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**Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the
rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory**

Security Council
Seventy-seventh year

Identical letters dated 18 August 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

In follow-up to my letter of yesterday, I regret to inform you that Israel, the occupying Power, is continuing its crackdown on Palestinian civil society, particularly human rights monitors and defenders, launching a new attack against them today in which Israeli occupying forces raided the premises of seven institutions, confiscated materials, destroyed property and forcibly closed offices. As accountability remains non-existent, Israeli officials are undeterred and acting as though there will be no consequences for such blatant aggression against Palestinian civil society.

It is to be recalled that, on 22 October 2021, the Israeli Minister, Benny Gantz, declared six leading Palestinian human rights and civil society organizations as “terrorist” organizations. Those targeted included the prominent human rights organization Al-Haq; Addameer, which supports Palestinian political prisoners and detainees; the Union of Agricultural Work Committees; the Bisan Center for Research and Development; the Union of Palestinian Women’s Committees; and Defense for Children International – Palestine.

All of the organizations have been recognized for the human rights and humanitarian work that they do, and they are supported by Governments and intergovernmental organizations from across the international community as part of the efforts to strengthen Palestinian civil society as an essential component of any democratic nation. But these efforts are being deliberately and systematically undermined by Israel, which has no interest in a functioning civil society in Palestine and seeks to stifle the exposure of Israel’s grave and systematic human rights violations and war crimes against the Palestinian people, including women and children.

Today, following the libellous designations in October 2021 and the implementing orders ratified by Minister Gantz on 17 August 2022 affirming the designation of the Union of Palestinian Women’s Committees, the Bisan Center and



Addameer as terrorist organizations, attacks on these civil society organizations were carried out by Israeli occupying forces. The occupying Power also announced that it had denied the appeals submitted by Al-Haq and Defense for Children International – Palestine against their designations as terrorist organizations, continuing the pressure and intimidation campaign against them and all who support them.

In addition to the attacks on and closures of the premises of the above organizations, Israeli occupying forces raided the premises of Saint Andrew's Anglican/Episcopal Church in Ramallah. The assault began at 3 a.m. and carried on for two hours as Israeli soldiers occupied the compound, including the church sanctuary, parish hall, church offices, rectory and Arab Episcopal Medical Center, and terrorized the inhabitants with gunfire, stun grenades and the smashing of glass as soldiers damaged the church entrance. Israeli occupying forces attempt to justify this appalling attack on church premises as a raid on Al-Haq, to which Saint Andrew's rents an office with a totally separate entrance from the church.

A statement issued by the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem "unequivocally condemns this attack on one of its sacred places of worship, as well as the devastation of church property, as both violations of international law and a terroristic act against the entire community ... The Diocese considers the offense on the complex of Saint Andrew's in Ramallah an assault against its free exercise of religion as an established and officially recognized Christian church".

We reiterate our calls upon the Security Council, the General Assembly and all other relevant actors to firmly condemn and reject such actions by the occupying Power against the church and against Palestinian civil society. We appeal for continued efforts to defend Palestinian civil society and its ability to carry out its work without persecution by the occupying Power and to defend the Palestinian people's right to advocate their freedom and human rights and resist such constant defamation, dehumanization and aggression.

Once again, we underscore that libellous slander and these attacks by Israel are part of its long-running campaign against Palestinian civil society for daring to expose the occupation's crimes, including human rights abuses against women and children. It is also another attack on the Palestinian people's fundamental right to oppose this illegal occupation and expose and resist its crimes. The international community cannot permit such a blatant assault to go without consequences.

In this regard, it is to be recalled that, in a joint statement of 12 July 2022 by the Foreign Ministries of Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain and Sweden after respective investigations into the October 2021 allegations and terrorist designations by Israel against the above-mentioned six Palestinian civil society organizations, it was stressed that: "No substantial information was received from Israel that would justify reviewing our policy towards the six Palestinian NGOs on the basis of the Israeli decision to designate these NGOs as 'terrorist organizations' ... In the absence of such evidence, we will continue our cooperation and strong support for the civil society in the oPT. A free and strong civil society is indispensable for promoting democratic values and for the two-state solution."

Israel's absolute contempt for international law and for the international community in its entirety must not go unanswered. It cannot be permitted to perpetrate its crimes against the Palestinian people, using one false and illegitimate pretext after another, without consequences. These illegal, violent actions against Palestinian civil society are clearly part and parcel of the broader pattern of acts of aggression, human rights violations and war crimes aimed at terrorizing and traumatizing the Palestinian civilian population. Such actions cannot be divorced from the illegal measures of colonization, collective punishment, detention and imprisonment, and unrelenting

oppression of Palestinians that have been the hallmarks of the past 75 years of Nakba and 55 years of foreign occupation violently inflicted by Israel on the Palestinian people.

It is long past time to bring an end to this grave injustice against our people and to assist them in bringing an end to this illegal colonial occupation and apartheid regime and to finally attain justice and see the day of their freedom and independence and a life of dignity in their homeland. Until that day is realized, we reiterate our continual appeal for international protection for the Palestinian people, in accordance with international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions. This is crucial for saving civilian lives, safeguarding their future and preserving the prospects for achieving the just solution to the Palestine question and lasting peace and security between Palestine and Israel that the international community has long called for yet, in the absence of accountability and political will, tragically failed to realize.

The present letter is in follow-up to our 763 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 17 August 2022 (A/ES-10/910-S/2022/628), 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