



General Assembly Security Council

Distr.: General
22 February 2022

Original: English

General Assembly
Tenth emergency special session
Agenda item 5
**Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the
rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory**

Security Council
Seventy-seventh year

Identical letters dated 22 February 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 must once again draw the international community's urgent attention to Israel's escalation of illegal policies and practices in Occupied Palestine, entrenching its colonial occupation and apartheid regime, fully confident that it will not be held accountable by an international community that continues to fail in its obligations to impose consequences for such violations, bring them to a halt and ensure justice for the victims.

Letter after letter, we are compelled to detail the crimes being deliberately perpetrated by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people in grave violation of international law and principles of human decency. Month after month, the Security Council meets to address the Palestine question, the longest-standing item on its agenda, and yet it falls short of taking action in line with its duties under the Charter of the United Nations and especially the implementation of its own resolutions. This regrettable cycle has undoubtedly contributed to the prolongation of this injustice while simultaneously undermining international law and eroding the Council's credibility, to the detriment of all.

The month of January witnessed intensifying crimes and violations that followed the dismal trajectory of violations in 2021. Unsurprisingly, this month's developments are identical to Israeli campaigns perpetrated in February of last year, especially in connection with forced displacement campaigns and the continued expropriation of Palestinian land in and around Jerusalem, a prime target of Israel's illegal policies.

Exactly one year ago, the international community was warned about Israel's expropriation of Palestinian land in occupied East Jerusalem. Today, the international community again faces the same warning as Israel pursues the expansion of a so-called "national park" onto church-owned lands and Christian holy sites in Tur/Mount of Olives in grave violation of the historic and legal status quo of holy sites in the City. This area is a major pilgrimage site, as it is known as the mount from



which Jesus ascended to heaven, and there can be absolutely no justification for encroaching onto biblical sites. Moreover, international law clearly prohibits land expropriation in occupied territory and any attempts to alter its demography, character and status. Such illegal actions must be rejected and condemned.

Here we reiterate: Israel is the occupying Power and is not the sovereign in occupied East Jerusalem or any other part of the Occupied Palestinian Territory and has no right whatsoever to implement its illegal colonial designs on our land, including in the Old City and at its holy sites, regardless of any unilateral declarations, so-called “Basic Law” or otherwise.

Israel, known for its greenwashing campaigns, is using the pretext of “better preserving historical landscapes”, encroaching on the centuries-old practices of churches and their history in rightfully preserving Christian holy sites. Given Israel’s obsession with annexing Palestinian land in Jerusalem, it is not surprising that every single so-called “environmental” gesture by Israel has actually infringed on the Christian and Muslim presence in the City, clearly aimed at further consolidating its control of the City and privileging and expanding the Jewish presence in the City while erasing the Christian and Muslim presence.

Owing to Israel’s accelerated attempts to steal church-owned lands, a joint statement was issued by the Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Jerusalem, Theophilos III, the Catholic Church Custos of the Holy Land, Francesco Patton, and the Armenian Patriarch of Jerusalem, Archbishop Nourhan Manougian, alerting the international community to the latest developments and deeming Israel’s plans a “direct and premeditated attack on the Christians in the Holy Land, on the churches and on their ancient, internationally guaranteed rights in the Holy City”.

Their joint statement echoes growing concern regarding Israel’s illegal attempts to alter the demographics and character of Jerusalem in favour of entrenching a system that privileges one group over others: “In recent years, we cannot help but feel that various entities are seeking to minimize, not to say eliminate any non-Jewish characteristics of the Holy City by attempting to alter the status quo in this holy mountain... Under the guise of protecting green spaces, the plan appears to serve an ideological agenda that denies the status and rights of Christians in Jerusalem.”

Israel claims to have “suspended” this planned theft of church-owned lands following the outrage that these plans caused. However, the occupying Power continues to pursue this campaign unrelentingly, including via coordination with settler organizations using the so-called “legal system” to expand such campaigns designed to minimize Christian characteristics throughout Jerusalem. In this regard, we draw attention to an alert statement issued by a group of patriarchs and heads of churches in Jerusalem, warning that “Christians have become the target of frequent and sustained attacks by fringe radical groups”.

As we have continually warned, Israel, the occupying Power, does not discriminate in launching schemes that are solely designed to impose its illegitimate colonial occupation and cement its erasure of Jerusalem’s Palestinian, Arab, Muslim and Christian dimensions and identity.

In this connection, exactly one year ago, the international community was warned about Israel’s mass dispossession and forced displacement campaigns in Jerusalem, particularly in the Sheikh Jarrah and Silwan neighbourhoods. Hundreds of Palestinian families in Sheikh Jarrah continue to face an intensified campaign of forced transfer to make way for Israeli Jewish settlers as part of Israel’s Judaization plans for the City. Contrary to the perception of “calm” being peddled by Israel, Sheikh Jarrah is anything but calm as the neighbourhood reflects a painful picture of what colonial apartheid in the twenty-first century looks like.

Sheikh Jarrah is currently under siege after Israeli occupying forces erected concrete barriers and military checkpoints around the neighbourhood, restricting the movement of Palestinians and activists while allowing armed Israeli mobs and extremists to roam freely. Israeli occupying forces and Israeli extremists continue to assault Palestinian residents, including a young disabled man, Mohammed Joulani, afflicted with Down syndrome who was beaten yesterday in broad daylight, as Israeli politicians persist with incitement and provocations, calling upon the most extreme elements of Israeli society to mobilize and do everything possible to uproot Palestinians from their homes. The role of Israeli politicians in inciting hatred and attacks is reaching dangerous levels to the point where even Israeli authorities have criticized them for abusing their legal immunity.

Today, the situation in Sheikh Jarrah remains one in which families sleep in fear at night not knowing whether they will have a roof over their heads, or if armed soldiers will raid their homes in the middle of the night, or if settlers will set fire to their homes and properties. This is the reality for hundreds of Palestinian families in Jerusalem, including Palestine refugees, who still face an ongoing Nakba. We echo Amnesty International's determination that the ongoing forcible transfer campaign in Sheikh Jarrah is a "war crime and a pillar of Israel's system of apartheid".

We must recall that this week also marks the twenty-eighth anniversary of the massacre perpetrated by a terrorist Israeli settler at Al-Haram al-Ibrahimi in Al-Khalil (Hebron), who shot and killed 29 Palestinians worshipping at dawn prayers, among them children and the elderly. Nearly three decades later, this heinous crime is still being glorified by Israel, as the terrorist's grave has become a pilgrimage site for settler extremists, who continue to torment Palestinian civilians and to incite and perpetrate acts of violence against them on a daily basis, whether in Al-Khalil, Jerusalem or elsewhere throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, despite the Security Council's demands in its resolution [904 \(1994\)](#) for the "confiscation of arms, with the aim of preventing illegal acts of violence by Israeli settlers" and "for measures to be taken to guarantee the safety and protection of the Palestinian civilians throughout the occupied territory, including, inter alia, a temporary international or foreign presence".

Whether 28 years ago in Al-Khalil or today in Jerusalem, settler extremism is undeniably a central tool of this longest colonial occupation in modern history. Whether it be a campaign designed to uproot Palestinians from their homes or a campaign disguised as an environmental project, every Israeli intention in Jerusalem serves this colonial apartheid regime that is becoming more blatant and aggressive by the day.

Left defenceless by the international community in the face of such insidious colonization, Palestinian civilians continue to protest against the occupation and to try to protect their land from seizure and settlements. This includes ongoing protests in Beita and Beit Dajan, south and east of Nablus, where in recent days more than 60 Palestinians, including children, have been injured by the Israeli occupying forces, and dozens more have been arrested across Occupied Palestine as violence and repression continue to be the preferred means for the occupying Power to press on with its illegal colonial settlement project.

With tensions in Jerusalem and across Occupied Palestine reaching intense levels as a result of all such illegal and provocative policies and actions, we reiterate our calls for the implementation of the over 800 General Assembly resolutions and 80 Security Council resolutions that have called for an end to this injustice, for the realization by the Palestinian people of their inalienable rights, and for protecting the character and status of the Holy City of Jerusalem and the Occupied Palestinian Territory as a whole in accordance with international law. The diplomatic, political

and legal mechanisms available to avert the further deterioration of this deplorable situation and to chart a course for a just peace must be mobilized, and we appeal to the Security Council and international community at large to act with urgency.

This letter is in follow-up to our 743 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 14 February 2022 (A/ES-10/890-S/2022/114) 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
