

STATEMENT TO THE SECURITY COUNCIL

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THE INALIENABLE RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE**

**OPEN DEBATE
ON THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST,
INCLUDING THE PALESTINIAN QUESTION**

New York, 26 July 2022

**Mister President,
Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,**

On behalf of the Committee, I congratulate Brazil for its capable presidency of the Security Council in July, and also thank UN Deputy Special Coordinator, Lynn Hastings for her briefing.

Mister President,

Israel's continued settlement expansion and land confiscation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, has grave political repercussions. They constitute grave breaches of international law and relevant United Nations resolutions and undermine the contiguity and viability of the Palestinian state and the prospects for realizing the two-State solution on the pre-1967 borders that the Security Council, General Assembly and international community as a whole have long endorsed and called for.

The Committee expresses its concern over ongoing developments in Masafer Yatta in the south of the occupied West Bank after the Israeli Supreme Court ruled that the area is to be appropriated by the Israeli military. This action risks forcibly displacing over 1,200 Palestinians, including a large number of women and at least 580 children, the largest forcible expulsion of Palestinians since 1967. As referenced by UNSCO, and as reported in the end-of-mission Statement by the UN Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices of 15 July 2022, the

implementation of this decision will test the international community's resolve and the Security Council's ability to take decisive action to uphold international law, the Charter and to protect Palestinian civilians living under occupation and their homes and livelihoods.

The Committee calls on the Security Council to clearly and firmly reiterate its demands that the Government of Israel, the occupying Power, immediately end all settlement expansions, demolitions, confiscations of Palestinian property and the forcible removal of civilians in compliance with international law and UN resolutions, including SC Res 2334 (2016).

Mister President,

The Committee is alarmed by the increasing violence and casualties in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, over the past months as reported by Special Coordinator Wennesland. We condemn the indiscriminate killing and excessive use of lethal force against civilians, particularly children, which have become all too frequent and for which no one is held accountable. Protection of civilians is central to the United Nations and the Security Council's work and must be a prioritized in the absence of a just solution.

Recent findings in the report of the Secretary General on Children and Armed Conflict highlighted the dramatic increase in grave violations inflicted on Palestinian children. These findings must serve as a stark

reminder to the Security Council to act. The Committee urges Israeli forces and Palestinian armed groups to comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law and human rights law and exercise measures to protect Palestinian children caught in the midst of this ongoing tragic conflict.

We applaud and join the multiple calls for action to also protect human rights defenders and press freedom. The Committee welcomes the UN Human Rights Office preliminary investigation regarding the killing of journalist Shireen Abu Akleh and urges Israel to bring those responsible to justice. The Committee also commends the nine member states of the European Union that have pledged to continue working with the six Palestinian civil society groups - that Israel labeled as terrorist organizations in October 2021 - in the absence of any substantial information to support that allegation. These organizations, some of whom are Committee partners, play crucial roles in promoting democracy and building a robust Palestinian civil society and must continue to be supported.

Mister President,

Through its multi-faceted work, UNRWA plays a crucial role in providing essential services to the Palestinian people. The Committee lauds the commitments made by Member States at the recent UN Pledging Conference and joins the Secretary-General in urging Member States to put the Agency on a sustainable financial foundation. By

contributing to UNRWA, we contribute to the welfare and dignity of Palestine refugees and to Middle East peace and stability.

We commend the June 2022 findings of the UN Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel. We concur with the assessment that the continued Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory and all its facets, including annexation, the Gaza blockade and policies based on discrimination and segregation are the primary root causes of the recurrent tension, instability and conflict in the region. The Committee pledges to continue its advocacy with Member States and United Nations officials toward resuming negotiations aimed at addressing these root causes, resolving the core issues and achieving a just and lasting peace. Only a comprehensive political process addressing the unfulfilled promises to the Palestinian people and leading to the realization of their inalienable rights, including to self-determination and return, will result in an end of the conflict.

In line with its mandate, the Committee will continue its advocacy work, organize public events and draw attention to the plight of the Palestinian people's inalienable rights including in relation to East Jerusalem.

Mister President,

The only way to resolve the question of Palestine is through a two-State solution, based on the 1967 borders, and with two States – Israel

and Palestine – living side-by-side in peace and security, with East Jerusalem as the capital of the State of Palestine. We urge the Security Council to act without delay to contribute to the achievement of that solution.

Thank you for your attention.
