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PALESTINIAN RIGHTS

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

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I. UNRWA CONDEMNS ARMED ATTACK AGAINST ONE OF ITS INSTALLATIONS IN DERA'A CAMP IN SYRIA

On 14 April, the United Nations Relief Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) released this press [statement](#):

Early on 9 April 2022, two individuals on a motorbike opened fire on the UNRWA health centre in Dera'a camp, Syria and threw an explosive device inside the compound, causing minor material damage. No injuries or fatalities were sustained during the incident. The health centre – that had been damaged in 2013 during the conflict – was under rehabilitation at the time of the incident.

UNRWA condemns this direct attack on one of its installations in the strongest terms. United Nations' premises are neutral and protected under international law.

UNRWA implements a strict no-weapons policy in all its installations as part of the Agency's efforts to ensure they are only used for humanitarian purposes. UNRWA is progressively rehabilitating various installations in Dera'a camp, including the health centre, to ensure vulnerable Palestine refugees can access the services easily.

The Agency demands full respect of the inviolability and neutrality of United Nations premises at all times. Any action that puts beneficiaries or UNRWA staff at risk or undermines the ability of the Agency to provide assistance to Palestine refugees in safety and security is not acceptable.

UNRWA reiterates its previous call that all parties must protect civilians and safeguard civilian infrastructure, including UNRWA installations in the Dera'a Governorate.

II. UNOPS, CANADA CONCLUDE ASSISTANCE PROJECT FOR HIGH JUDICIAL COUNCIL

On 14 April, the United Nations Office of Project Services issued the following [press release](#):

The United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) and the Government of Canada successfully concluded and transferred responsibility for the Facilities Management Assistance Project (FMAP) to the High Judicial Council (HJC) through a meeting that was conducted today with the Chief Justice of the HJC, his excellency Mr. Issa Abu Sharar, in the presence of the Head of Cooperation at the Representative Office of Canada in Ramallah, Mrs. Catherine Palmier, and the Country Director of UNOPS, Mr. Tokumitsu Kobayashi.

FMAP was funded by the Government of Canada with a total value of CAD \$3.5 million and implemented by UNOPS. The implementation of the project lasted for four years and aimed to improve access to justice and the rule of law for all Palestinian citizens in the West Bank. Specifically, the goal of the project was to increase the functionality of the facilities management system within the HJC to effectively manage their facilities in a sustainable manner and according to international standards.

In order to achieve this goal, the FMAP assisted in the establishment of the Facilities Management General Directorate (FMGD) by providing a range of administrative, operational and financial, facilities management policies and procedures, strategic plans and development tools for the FMGD, in addition to providing capacity building support for the FMGD staff through the provision of training inside and outside the country. The FMAP assisted in the establishment of three facilities management maintenance centres in the West Bank by providing the needed tools, equipment and spare parts, in addition to the installation and operation of the Computerised Maintenance Management System (CMMS) in all HJC courthouse facilities.

It is expected that the FMAP will contribute to strengthening environmental sustainability, gender equality and gender parity in the management of HJC facilities. This will support the HJC in achieving its ultimate of increasing access for men, women, girls and boys to an effective and equitable justice system.

III. UN SPECIAL COORDINATOR ON SECURITY SITUATION IN JERUSALEM

On 15 April, United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Tor Wennesland, issued the following [statement](#):

I am deeply concerned by the deteriorating security situation in Jerusalem during these holy days.

The provocations on the Holy Esplanade must stop now. I call on political, religious and community leaders on all sides to help calm the situation, avoid spreading inflammatory rhetoric and speak up against those seeking to escalate the situation. Allowing tensions to spiral further only risks another escalation.

The UN is in close contact with key regional partners and the parties to calm the situation.

I urge the authorities on both sides to immediately de-escalate the situation and prevent any further provocations by radical actors.

IV. PROVOCATIONS ON JERUSALEM'S HOLY ESPLANADE MUST STOP NOW, SECRETARY-GENERAL SAYS

On 15 April, the following [statement](#) was issued by the Spokesperson for United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres (SG/SM/21238):

The Secretary-General is deeply concerned by the deteriorating security situation in Jerusalem.

He calls on leaders on all sides to help calm the situation. Provocations on the Holy Esplanade must stop now to prevent further escalation.

He reiterates his call for the status quo at the holy sites in Jerusalem to be upheld and respected.

The Secretary-General's Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process is in close contact with key regional partners and the parties to calm the situation.

The Secretary-General reiterates his commitment to supporting Palestinians and Israelis to resolve the conflict on the basis of relevant United Nations resolutions, international law and bilateral agreements.

V. UN SPECIAL COORDINATOR ON SECURITY SITUATION IN ISRAEL AND THE OCCUPIED WEST BANK, INCLUDING EAST JERUSALEM

On 19 April, the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Tor Wennesland, made the following [statement](#):

I am deeply concerned about the trajectory of events over the past couple of weeks in Israel and the occupied West Bank that have resulted in many civilians killed and injured. Particularly worrying are the heightened tensions we have witnessed in Jerusalem in recent days, in the Old City and in and around the Holy Sites during a period of holy days for Muslims, Jews and Christians.

The UN has remained in close contact with all relevant parties to de-escalate the situation. This dialogue has been constructive and I encourage continued engagement between the relevant parties.

At this crucial moment, when tensions remain high and some difficult days still lay ahead, all efforts to lower tensions should be encouraged, while provocations, spreading of misinformation and incitement to violence should be categorically rejected. Leaders on all sides have a responsibility to reduce tensions, create the conditions for calm and ensure the status quo at the Holy Sites is protected.

VI. SECRETARY-GENERAL IN STATEMENT ON JERUSALEM, REITERATES “PROVOCATIONS” MUST STOP IMMEDIATELY

On 20 April, the following [statement](#) was issued by the Spokesperson of United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres:

The Secretary-General remains deeply concerned by the deteriorating situation in Jerusalem, particularly the incidents in and around the holy sites. He is actively engaged with leaders to do all they can to lower tensions, avoid inflammatory actions and rhetoric, and restore calm.

The provocations must stop immediately. The ongoing holy days for Muslims, Jews and Christians should be a period of peace and reflection, not incitement and violence. The Secretary-General reiterates that the status quo at the holy sites in Jerusalem must be upheld and respected.

He is committed to supporting Palestinians and Israelis to resolve the conflict on the basis of relevant United Nations resolutions, international law and bilateral agreements. The Secretary-General also reaffirms the need to avoid the excessive use of force and to stop all unilateral measures, like settlements and evictions, that can undermine the two-State solution.

VII. UN SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR WARNS ISRAELI CRACKDOWN WILL FUEL MORE VIOLENCE, URGES INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

On 22 April, the following [statement](#) was issued by Michael Lynk, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian Territory occupied since 1967:

“The past few weeks have seen a rising level of violence associated with Israel’s 55-year-old occupation of Palestine,” said Michael Lynk, the UN Special Rapporteur for the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967. “International inaction in the face of these new levels of violence will only encourage more of the same.”

In recent weeks, Israeli security forces have entered the Haram al-Sharif in East Jerusalem and arrested hundreds of Palestinian worshipers amidst protests and stone-throwing, rockets have been fired towards Israel from Gaza and Israel has bombed Gaza, and scores of Palestinians have been injured in demonstrations against settler marches in the West Bank. More than 40 Palestinians and 15 Israeli and foreign nationals have been reportedly killed in the violence so far this year.

“This entrenched Israeli occupation, which has become indistinguishable from practices of apartheid, is based on the institutional discrimination of one racial-national-ethnic group over another,” said the Special Rapporteur.

“Violence and large-scale human rights abuses are inherent in such an unequal relationship. History teaches us the bitter lesson that prolonged and unwanted alien rule is invariably enforced by violence and resisted by violence.”

The level of violence required by Israel to maintain its occupation has been steadily increasing over the past 16 months. Last year [marked the highest number of Palestinian deaths resulting from confrontations with Israelis related to the occupation since 2014](#). As well, [the number of Palestinian children killed as a result of Israeli violence in 2021 was the most since 2014](#).

The reported incidents of settler violence towards Palestinians or their property in 2021 was the highest since statistics were first gathered in 2017. And [the number of Palestinian homes demolished as a result of Israeli orders in 2021 was the most since 2016](#).

“Israel has chosen to deepen its occupation through the establishment of 300 settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory in violation of international law, where 700,000 Israeli Jewish settlers live with full legal and political citizenship rights amidst five million stateless and rightsless Palestinians,” Lynk said.

“A permanent occupation – a legal oxymoron – provides the Palestinians with no political horizon and no hope, only the despair of more of the same.”

The Special Rapporteur urged the international community to adopt a series of immediate and short-term measures that could correct this trend, including:

- Direct that Israel end its 15-year-old blockade of Gaza and allow the opening of its crossing points, as per UN Security Council resolution 1860 (2009);

- Direct that Israel immediately cease all settlement activities in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, as per UN Security Council resolution 2334 (2016);
- Direct that Israel take immediate steps to enable Palestinian freedom of movement within the occupied Palestinian territory, including the removal of checkpoints, barriers, permit restrictions and separate highways;
- Direct that Israel immediately end all human rights violations and abuses in the occupied Palestinian territory, including the disproportionate use of force, demolitions and forced evictions, the adoption of steps to ensure accountability for settler violence and military violations of international norms on the use of force, and the ending of the suppression of Palestinian civil society organisations;
- And enable the Palestinian Authority to hold free, fair and peaceful elections in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem.

In addition, the Special Rapporteur called for the international community to embark upon a rights-based peace process between Israel and Palestine, which would be centred upon international law and the body of United Nations resolutions. The end goal, he said, must be the rapid and complete end of the occupation, and the realization of Palestinian self-determination.

“Only by providing a horizon of hope, through the international community’s meaningful demand that the occupation must fully end with all deliberate speed, can this alarming rise in violence be reversed,” Lynk said.

VIII. SPECIAL COORDINATOR WENNESLAND BRIEFS THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL ON THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST

On 25 April, the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Tor Wennesland, made the following [statement](#) at the Security Council meeting on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question (S/PV.9021):

Allow me to begin by wishing all Muslims a blessed Ramadan. I also extend my best wishes to all Christians and Jews who celebrated Easter and Passover.

When I briefed the Council in March (see S/PV.9000), I expressed my hope that this month and its holy days would be a peaceful and celebratory time. Sadly, this period has been marked by violence in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and terror attacks in Israel, which have killed and injured scores of civilians. In Jerusalem, the situation remains relatively calm, despite inflammatory rhetoric and violent clashes between Palestinians and Israeli security forces that have taken place at the Holy Sites.

In Gaza, the launching of rockets is undermining the fragile stability that has prevailed since last May. Let me be clear — there is no justification for acts of terrorism or violence against civilians. Violence, provocations and incitement must stop immediately and be unequivocally condemned by all.

I also reiterate that political, religious and community leaders on all sides must continue to do their part to reduce tensions, uphold the status quo at the holy sites and ensure that their sanctity is respected by all. In this regard, I welcome statements by senior Israeli officials reiterating Israel's commitment to upholding the status quo and ensuring that only Muslims will be allowed to pray on the Holy Esplanade.

At this sensitive and volatile moment, Israeli and Palestinian leaders have made some commendable efforts to ease tensions, condemn attacks and rein in violence. Regional and international partners, such as the United Nations, Egypt and Jordan, have engaged to help restore calm at the holy sites and ensure continued access for Muslim worshippers. These efforts should continue.

Daily violence escalated sharply in the occupied Palestinian territory and in Israel.

In the occupied West Bank and Israel, 23 Palestinians, including three women and four children, were killed by Israeli security forces during demonstrations, clashes, search-and-arrest operations, attacks and alleged attacks against Israelis and other incidents, and 541 Palestinians, including 30 women and 80 children, were injured. Israeli settlers or other civilians perpetrated some 66 attacks against Palestinians resulting in nine injuries and damage to Palestinian property.

In all, 12 Israelis, including two women, as well as three foreign nationals, were killed and 82 Israelis, including some six children and four women, as well as one foreign national, were injured by Palestinians in shooting, stabbing and ramming attacks, clashes, the throwing of stones and Molotov cocktails and other incidents. In total, Palestinians perpetrated some 104 attacks against Israeli civilians resulting in injuries and damage to Israeli property.

Over two weeks, four terrorist attacks took place inside Israel — the deadliest such attacks in years. On 22 March, an Israeli Arab man killed four Israeli civilians, including two women, in an attack in the Israeli city of Be'er Sheva, before being shot and killed by Israeli civilians. A week later, two Israeli Arab men carried out a shooting attack in the Israeli city of Hadera, killing two Israelis and injuring four others, before being shot and killed by the Israeli security forces.

On 29 March, a Palestinian man from the West Bank shot and killed three Israelis and two foreign nationals, injuring 10 others in a shooting attack in the city of B'nai Brak in central Israel. The assailant was shot and killed by the Israeli police. On 7 April, a Palestinian from the Jenin refugee camp in the West Bank carried out a shooting attack in the centre of the Israeli city of Tel Aviv, killing three Israeli civilians and injuring 14. Following an intensive manhunt, the assailant was shot dead by Israeli security forces on 8 April.

Following the attacks in Israel, Israeli authorities significantly reinforced Israeli security force presence along the separation barrier and increased military operations inside the occupied West Bank.

On 31 March, two Palestinians, including a 16-yearold boy, were killed during clashes and armed exchanges in Jenin during an Israeli security force search-and-arrest operation; 20 Palestinians were injured.

On 10 April, Israeli security forces shot and killed an unarmed Palestinian woman with a vision impairment who ran with raised arms towards an Israeli security force checkpoint near Husan. Israeli authorities said they were investigating the incident.

On the same day, Israeli security forces shot and injured a 16-year-old Palestinian boy, who later died of his injuries.

On 13 April, a 14-year-old Palestinian boy was shot dead by Israeli security forces during clashes in Husan. The Israeli security forces said that boy had attempted to throw a Molotov cocktail at Israeli security forces when he was shot — an account disputed by Palestinian eyewitnesses.

Palestinians were also killed by Israeli security forces during search and arrest operations, exchanges of fire and clashes, including on 2 April and 9 April in Jenin; 10 April in Bethlehem and Jenin; 13 April in the village of Silwad, near Ramallah, and in Nablus; 14 April in Kafr Dan, near Jenin and 18 April in the village of Yamoun, near Jenin.

Other Palestinians were shot and killed, reportedly in the context of attacks or attempted attacks by Israeli security forces or Israeli civilians on 31 March near the settlement of Neve Daniel and on 10 April in Hebron.

On 15 April, during the early morning hours, a large number of Palestinians gathered at the Al-Aqsa compound. Some Palestinians threw stones, fireworks and other heavy objects towards Israeli security forces, which used stun grenades, sponge-tipped bullets and batons, including against some bystanders. In the midst of these clashes, several dozen Palestinians entered a mosque in the compound, with some continuing to throw stones and fireworks towards the Israeli security forces. Following a standoff with those inside, Israeli police entered the mosque and arrested those barricaded inside. During the clashes, some damage was caused to the structure of the mosque.

Some 160 Palestinians were injured, including four women, 27 children and at least one journalist, while some 400 were arrested, most of whom were released later that day. According to Israeli security forces, three policemen were injured during the clashes. The conduct of Israeli forces has raised concerns about possible excessive use of force. Importantly, noon prayers subsequently took place that day without major incident.

Over the following days, there were additional, though more limited clashes at the holy sites and in and around the Old City. Some 52 Palestinians were injured by Israeli security forces in these incidents and 10 Israelis were injured by Palestinians in two separate incidents. On 19 April, Israeli authorities decided, in line with past practice, that non-Muslims would not be allowed to visit the Holy Esplanade between Friday, 22 April and the end of the month of Ramadan.

Despite the tensions, overall, hundreds of thousands of Muslims, Jews and Christians have been able to celebrate the holy days in and around the Old City in relative peace and without further escalation.

I reiterate that perpetrators of all acts of violence must be held accountable and brought swiftly to justice. Security forces must exercise maximum restraint and use lethal force only when strictly unavoidable in order to protect life. I am particularly appalled that children continue to be killed

and injured. I urge the Israeli authorities to conduct thorough and transparent investigations into all instances of possible excessive use of force.

Against the backdrop of continued settlement activities and ongoing pressure on Palestinian communities in the occupied West Bank, as well as heightened tensions, settler-related violence remained high, particularly following the terrorist attacks in Israel.

On 10 April, dozens of Palestinians vandalized and set fire to a Jewish holy site located in Area A in the West Bank city of Nablus, before being dispersed by Palestinian security forces. Vandalizing religious sites is unacceptable and has the potential to further escalate the situation. I call on all parties to ensure religious sites and places of worship are respected and protected.

Turning to settlement-related developments, on 27 March, members of an Israeli settler organization accompanied by Israeli police took over the first floor of a historic building in Jerusalem's Old City. The settlers' seizure took place amid ongoing legal proceedings over ownership of the property between the settler organization and the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate. In a statement issued on 29 March, the Patriarchate called the seizure a threat to the continued existence of a Christian Quarter in Jerusalem.

On 19 April, thousands of Israeli activists, accompanied by right-wing members of the Knesset, marched to the evacuated Homesh settlement, demanding its re-establishment. Prior to the march, Israeli security forces temporarily closed the main road and blocked the entrances to several villages, prompting clashes with Palestinians. At least 14 Palestinians were injured by rubber-coated metal bullets. I reiterate that all settlements are illegal under international law and constitute a marked obstacle to peace.

Ahead of and during the month of Ramadan, there was a slowdown in the demolition of Palestinian homes. Overall, the reporting period saw Israeli authorities demolish, seize or force owners to demolish 27 Palestinian-owned structures in Area C and one in occupied East Jerusalem, displacing eight Palestinians, including four children. The demolitions were carried out due to the lack of Israeli-issued building permits, which are nearly impossible for Palestinians to obtain. On 30 March, Israel's Supreme Court decided to postpone by some six months a ruling on the potential demolition of 38 homes in the Palestinian village of Al-Walajeh, near Jerusalem, citing progress in discussions between the Palestinian residents and Israeli authorities on advancing a building and zoning plan for the village. I call on Israeli authorities to end the demolition of Palestinian property and the displacement and eviction of Palestinians, and to approve additional plans that would enable Palestinians to build legally and address their development needs.

Turning to Gaza, the security, humanitarian and economic situation remains deeply troubling. Palestinians in Gaza continue to suffer as a result of years of severe economic and movement restrictions resulting from the Israeli closure regime, as well as the nature of Hamas rule and the ongoing threat of violence. After several months with no rocket fire, militants in Gaza launched five rockets towards Israel, with one landing in the Israeli town of Sderot and causing property damage. The others were intercepted by the Iron Dome system, landed short in the Strip, or landed in open areas inside Israel.

In retaliation, the IDF conducted air strikes against what it said were Hamas targets in the Strip, with no injuries reported. Following the rocket launches, Israeli authorities closed the Erez

crossing into Israel to Palestinian workers and traders on 24 and 25 April. I reiterate that the indiscriminate launching of rockets towards Israeli population centres violates international law and must stop immediately.

Some positive developments related to movement and access in and out of the Strip took place during the reporting period. On 27 March, the Israeli Government approved the issuance of 20,050 permits for Palestinian workers from Gaza to enter Israel, in addition to some existing 2,500 permits issued for traders and businessmen. The Government also allocated some \$12 million to improving the crossings between Gaza and Israel, as the amount of goods exiting Gaza remains at a relatively high level.

In a separate decision, Israeli authorities approved essential medical equipment, such as mobile X-ray machines, and reduced restrictions on the import to Gaza of 56 communications items, many of them routine. Separately, following agreement by the Palestinian Authority and Israel, preparations are under way to facilitate under the Gaza Reconstruction Mechanism, the entry into Gaza of dual-use materials and equipment needed for the repair and maintenance of Gaza's fishing boats as part of revitalizing the fishing sector. The success of this initiative should pave the way for a similar easing of restrictions in other sectors.

Reconstruction of homes fully or partially damaged during the May 2021 escalation is continuing, albeit slowly, largely owing to lack of funds. In a new development, around 3,000 tons of rebar entered Gaza through the Egyptian-controlled Rafah crossing during the reporting period. While these developments are welcome, additional steps are needed by all parties to further enhance access and trade and to improve the prospects for economic development of the Strip.

The fiscal condition of the Palestinian Authority remains precarious. While Palestinian Authority revenues have risen in recent months, expenditures continue to grow, and adequate budget support from donors has not been forthcoming, making it increasingly difficult for the Authority to address outstanding debts and make critical investments in the economy and its people.

Following the outbreak of the conflict in Ukraine, rising prices and market disruptions, which are taking place across the Middle East, threaten food-security levels of vulnerable families in the occupied Palestinian territory. The cost of the quarterly United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) distribution has increased by 42 per cent since the end of 2021 in Gaza where the United Nations accounts for nearly 60 per cent of food supply, which, in addition to meeting needs for food security, is a key stabilizing factor. Spiking international prices for construction materials will also affect reconstruction efforts all over Palestine and in Gaza. Without additional funding, the World Food Programme and UNRWA will not be able to meet the food needs of the Palestinian population this year, which could have a destabilizing impact across the occupied Palestinian territory, particularly in the Gaza Strip. I echo the Secretary-General's appeal for urgent support for UNRWA, which continues to face a critical financial situation.

The parties and regional and international partners must work in concert to move the Palestinian Authority onto a firmer fiscal footing while addressing broader systemic issues. While we have seen some encouraging initiatives and Israeli-Palestinian cooperation to address economic challenges in recent months, a coherent strategy is needed to ensure that the progress made is not

reversed. Policy changes and initiatives to better regulate the economic interdependence between Israelis and Palestinians and to promote more effective and integrated governance are much needed.

Turning to the region, on 21 April, Jordan convened a ministerial meeting of the Arab League to discuss tensions at the holy sites. The ministerial committee issued a statement following the meeting calling for the respect of the legal and historic status quo.

The ceasefire between Israel and Syria is being maintained in a volatile security situation characterized by violations of the 1974 Disengagement of Forces Agreement between Israel and Syria by the parties. As always, such developments present the risk of escalation as Lebanon is preparing for parliamentary elections to be held on 15 May. The United Nations continues to support the authorities' operational preparations, encouraging women's political participation and urging campaigning without hate speech. On 7 April, the International Monetary Fund announced a staff-level agreement with the Government of Lebanon that would unlock around \$3 billion in financial aid, subject to the implementation of major reforms. At a sensitive time of ongoing tensions in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory, I am concerned by the firing of a rocket across the Blue Line into Israel in the early hours of this morning. No group has claimed responsibility for these attacks. The IDF responded with artillery fire into Lebanon. There were no casualties reported, and I urge restraint on all sides. The United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon continues to engage with the Lebanese Armed Forces to increase its counter-rocketlaunching operations to prevent further such incidents and contribute to stability along the Blue Line.

The violence and spiralling tensions of the past month have underscored yet again that efforts to manage the conflict are not a substitute for real progress towards resolving it. We must work immediately to lower tensions and maintain calm. Alongside that, collective efforts are needed to address the drivers of conflict. Reducing violence and halting settlement activity, while shoring up the Palestinian Authority's fiscal stability and strengthening Palestinian institutions, are crucial. Steps to improve economic conditions must be implemented in a way that lays a foundation for a return to a meaningful political process. Let me repeat what I said to the Council last week, which is that a serious escalation is avoidable. A sustained calm can open the space for a more serious discussion about further improvements and perspectives, and I urge the parties to maintain calm so that the final week of Ramadan can be celebrated without interruption.

Having said that, we must not lose sight of how vital it is to end the occupation and advance towards a two-State reality. The ultimate goal remains clear — two States, living side by side in peace and security, in line with United Nations resolutions and international law. The United Nations remains committed to supporting Israelis and Palestinians in moving towards that future, even as they address pressing political, security, economic and humanitarian concerns and needs. We will continue to work with the parties and with regional and international partners to achieve that goal.

IX. SPECIAL RAPPORTEURS CALL ON GOVERNMENTS TO RESUME FUNDING FOR SIX PALESTINIAN CSOS DESIGNATED BY ISRAEL AS “TERRORIST ORGANISATIONS”

On 25 April, the following [statement](#) was issued by Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian Territory occupied since 1967 Michael Lynk; Mary Lawlor, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders; Fionnuala Ní Aoláin, Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights while countering terrorism; Irene Khan, Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression; Melissa Upreti (Chair), Dorothy Estrada Tanck (Vice-Chair), Elizabeth Broderick, Ivana Radačić, and Meskerem Geset Techane, Working Group on discrimination against women and girls; Reem Alsalem, Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences; Clément N. Voule, Special Rapporteur on the right to peaceful assembly and association; and Siobhán Mullally, Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children:

UN human rights experts today called on the international community to take immediate and effective steps to protect and sustain the six Palestinian civil society groups that were designated as ‘terrorist organisations’ by the Government of Israel in October 2021.

“Israel’s disturbing designation of these organisations as ‘terrorist organisations’ has not been accompanied by any public concrete and credible evidence,” said the human rights experts. “We note that the information presented by Israel has also failed to convince a number of governments and international organisations that have traditionally provided funding for the indispensable work of these six organisations.”

In October 2021, the UN experts [denounced](#) Israel’s designation of six Palestinian civil society organisations – Addameer Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association, Al-Haq, Bisan Center for Research and Development, Defense for Children International – Palestine, the Union of Agricultural Work Committees and the Union of Palestinian Women Committees – as terrorist organizations. Israel’s designation enables it to close the organisations, seize their assets, end their work and charge their leadership and staff with terrorist offences.

“Israel has had six months to substantiate its accusations and it has failed to deliver,” the experts said. “We call on the funding governments and international organisations to swiftly conclude that Israel has not established its allegations and to announce that they will continue to financially and politically support these organisations and the communities and groups they serve.”

Although Israel has not substantiated its allegations publicly or to the funding governments and international organizations, several of the funders have delayed their contributions to the Palestinian organisations while they investigate these claims. The European Union has formally suspended its funding for two of these organisations. This has undermined the work of these Palestinian organisations and has had an incalculable impact on the communities they support. There has been a lack of clarity about the duration of these steps, the experts said.

“We are deeply disturbed by Israel’s apparent misuse of anti-terrorism legislation to attack some of the leading civil society organisations in Palestine. Such misuse must be rejected and countered,” the experts said.

“The United Nations has been very clear that the drafting and application of anti-terrorism laws have to be rigorously consistent with international law and human rights protections, including the principles of legal certainty, necessity, proportionality, the rule of law and non-discrimination.”

Against this background, the experts welcomed the statement issued on 23 March 2022 by the Belgium Minister of Development Cooperation, Meryame Kitir, who stated that: “My administration has conducted an internal investigation into the allegations. This did not reveal any evidence that would confirm the allegations. I have therefore decided not to take any action against the Palestinian organizations in question. Nor is the evidence provided by the Israeli authorities such as to reconsider my decision.”

The human rights experts emphasised that they recognise and applaud the indispensable work of Palestinian civil society in holding Israel accountable for its occupation and human rights violations and in promoting democratic principles and human rights within Palestinian society.

“Applying anti-terrorism laws to well-regarded human rights defenders and civil society organisations – without persuasive evidence to substantiate these claims – seems to indicate a politically-motivated attempt by Israel to silence some of its most effective critics in violation of their rights to freedom of association and of expression,” they said.

“If the international community is serious about its support for Palestinian self-determination and an end to the 55-year-old Israeli occupation, it must become more vocal and assertive in defending the work of these organisations, and reminding Israel of its international human rights obligations.”

Accordingly, the human rights experts called upon the international community to:

- Publicly conclude that Israel has not substantiated its allegations against the six organisations;
- Resume, continue and even increase its financial and political support for the work of these six organisations; and
- Demand that Israel retract the designations and cease its harassment of all Palestinian, Israeli and international human rights and civil society organisations which promote human rights and accountability in Israel and Palestine.

X. UNRWA COMMISSIONER-GENERAL CALLS FOR SUPPORT TO PALESTINE REFUGEES IN SYRIA AHEAD OF BRUSSELS INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

On 26 April, Philippe Lazzarini, Commissioner-General of the UN Relief Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near-East (UNRWA), issued the following [statement](#):

The Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), Philippe Lazzarini called on the international and donor community to support Palestine refugees in Syria. After a visit to Damascus on 19-21 April, and ahead of the international conference on “Supporting the Future of Syria and the Region” to be held next month, he reminded donors and policymakers that some 438,000 Palestine refugees remain in Syria, most at least once displaced and living under the poverty line.

The recent spike in the prices of food, fuel and commodities globally adds a layer of hardship to an already dire situation for the refugees in Syria, after 11 years of conflict. Many report living on one meal a day, preferring to lower their intake to be able to feed their children.

“It is very difficult to describe the destitution of most Palestine refugees in Syria,” said the UNRWA Commissioner-General. They often seem to fall off the grid, off the global attention. They need the support of the international community. After 11 years of a grueling conflict that displaced half the population, most Palestine refugees need UNRWA cash assistance to survive. Sadly though, insufficient funding to UNRWA makes it unable to cover their needs. Female headed families and families of disabled children are most vulnerable and most in need of support,” said Mr. Lazzarini

UNRWA expects Palestine refugee families that receive government clearance to continue returning to camps such as Yarmouk and Ein el Tal, despite the destruction and risks of unexploded ordinance. “UNRWA must be able to provide at least basic health and education services to Palestine refugees who have no choice but to return to camps that are still largely destroyed,” said Mr. Lazzarini. “It is always very compelling to see the scope and scale of destruction in Yarmouk and other Palestine refugee camps. It is also very gripping to see the extraordinary resolve and determination of young Palestine refugee girls and boys and their avidity to learn,” he added after a meeting with UNRWA schools parliamentarians at the Beit Lahia Ariha School in Khan Dunoun camp.

During his visit, the Commissioner-General met with Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates, Dr. Faysal Miqdad and the Director-General of the General Authority for Palestinian Arab Refugees (GAPAR), Mr. Qasem Husein to discuss the situation in Palestine refugee camps and ways to continue to support jointly Palestine refugees.

The Commissioner-General lauded the UNRWA front line staff, teachers, doctors, nurses, social workers for their dedication in providing essential services throughout the conflict to Palestine refugees, sometimes at the risk of their own life. UNRWA has lost 19 staff member in Syria since the beginning of the conflict.

XI. UN HUMAN RIGHTS EXPERTS: ISRAEL'S HOUSING POLICIES IN OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORY AMOUNTS TO RACIAL SEGREGATION

On 27 April, the following [statement](#) was issued by Ms E. Tendayi Achiume, Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance; Mr Clément Nyaletsossi Voule, Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association; Mr Balakrishnan Rajagopal, Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, and on the right to non-discrimination in this context; Mr Michael Lynk, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967; Mr Pedro Arrojo-Agudo, Special Rapporteur on the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation:

Israel's housing policies in East Jerusalem amount to racial segregation and discrimination against the Palestinian people, and a violation of their human rights, UN experts said today.

Based on reports received, the experts said Palestinians in the territory have been subject to discriminatory zoning and planning regimes that restrict access to housing, safe drinking water and sanitation, and other essential services, including healthcare and educational facilities.

“The discriminatory zoning and planning regime in East Jerusalem, which prioritises zoning for Israeli settlements and limits housing options for Palestinians, clearly amounts to segregation on the basis of race, colour, descent or national or ethnic origin,” the experts said.

“Racially segregated settlements have had significant and lasting consequences on the standards of living of the Palestinian people,” they stressed, calling attention to the detrimental effect of the measures on Palestinians and Bedouin communities in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.

A [report](#) to the Human Rights Council in March said Israel's 55-year occupation of the Palestinian territory constitutes apartheid. The UN experts echoed the findings of the report and urged the Israeli Government to comply with international human rights and humanitarian law, including the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.

They expressed alarm about reports that Palestinian protests over the establishment of the “Evyatar” outpost and Israel's exclusive control over the distribution of public spaces and basic resources have allegedly been met with disproportionate violence and systematic suppression by the Israeli Defence Forces.

“We have received reports that protesters have been subjected to indiscriminate and excessive use of force, arbitrary detention, torture, and collective punishment. At least six Palestinians have been shot dead by Israeli security forces or Israel settlers while protesting the establishment of the settlement,” they said.

The UN experts urged the international community to conduct independent investigations into the conduct of military and law enforcement operations, in order to end the occupying power's ongoing impunity for excessive use of force against Palestinians in the context of protests, search-and-arrest operations, and at checkpoints.

“Peaceful assemblies should only be dispersed in exceptional cases, and subject to strict requirements of legality, necessity and proportionality,” they said.

Concerns about Israel’s demolition of infrastructure in the West Bank have also been the subject of the Human Rights Committee’s review of Israel’s implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). The Committee has called for review and reform of the planning and zoning regime in the region.

“Israel, as the internationally-recognised occupying power of the Palestinian territory, has significant obligations under international human rights law, which it has repeatedly violated.” the experts said. They urged the international community to adopt a robust menu of accountability measures to swiftly end the occupation and enable Palestinian self-determination.

The UN experts have been in official communication with the Israeli Government to address these allegations and clarify its obligations under international law.

XII. CEIRPP HOLDS VIRTUAL EVENT ON HEBRON

On 27 April, the United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (CEIRPP) convened a virtual event entitled “Al-Khalil/Hebron – A Case Study for the Impact of Israeli Settlements on Palestinian Rights Under Occupation”. The [Chair’s Summary](#) of the virtual event is reproduced below.

The event **“Al-Khalil/Hebron – A case study for the impact of Israeli settlements on Palestinian rights under occupation”** was held on 27 April 2022, under the auspices of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (CEIRPP). The event was moderated by H.E. Mr. Arrmanatha Christiawan Nasir, Vice-Chair of the Committee and Permanent Representative of Indonesia to the United Nations. It consisted of an opening session with remarks by the Vice-Chair and H.E. Mr. Riyad Mansour, Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations. The panel comprised of Mr. Hisham Sharabati, Palestinian Human Rights defender; Ms. Inès Abdel Razek, Advocacy Director of the Palestine Institute for Public Diplomacy; Mr. Sulaiman Khatib, Director of International Relations, and Mr. Avner Wishnitzer, co-founder and member, both at the Israeli-Palestinian NGO Combatants for Peace.

Member States participated in the two-hour event on WebEx platform. The event was livestreamed on UN WebTV as well as the Committee social media channels and the public had an opportunity to make comments and pose questions to the panellists.

At the opening, Ambassador **Nasir** explained the Committee’s mandate to raise awareness internationally on the Question of Palestine and the challenges faced daily by the Palestinian people. This event focussed on Hebron as an illustration of the illegal Israeli settlement of the West Bank and the specific challenges faced by Palestinians living near such settlements. Israel exercises direct control over the 20 per cent of Hebron City known as “H2,” home to some 33,000 Palestinians and a few hundred Israeli settlers living in a fortified enclave protected by the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF). Hebron case study stood out for the well documented and repeated incidents of settler violence, the impact of closures for thousands of Palestinian segregated from the rest of the population by an extensive network of gates, walls and fences and a heavy Israeli military

presence enforcing this segregation. The situation remained volatile and reverberate politically, economically and socially in the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT). Ambassador Nasir introduced the panellists and stated that over several years now the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Secretary-General have reaffirmed that all settlements were illegal under international law and constituted a substantial obstacle to peace, calling on Israel, the occupying Power, to cease all settlement activity immediately and completely. The Committee also has repeatedly expressed its concern at the continuation of settlement activities and called for the implementation of Security Council resolution 2334 (2016) and all other relevant UN resolutions.

In his introductory remarks, **Ambassador Mansour** thanked Ambassador Nasir and the Bureau of the Committee for organizing the event. He also expressed his gratitude towards the panellists and thanked them for their participation.

Mr. Hisham Sharabati stated that he wished his presentation would help to raise awareness about the situation in Hebron, especially at the United Nations. Mr. Sharabati showed several maps showing Hebron's division into areas known as "H1" and "H2" as well as details on the impact on the life of Palestinians living in the Hebron area due to the constant heavy Israeli military presence, settlers' violence, and the segregation of the city centre implemented through a widespread facial recognition equipment, fences, walls, and checkpoints. Past and present photos of Shuhada Street, in the city centre, showed the stark contrast between a thriving area with life and economic activities some thirty years ago and the current state of a totally empty street with closed shops due to the coercive environment imposed on Palestinians. Other images showed also the existence of roads with separate access for Israeli and Palestinians, which have been called "apartheid roads".

Ms. Inès Abdel Razek emphasized that Hebron was "a microcosm of the Israeli occupation and a situation of apartheid", adding that it was essential to document and show the human reality of Palestinians living in this area. This task was essential as many foreigners faced difficulties to enter the West Bank and could not directly witness the situation on the ground. To this end, the Palestine Institute for Public Diplomacy initiated the project "Palestine Virtual Reality" with videos providing an immersive experience in areas around the West Bank. Ms. Abdel Razek showed a short extract of a video virtual tour of Hebron, near an Israeli military checkpoint. Israel designed a complicated and bureaucratic system of segregation to maintain its domination over the Palestinians. She stressed that the mass violations of human rights in Hebron, the rest of the West Bank and Gaza would continue if Member States failed to provide the necessary support to end the impunity for those policies. Fostering accountability for the crimes committed and ending impunity were the bases of any future solution, either the two-State solution or other options, she stated.

Mr. Sulaiman Khatib shared his experience of living in Hizma, a community located on the North-East of Jerusalem, near an Israeli checkpoint, settlements as well as the Separation Barrier. His family had lost a large portion of land following the construction of this "separation wall", a situation similar to those living in and around Hebron. Mr. Khatib spoke of the suffering of his family because of the Israeli occupation, in contrast with the higher quality of life enjoyed by Israeli settlers. The natural environment had also suffered from this situation and the limited resources and economic opportunities in Area C (approximately 60 per cent of the West Bank under almost complete Israeli control) pushed the population to leave for Area A (approximately 18 per cent of the West Bank under Palestinian political and security control). The constant

presence of military and settlers has been highly traumatic for those communities, many of whom were 1948 refugees from the Negev, recalling the example of the Bedouin village of Khan Al-Ahmar in the central West Bank. This psychological trauma caused by the occupation, especially on children, and loss of their own culture must be addressed to ensure a lasting political solution for this situation. Many Palestinians thought that their plight would not be heard and solved, but examples like the success achieved in South Africa provided hope.

Mr. Avner Wishnitzer presented his personal account of a system he described as both unfair for Palestinians and dangerous for Israel. Mr. Wishnitzer explained that he started his activism in the Massafer Yatta area, south of Hebron, and was exposed to what he called “slow violence” by the State of Israel against Palestinians. The aim of his organization, Combatants for Peace was to denounce the reality of the occupation and to dismantle this system of domination. The discrimination on the access to limited water resources in the South Hebron Hills was a clear example of this “slow violence”. Here, Israeli authorities did not allow Palestinian communities to get connected to the water grid and even demolish water distribution systems built without permits, which were almost never granted to Palestinians, while settlers took over water springs in those same areas. As a result, Palestinian communities must purchase their water at a cost six times higher than the regular price and transport it by tankers which were often confiscated by Israeli authorities. This discriminatory situation violated international law and basic human rights, and could not be accepted, he noted.

During the **Question-and-Answer** session, **Ambassador Mansour** thanked the Committee and the panellists for their moving testimonies and stated he knew about the situation of these communities and understood the frustration and anger over this prolonged occupation. He added that it was essential to educate the international community and put accountability and justice at the centre of the discussion on the Question of Palestine, alongside United Nations resolutions. The Observer Mission of the State of Palestine to the United Nations had been advocating to foster accountability, relaying the stories of Palestinians suffering in those communities, in order to force an end to the occupation. **Mr. Ray Sithole** from the **Permanent Mission of South Africa to the United Nations** thanked the Vice Chair, Ambassador Mansour and the panellists for their tireless activism and for sharing their experience. He stated that South Africa was a staunch supporter of the Palestinian cause, adding that the occupation was a violation of international human rights and international humanitarian law. South Africa remained committed to work on the process of revitalizing negotiations leading to the two-State solution, with a viable Palestinian State and recognized sovereignty for both states.

Panellists addressed several questions submitted by the audience. On recommendations for the international community on the protection of Palestinians in Hebron, **panellists** stressed that many resolutions had been adopted by UN organs and committees to stop settlements and the occupation, without tangible outcomes on the ground. Taking the example of the sanctions imposed as a result of conflicts in Ukraine or in Iraq, a panellist noted how no concrete step had been taken vis-à-vis Israel over the years. Hence, Palestinians did not feel supported by the international community. It was also mentioned that it was everyone’s responsibility to be engaged in ending the occupation, at every level.

Panellists also called for the UN Special Committee against Apartheid to be reconvened. It was stressed that Member States must realize that normalizing their relations with Israel was

prolonging the occupation. Responding to a question related to the issue of tax deductions for organizations supporting settlements, it was noted that many settlement projects, illegal according to international law, were funded by US and European organizations. Countries had the duty to intervene against these organizations, including through courts or imposing individual sanctions. It was also pointed out that safeguarding indigenous Palestinian culture was essential, that there was a need to create an alternative to the current status quo, and that the Palestinian diaspora must be supportive of and invested in these efforts.

In her closing remarks, **Ambassador Abdelhady-Nasser** thanked the Chair, the Committee, the Division for Palestinian Rights and the panellists for their informative presentations and testimonies, and for their message of hope. She stressed that Mr. Wishnitzer represents one of many Israeli voices that were not heard enough. She stated that the situation of the Palestinians was often desperate, but civil society organizations must continue their efforts to achieve justice. **Ambassador Mansour** added that it was essential to continue to promote the right of Palestinians at the United Nations, including through resolutions and other decisions, and to document the violations.

Ambassador Nasir closed the event.

****Note: This Summary attempts to provide an overall picture of the deliberations of the virtual Event. A [video](#) of the Event can be found on the webpage of the CEIRPP, <https://www.un.org/unispal/> as well as in its official [Facebook page](#) and [YouTube account](#).*

****Note: The views and opinions expressed in this summary are those of the speakers and do not necessarily reflect the official position of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.*
