



DIVISION FOR
PALESTINIAN RIGHTS

Bulletin

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

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I. \$ 3.75MILLION WORLD BANK GRANT TO HELP PALESTINIANS FIGHT CORONAVIRUS AND FUTURE HEALTH SHOCKS

On 6 February, the World Bank [allocated](#) an additional grant of \$3.75 million to the ongoing [West Bank and Gaza COVID-19 Emergency Response](#). The press release is reproduced below.

An additional grant of US\$3.75 million was allocated to the ongoing [West Bank and Gaza COVID-19 Emergency Response](#). The additional financing will continue to support the Palestinian Authority's response to the threat posed by the COVID-19 pandemic while ensuring continuity of essential health services and contributing to long-term resilience.

The grant will be contributed from [the Health Emergency Preparedness and Response \(HEPR\) Multi-donor Trust Fund](#) administered by the World Bank. It is a flexible mechanism for rapid financing to support countries and territories to improve their capacities to prepare for, prevent, respond to, and mitigate the impact of epidemics on populations.

“COVID-19 continues to pose a high risk of morbidity and mortality, as well as a burden to healthcare systems. Due to low capacity of testing in the Palestinian territories, the number of COVID-19 cases are underestimated. Still, the numbers of new infections reported daily continue to reach new highs. The additional financing will support the original project by providing immediate response to COVID-19, but also contributing to long-term resilience,” said Kanthan Shankar, World Bank Country Director for West Bank and Gaza.

Beyond strengthening the overall healthcare services and clinical capacity in immediate response to COVID-19 under the framework of the parent project, the new grant focuses on procuring supplies and equipment that could be utilized to promote resilience to future pandemics and health shocks. These include medicines for the treatment of health emergencies and chronic conditions as well as emergency medical devices and equipment including defibrillators, vital-signs monitors, emergency trolleys, patient beds, mobile blood banks, ultrasound machines, generators, and more.

The operation will also seek to reduce limitations to access to healthcare experienced by rural and marginalized communities. For instance, women in remote areas often find it difficult to access health services due to distance to health facilities and lack of transportation. Mobile clinics financed through the additional financing will ensure equitable access to quality care for populations that are often left behind. The World Bank will continue to strengthen resilience and pandemic preparedness in the health system through technical and operational engagement with the Ministry of Health and other partners in the sector.

II. PALESTINIAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE ELECTS BUREAU, ADOPTS 2022 PROGRAMME OF WORK

On 8 February, the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People held its 406th meeting. With Secretary-General Antonio Guterres presiding, the Committee elected members of the [Bureau](#), with the Permanent Representative of Senegal as the Chair of the Committee, and the Permanent Representatives of Cuba, Indonesia, Namibia and Nicaragua as

Vice-Chairs. The Committee also adopted its [Programme of Work](#) for 2022. The Secretary-General's statement is replicated below.

The situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, continues to pose a significant challenge to international peace and security. The promise of the independence of the Palestinian State remains unfulfilled. Political, economic and security conditions across the Occupied Palestinian Territory are deteriorating as Palestinians experience high levels of dispossession, violence and insecurity.

We urgently need to intensify collective efforts to resolve the conflict and end the occupation in line with United Nations resolutions, international law and bilateral agreements. The goal remains two States — Israel and an independent, democratic, contiguous, viable and sovereign Palestinian State — living side by side in peace within secure and recognized borders, on the basis of the pre-1967 lines, with Jerusalem as the shared capital of both States. There is no plan B.

I am encouraged by recent engagement between senior Israeli and Palestinian officials. I urge both sides to expand these contacts to encompass underlying political issues.

Piecemeal approaches to the question of Palestine will only ensure that the underlying issues perpetuating the conflict remain unaddressed. Unilateral steps and illegal actions that drive the conflict must cease. Incitement to violence will lead nowhere and must also be rejected by all.

I am concerned by unabated violence across the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including settler violence and military operations that have led to numerous deaths.

It is essential that the parties solidify the cessation of hostilities and support economic development in Gaza. Concerted efforts are essential to ensure calm, strengthen Palestinian institutions, restore hope and avoid a deadly escalation of violence.

Illegal settlement activity, demolitions and evictions also continue, including in East Jerusalem, undermining international humanitarian and human rights law — and feeding hopelessness, animosity and diminishing prospects for a negotiated solution. All settlement activity is illegal. It must stop.

Continued human rights violations against Palestinians significantly impede their ability to live in security and develop their communities and economies. I also call on all parties to preserve the status quo at the holy sites in the Old City of Jerusalem.

As the international community works towards reviving the political process, we must support efforts to improve the economic and humanitarian situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

I am pleased by vital support for the United Nations Humanitarian Flash Appeal, ongoing reconstruction efforts in Gaza and critical COVID-19 response efforts by the United Nations system on the ground.

I remain concerned about the dire fiscal situation facing the Palestinian Authority, which is undermining its institutional stability and ability to provide services to its people. At the same time, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East's

(UNRWA) existential financial crisis is affecting the rights and well-being of Palestine refugees across the region. I call on Member States to increase their financial support to the Palestinian people and their contributions to UNRWA, a vital pillar of regional stability.

Let me also note recent Israeli decisions to increase the movement of goods and people in and out of the Gaza Strip. While a welcome development, it is important to expand such steps and work towards a full lifting of the debilitating closures in line with United Nations Security Council resolution 1860 (2009).

Time is running short. We cannot lose sight of the long-sought goal of ending the occupation and realizing a two-State solution. All parties must take concrete steps that will enable a return to the path of meaningful negotiations and, ultimately, a just and lasting peace. The United Nations is committed to supporting Palestinians and Israelis to resolve the conflict. Let us reinforce our shared commitment to this goal.

III. UN COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION (CERD) SETS UP CONCILIATION COMMISSION

On 17 February, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights issued the press release replicated below.

The UN [Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination](#) has set up an ad hoc Conciliation Commission which will offer its good offices to both the State of Palestine and Israel with a view to resolving the dispute over allegations of racial discrimination amicably.

Both Israel and the State of Palestine are parties to the [International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination](#), which allows States to complain to the Committee about alleged violations of the treaty by another State party, in accordance with Article 11.

A Conciliation Commission was set up in accordance with article 12(1) b of the Convention, and is composed of five human rights experts from the Committee. They are Verene Shepherd, Gün Kut, Pansy Tlakula, Chinsung Chung and Michał Balcerzak. The appointees are independent of any government or organization and serve in their individual capacities.

The Conciliation Commission held two online preparatory meetings on 19 January and 10 February this year, during which it adopted its Rules of Procedure and elected Gün Kut as its Chair.

The Conciliation Commission will review information and evidence and prepare a report highlighting its findings and recommendations for the amicable solution of the dispute.

Documents concerning the case of the State of Palestine against Israel are available [online](#).

IV. HUMANITARIAN COUNTRY TEAM MEETS WITH EAST JERUSALEM FAMILY THREATENED WITH EVICTION

On 20 February, representatives of the Humanitarian Country Team in Palestine met with the Salem family in the occupied East Jerusalem neighbourhood of Sheikh Jarrah and subsequently issued the following [press release](#).

Today, representatives of the Humanitarian Country Team in Palestine, comprising United Nations Agencies and international and Palestinian NGOs, met with the Salem family in the occupied East Jerusalem neighbourhood of Sheikh Jarrah. The family of 12, including six children and the elderly mother, Fatima Salem – all of whom are Palestine refugees – faces eviction during March from their family home of 70 years.

The announcement of the scheduled eviction has recently raised tension in the Jerusalem neighbourhood, with clashes involving Palestinian residents, Israeli settlers, and Israeli Security Forces resulting in property damage, multiple injuries and arrests, including the arrest of eight children since Friday 11 February. The Salem family itself and their neighbours have been subject to attacks with pepper spray and stones resulting in injury and property damage.

The Salem family is one of 218 Palestinian families, comprising 970 individuals, including 424 children, living in East Jerusalem, mainly in the neighbourhoods of Sheikh Jarrah and Silwan, that are currently facing the threat of forced eviction by the Israeli authorities.

The United Nations has repeatedly called for a halt to forced evictions and demolitions in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem: under international humanitarian law, forcible transfers of protected persons by the occupying power are forbidden regardless of their motive.

Active steps must be taken to de-escalate the situation before another crisis erupts; we urge all political and community leaders to refrain from provocative action and rhetoric. Israeli authorities must take steps to ensure the protection of civilians, including Palestine refugees.

V. SPECIAL COORDINATOR BRIEFS SECURITY COUNCIL

On 23 February, the Security Council held a meeting on “The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question”. The [briefing](#) by Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process Tor Wennesland is reproduced below.

This month has witnessed a worrying continuation of the trends I have outlined repeatedly in this Council, particularly the destabilizing deterioration of the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Across the West Bank, daily violence continues; tensions in East Jerusalem and the refugee camps are mounting and settler violence remains a serious concern. Illegal settlements and planning processes are steadily advancing, alongside demolitions and evictions, including in and around Jerusalem.

These factors are increasing the territorial fragmentation of the West Bank, undermining the Palestinian Authority and further eroding the prospects for peace.

Meanwhile, the Palestinian Authority continues to face a prolonged financial crisis, which severely undermines its capacity to deliver services, and has crippled the economy. Economic and political reforms driven from inside the Palestinian Authority are a critical first step to changing this situation. The PA must be strengthened, and the international community should support actions to this end.

High-level dialogue between the Israeli and Palestinian leadership has led to welcome commitments and some economic steps, but these efforts must be rapidly turned into substantial, durable achievements and significantly expanded alongside policy changes by both sides.

Recent efforts by Israel to reduce settler violence in the West Bank and avoid further provocative steps in Jerusalem are well-noted

In Gaza, a fragile calm currently prevails. But absent fundamental change, this is only temporary. Hamas control of the Strip, Palestinian divisions and the Israeli closure regime are creating a generation who have experienced multiple wars and humanitarian crises and who have few prospects for a better life. In line with resolution 1860 (2009), Israel should further ease restrictions on the movement of goods and people to and from Gaza, with the goal of ultimately lifting them.

Daily violence continued throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory during the reporting period.

In the occupied West Bank, six Palestinians, including two children, were killed by Israeli security forces (ISF) during demonstrations, clashes, search-and-arrest operations, attacks and alleged attacks against Israelis, and other incidents, and 205 Palestinians, including 25 children, were injured. Israeli settlers or other civilians perpetrated 55 attacks against Palestinians resulting in 18 injuries and/or damage to Palestinian property.

In all, nine Israeli civilians, including at least one woman and two children, and eight Israeli security personnel were injured by Palestinians in clashes, shooting, stabbing and ramming attacks, the throwing of stones and Molotov cocktails, and other incidents. In total, Palestinians perpetrated 108 attacks against Israeli civilians resulting in injuries and/or damage to Israeli property.

On 8 February, Israeli Security Forces (ISF) entered Nablus, in Area A of the occupied West Bank, and shot and killed three Palestinians in a car. According to Israeli authorities, the three were members of a cell that had carried out attacks on Israeli forces, were planning additional attacks and tried to shoot at ISF during the incident. The Fatah-affiliated Al Aqsa Martyrs Brigades later claimed the men as members. The Palestinian Cabinet and Ministry of Foreign Affairs condemned the killing, calling it an assassination and demanding an international investigation. Palestinians across the West Bank protested the killing and a general strike was announced in some areas.

On 13 February, a 16-year-old Palestinian boy was shot and killed by ISF in the village of Silat al-Harithiya, near Jenin. The boy was killed amid clashes that erupted after Israeli forces entered the village to demolish the family home of one of the perpetrators of a December shooting attack that killed an Israeli civilian.

On 15 February, a 19-year-old Palestinian man was shot and killed by ISF in Nabi Saleh village, near Ramallah. The incident occurred near an Israeli checkpoint in a confrontation between ISF and youths, where the man was reportedly shot in the back.

On 18 February, during demonstrations in Beita village, near Nablus, 26 Palestinians were injured, including four by live ammunition. Two of the injured were first responders from the Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRCS).

On 22 February, ISF shot a 13-year-old Palestinian boy in al-Khader area near Bethlehem. ISF evacuated the boy who was later pronounced dead. According to conflicting reports, the boy was either throwing stones or a Molotov cocktail when shot.

All loss of life is deeply regrettable, and I reiterate that children must never be the target of violence or put in harm's way. Security forces must exercise maximum restraint and use lethal force only when it is strictly unavoidable in order to protect life.

Settler-related violence remained a concern throughout the reporting period.

On 21 January, adjacent to Burin village near Nablus, settlers injured five Israeli activists involved in a tree planting activity with local Palestinians, set one of their vehicles ablaze and damaged another. On 7 February, three residents of the outpost of Givat Ronen were arrested for suspected involvement in the attack.

On 24 January, Israeli settlers drove a convoy through the Palestinian town of Huwwara, near Nablus, throwing stones at Palestinians, their vehicles and shops, and causing significant damage. Three Palestinians, including a 17-year-old boy, were injured. Israeli police opened an investigation and on 16 February announced the arrest of 17 Israelis in relation to the incident.

Following these incidents, several senior Israeli Government members and Members of Knesset condemned the violence carried out by settlers and pledged to act against it.

I note such constructive statements and urge tangible action in line with Israel's obligation, as the occupying power, to ensure the safety and security of the Palestinian population.

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

Turning to settlement advancements, on 24 January, the Jerusalem District Planning Committee advanced plans for some 400 new housing units in place of an existing 80 units in the settlement of Gilo in occupied East Jerusalem.

On 1 February, Israel's Attorney-General published a legal opinion allowing Israeli authorities to advance plans for a settlement in the partially evacuated outpost of Evyatar and authorizing accelerated planning procedures for this purpose. The opinion was issued following a land survey by Israel's Civil Administration. Advancement of the plan requires a decision by Israel's Defence Minister.

I reiterate that all settlements are illegal under international law and remain a substantial obstacle to peace.

Israeli authorities demolished, seized or forced owners to demolish 72 Palestinian-owned structures in Area C and seven in East Jerusalem, displacing 73 Palestinians, including 32 children. The demolitions were carried out due to the lack of Israeli-issued building permits, which are nearly impossible for Palestinians to obtain.

I remain particularly concerned by the potential eviction of a number of Palestinian families from homes they have lived in for decades in Sheikh Jarrah and Silwan in occupied East Jerusalem.

On 30 January, Israeli authorities authorized the eviction of a Palestinian family comprising 11 people, including four children, from their home in Sheikh Jarrah during the month of March. In the wake of this decision, tensions increased in the neighbourhood, with numerous reports of violent altercations and damage to property. The already-sensitive situation escalated on 13 February, when a far-right Israeli Knesset Member set up a makeshift office near the family's home and called for supporters to come to the neighbourhood. On 22 February, an Israeli court suspended the eviction pending consideration of an appeal by the family, and contingent on the family's depositing some USD 8,000 as collateral.

I call on Israeli authorities to end the displacement and eviction of Palestinians and approve additional plans that would enable Palestinians to build legally and address their development needs.

From 6 to 9 February, the Palestinian Central Council met for the first time since 2018, electing a new leadership for the Palestinian National Council and new members for vacant positions in the PLO Executive Committee. In its final statement, the PCC called for a halt to security coordination and the suspension of recognition of Israel until it recognizes the Palestinian State based on the June 1967 borders and halts settlement activity, reiterating decisions from the previous PCC meeting.

I again underscore that the fiscal condition of the Palestinian Authority remains dire. Revenues are not keeping pace with needed expenditures, leading to accumulated debt, and investment in important sectors including health, education and infrastructure is virtually non-existent.

Urgent action is required by the PA, Israel and donors to avert the fiscal collapse of the PA and to pave the way for long-term fiscal reforms. To this end, I welcome the current work of the IMF mission to support the PA's important work on fiscal stability and reform. The IMF is expected to provide its report to the AHLC later in the spring. I also welcome ongoing efforts by Israel to facilitate greater access for Palestinian workers from Gaza and the West Bank to the labour market in Israel, which should be continued.

Turning to Gaza, the further easing of restriction on access of materials into Gaza remains a key priority. I welcome the parties' engagement in this regard over the past weeks, including the entry of white cement to Gaza required for reconstruction, but more needs to be done.

The UN continues to highlight to the Government of Israel priority items that need to enter Gaza, largely for United Nations health, water and sanitation projects – some of which were requested over a year ago. Significant delays in approval of items under the Gaza Reconstruction Mechanism (GRM) impact humanitarian operations and should also be resolved without delay.

I hope the resumption of technical-level trilateral meetings on the GRM will lead to improvements to facilitate reconstruction and much-needed development projects. I urge both parties to build on recent momentum to continue to enhance access and trade. I am, however, concerned that recent steps taken by Hamas authorities risk compromising the Palestinian banking system, with potential repercussions for humanitarian and development activities conducted by the international donor community.

With funding from Qatar, the gradual reconstruction has begun of housing units that were totally demolished during the May 2021 escalation, thus far reaching some 115 households. Reconstructing destroyed homes remains a priority and needs to be scaled up. Similarly, UNRWA has completed the repair of nearly 7,000 housing units and is currently working with 700 families whose homes were totally demolished with the help from the US and Germany.

Let me reiterate the Secretary-General's call to provide UNRWA with predictable, sustained and sufficient funding to provide essential assistance to Palestine refugees in the region. If we act early enough in the year, we can prevent a financial crisis of the scale of last year and the risk that millions of refugees be left without education, health services and lifesaving cash and food assistance. Any reduction or disruption of services can have significant humanitarian, political and security consequences for the region and beyond. Preserving UNRWA services is a joint responsibility of all UN Member States.

Turning to the region, while the ceasefire between Israel and Syria has been generally maintained, the situation remains volatile with continued violations of the 1974 Disengagement of Forces Agreement by the parties. This includes firing by the Israel Defence Forces into the area of separation and the continued presence of the Syrian armed forces in the area of separation. It is important that the parties respect their obligations under the Agreement and support the liaison with UNDOF to de-escalate the situation during heightened tensions.

In Lebanon, following a three-month stalemate, the Cabinet reconvened on 24 January and shortly thereafter passed the 2022 state budget, now with Parliament for approval. Preparations are ongoing for the 15 May parliamentary elections, although resources have not yet been fully allocated. The situation in the UNIFIL area of operations remained relatively calm notwithstanding a number of incidents. UNIFIL remains engaged with the parties to contain incidents and defuse tensions, including through a tripartite meeting on 11 February.

While we have seen some encouraging economic initiatives, we must push beyond the paradigm of managing, rather than resolving the conflict. Economic steps alone – while essential and desperately needed – will not put us on the path toward a just and lasting peace. There is no substitute for a legitimate political process that will resolve the core issues driving the conflict.

Nevertheless, we must begin somewhere. There is a need for a package of incremental steps – which are significant and durable – that would reflect a more coherent strategy to strengthen the Palestinian Authority and clearly chart the way toward a two-State reality.

Getting there requires political leadership. I urge Israelis, Palestinians, regional States and the broader international community to take firm action to enable the parties to re-engage on the path towards meaningful negotiations.

Only an end to the occupation and the achievement of two States, living side by side in peace and security, based on the 1967 lines, in line with UN resolutions, international law and previous agreements, will resolve this conflict. I remain actively engaged in advancing these efforts with my counterparts in the Middle East Quartet, key regional partners and Israeli and Palestinian leaders.

VI. HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS REPORTS ON HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE OPT, ACCOUNTABILITY AND JUSTICE

On 23 February the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights submitted a report ([A/HRC/49/25](#)) to the Human Rights Council pursuant to Council resolution 46/3. The conclusions and recommendations of the report are reproduced below.

...

45. Despite intensified violence and recurring violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, impunity remained widespread and pervasive. There are serious concerns that steps taken thus far by Israel and the Palestinian authorities to investigate alleged violations of international humanitarian law during the escalation of hostilities in May 2021 have not been sufficient. Impunity also persisted in relation to alleged violations, including possible war crimes, by all parties during previous escalations in 2008/09, 2012 and 2014. There was an almost total failure to ensure accountability for numerous allegations of the excessive use of force by Israeli forces in the context of law enforcement operations in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, resulting in the killing and injury of Palestinians. With regard to the Palestinian authorities, few steps were documented in the investigation and prosecution of members of Palestinian security forces or of the security forces in Gaza responsible for the alleged excessive use of force and other human rights violations committed against Palestinians.

46. In this climate of impunity, increased restrictions on the freedom of expression, association and assembly of those who defend human rights and call for accountability are a cause for particular concern. Counter-terrorism legislation must not be applied to curtail human rights and humanitarian work, to suppress or deny the right to freedom of association, or to quash political dissent and limit the peaceful activities of civil society.

47. Recalling the follow-up measures described in the comprehensive review of the status of recommendations addressed to all parties since 2009*, the High Commissioner:

* [A/HRC/35/19](#), paras. 63–81.

(a) Calls upon Israel to fully comply with its obligations under international human rights law and international humanitarian law in the Occupied Palestinian Territory; urges it to conduct prompt, independent, impartial, thorough, effective and transparent investigations into all alleged violations and abuses of international human rights law and international humanitarian law, including into allegations of international crimes; and also calls upon Israel to ensure that all victims and their families have access to effective remedies, gender-responsive reparation and truth;

(b) Calls upon Israel to revoke the designations against Palestinian human rights and humanitarian organizations as terrorist or unlawful organizations, absent sufficient evidentiary basis for them. Israel must also ensure that human rights defenders are not detained, charged and convicted in relation to their legitimate work to protect and promote human rights and accountability;

(c) Calls upon Israel to resume its cooperation with OHCHR and make full use of OHCHR technical assistance;

(d) Urges the State of Palestine to conduct prompt, independent, impartial, thorough, effective and transparent investigations into all alleged violations and abuses of international human rights law and international humanitarian law, in particular into allegations of international crimes; and calls upon the State of Palestine to ensure that all victims and their families have access to effective remedies, gender-responsive reparation and truth;

(e) Recommends that all parties ensure full respect for international law, including international humanitarian law, in particular the principles of distinction, proportionality and precaution, and that they ensure accountability for grave violations;

(f) Calls upon all States to take all measures necessary to effectively ensure respect for the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 by all parties to the conflict, taking into account the means reasonably available to them and their level of influence on the parties, and reminds States, in particular those with close ties to the parties, that they should exert their influence to ensure respect for the law;

(g) Reiterates the calls upon all States and relevant United Nations bodies to take the measures necessary to ensure full respect and compliance with the relevant resolutions of the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council.
