General, the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the European Union and other international human rights organizations in publicly expressing deep concern at Israel's decision of 22 October designating six human rights and humanitarian Palestinian civil society organizations as "terrorist entities". Some of these organizations are long-standing, reliable partners of the Committee, as well as of the United Nations, in advocating for the protection and promotion of the human rights of the Palestinian people.

On 7 December, the Committee organized an event where representatives from Palestinian and Israeli civil society called on Member States to hold Israel accountable for its actions and to continue giving a platform to the voices that the Government of Israel is trying to suppress.

To date, the Israeli Authorities have not made public substantial evidence against these six Palestinian organizations.

We reiterate that civil society organizations must be allowed to work unhindered in the implementation of their mandate.

The Committee calls for the implementation of the provisions contained in resolution 2334 (2016), as well as of all UN resolutions and internationally agreed parameters to justly and sustainably resolve the question of Palestine.

We are grateful to Norway for this ministerial meeting, and further hope that a ministerial meeting of the Middle East Quartet will soon relaunch the peace process.

The current course must be diverted and redressed without delay toward ending the Israeli occupation that began in 1967, implementing a just solution based on international law and 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.

The Committee stands ready to assist and garner the support needed to advance the process.

III. UNICEF, UNRWA, AND OHCHR CALL FOR THE IMMEDIATE RELEASE OF A SERIOUSLY ILL PALESTINIAN CHILD DETAINED IN ISRAEL

On 20 January, UNICEF, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East issued a [joint statement](#) replicated below.

The Government of Israel has extended the detention of Amal Nakhleh until 18 May 2022 without charge or trial. Amal, 17 years old when arrested, has been in administrative detention for more than one year.

Neither Amal nor his lawyers or family have been informed of the reasons for his arrest and detention. Amal suffers from a severe autoimmune disease that requires continuous medical treatment and monitoring.

We call for Amal's immediate and unconditional release from detention in line with international human rights law.

According to The Convention on the Rights of the Child, to which Israel is a signatory: *"The detention of children is a last resort.... Every child deprived of his or her liberty shall have the right to prompt access to legal and other appropriate assistance, as well as the right to challenge the legality of the deprivation of his or her liberty before a court or other competent, independent, and impartial authority, and to a prompt decision on any such action."*

Amal's case is one of the more prolonged cases where a Palestinian child has been detained without charge or trial. It is however not an isolated case. Currently, at least another three Palestinians are in administrative detention who were under the age of 18 when first detained.

We echo the calls of the UN Secretary General who in his Report on Children and Armed Conflict has, every year since 2015, urges Israel to end the administrative detention of children. This practice deprives children of their liberty and must immediately end.

IV. UNRWA CONDEMNS DEMOLITION OF A FAMILY HOME IN SHEIKH JARRAH, EAST JERUSALEM

On 20 January, the West Bank field office of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) issued a statement condemning the demolition of the home and eviction of the Salhiyya family in the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood of East Jerusalem. The UNRWA [statement](#) is replicated below.

The West Bank field office of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) condemns the demolition of the home and eviction of the Salhiyya family in the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood of East Jerusalem. Israeli forces violently raided the house of the Palestine refugee family at 3 am on 19 January, while members of the Salhiyya family, including an older woman and a young child, were sleeping. In a matter of hours, the Salhiyya's house and possessions were destroyed, erasing all traces of their nearly 40 years of history in the neighborhood. Having already lost their place of residence as a result of the 1948 conflict, the Salhiyya family is now again displaced, seeking refuge one more time.

In the course of the operations aimed at evicting the family, the Israeli forces injured several family members. In addition, the Israeli forces arrested, among others, Mahmoud Salhiyya, the head of the family, who had threatened self-immolation two days ago, when Israeli forces demolished his commercial activity and source of livelihood next to the house. Visiting the scene this morning, UNRWA West Bank observed the total destruction of the house: school bags, clothes and family photos still partially visible under the rubble.

Sadly, the case of the Salhiyya family's is not unique. Tens of Palestine refugee families in different parts of Sheikh Jarrah alone (over 200 persons, many of whom are children) currently face an imminent threat of eviction by Israeli authorities. According to data collected by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in 2020, an estimated 218 Palestinian households (comprising 970 Palestinians, 424 of whom are children) across East Jerusalem are at risk of displacement by the Israeli authorities.

UNRWA calls upon the Israeli authorities to immediately halt all evictions and demolitions in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. Under international humanitarian law, the forcible transfer of protected persons, as well as the destruction of real or personal property belonging individually or collectively to private persons by Israel, as the occupying power, is strictly forbidden, except where such measures would be rendered absolutely necessary by imperative military reasons, or for the security of the population under occupation.

UNRWA calls on the Israeli authorities to abide by international laws and, as the occupying power, ensure the protection of Palestine refugees and civilians in the West Bank,

including East Jerusalem. All individuals have a right to safe and secure housing and to live in peace and dignity.

V. UNRWA AND UNICEF RENEW AGREEMENT TO FURTHER SUPPORT PALESTINE REFUGEE CHILDREN

UNRWA and UNICEF renewed on 24 January 2022 an agreement to extend support to Palestine refugee children, adolescents, and women in the State of Palestine, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria. The [press release](#) is reproduced below.

The two UN agencies renewed today an agreement to extend support to Palestine refugee children, adolescents, and women in the State of Palestine, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria. UNICEF and UNRWA will primarily cooperate in the fields of child and social protection, education, health, advocacy and emergency preparedness.

“Joining efforts this way will greatly improve and increase the kind of support and advocacy that Palestine refugees get,” said Leni Stenseth, UNRWA Deputy Commissioner-General. “As an Agency that knows first-hand the trauma that refugee children can face, UNRWA strongly believes that a combination of protection, health, education and advocacy can mitigate the impact of conflicts and violence on children and contribute to their wellbeing.”

Building on the long-standing cooperation on evidence generation for children, the agencies will conduct studies, situation analysis of women and children, research and promote social change through addressing harmful social and gender norms and practices. The cooperation enhances humanitarian coordination including in time of crisis, increasing capacity to analyse risks and increase preparedness to mitigate crises.

“We are delighted to renew our commitment to help Palestine refugees through this agreement. UNICEF and UNRWA have been cooperating for decades. With this agreement we will continue advancing child-sensitive programmes, providing technical assistance, increase support for digital learning, delivery of COVID-19 vaccines and raising awareness on vaccines safety and joint advocacy on children’s rights” said Ted Chaiban, UNICEF Regional Director for the Middle East and North Africa.

The four-year agreement (from 2022 to 2025) will cover the following areas:

- Child protection: provision of technical assistance, policy advice and joint advocacy and programming.
- Education: focusing on continuity of learning including in time of crisis, digital learning, addressing violence in schools and life-skills development for young people including for preparation to join the labour market.
- Social Protection to mitigate the impact of poverty including through financial cash assistance to families

- Health: maternal and child health, childhood illness management, malnutrition, immunization, response to the COVID-19 pandemic including the delivery of vaccines.
 - Evidence generation to support programming for children
 - Advocacy and Communications
 - Social Norms & Behavioural Change
 - Emergency Preparedness and Response.
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