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

Identical letters dated 6 February 2023 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

Persisting with its lethal, destructive and unlawful pattern of behaviour, Israel, the occupying Power, continues to perpetrate aggressions against the Palestinian people. Without an immediate international intervention that imposes accountability and a cost for the war crimes and crimes against humanity that Israel is committing, this illegal colonial occupation and apartheid regime will continue to endanger human lives and endanger regional and international peace and security with dire consequences.

Since my previous letter to you, dated 31 January Israeli occupying forces and settler militias have carried out countless rampages and assaults throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, killing and injuring more Palestinian civilians. At the time of writing, the number of victims since the start of 2023 has risen to 41 Palestinians killed and hundreds injured.

For more than a week, Israeli occupying forces have besieged the city of Jericho, imposing checkpoints and concrete barriers at the entrances to the city and carrying out raids, targeting in particular the Aqbat Jabr refugee camp, with the occupying Power claiming that it is pursuing “wanted men”. Today, 6 February, that siege resulted in the killing of five Palestinian youths by the Israeli occupying forces at the Aqbat Jabr refugee camp and the injury of dozens of other people, including in an earlier raid on Saturday. The Israeli occupying forces also raided and ransacked homes in the refugee camp and detained a dozen Palestinians, mostly relatives of the youths who were killed.

The victims of this excessive use of force, which amounts to extrajudicial execution, were two brothers, Raafat Wael Aweidat, age 21, and Ibrahim Wael Aweidat, age 27, and Adham Majdi Aweidat, age 22, Thayer Aweidat, age 28, and Malik Awni Lafi, age 22. The dead bodies of these five young men were then seized and taken by the Israeli occupying forces, compounding the grief of their devastated families.



Tensions are spiking dramatically as a pervasive sense of fear and besiegement is spreading among the Palestinian people in the aftermath of such deadly attacks, countless measures of collective punishment and the violence and terror being perpetrated on a daily basis by Israeli settler gangs and militias that are roaming throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. In fact, extremist Israeli politicians, settlers and military officials openly threaten to commit more savagery against Palestinian civilians, including threats of more military raids, and to crack down on Palestinian prisoners and detainees, and carry out more ethnic cleansing of Palestinians.

In this regard, Israel, the occupying Power, is ratcheting up its plans to demolish more Palestinian homes as it continues its feverish attempts to forcibly displace and ethnically cleanse our people from their land, in grave breach of international law. Among the many Palestinians under threat of having their homes demolished, including the entire communities of Masafer Yatta and Khan al-Ahmar, approximately 77 Palestinians, including 42 children, in the Wadi Qaddum area of occupied East Jerusalem are at risk of losing their home and being forcibly displaced.

The building in Wadi Qaddum is being targeted for demolition under the pretext of lacking a building permit, which is nearly impossible for Palestinians to acquire from the occupying Power, as repeatedly affirmed by the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General to the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority, Tor Wennesland, in his briefings to the Security Council and in countless reports by United Nations Special Rapporteurs, United Nations agencies and international, Palestinian and Israeli human rights organizations. The Palestinian population in Jerusalem is especially vulnerable to this illegal Israeli policy; there are currently 20,000 outstanding demolition orders against homes in the city, endangering over 40 per cent of the Palestinian population.

If Israel proceeds with its plans to demolish the Wadi Qaddum building, the families would be rendered homeless, dispossessed and displaced yet again by Israel. As we witness the horrific destruction being wreaked by natural disasters in our region and across the world, the sheer perversity and cruelty of such a deliberate and illegal policy and practice by Israel to destroy homes cannot be overlooked.

We call on the international community to act to exert the necessary pressure to avert the looming demolitions and to bring a halt to all these crimes, which constitute an ongoing Nakbah against the Palestinian people, and to ensure their protection.

In this regard, we recall the statement that the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Volker Türk, made on 3 February 2023, in which he expressed, *inter alia*, his “fear that the recent measures being taken by the Government of Israel are only fuelling further abuses of human rights law and violations of international humanitarian law”, and called for urgent efforts to end the “illogic of escalation that has only ended in dead bodies, shattered lives and utter despair”.

As stressed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the State of Palestine, the reality is that this is not merely “a cycle of violence, but rather a campaign of targeted killings against the Palestinian people”. We are therefore compelled to reiterate our calls for international protection for the Palestinian people under international law, according to which they are considered to be protected persons under this illegal Israeli occupation. As Israel refuses to end its occupation and remains in flagrant and systematic breach of its obligations towards the protected population – in fact not only abrogating, but abdicating, its responsibilities – it is incumbent on the international community to ensure the protection of our people.

We stress in particular the obligation of the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention to respect and ensure respect for the Geneva Conventions of 1949 in all circumstances. The time has long past to enforce the Fourth Geneva Convention in Occupied Palestine and to hold Israel accountable for its grave breaches as per articles 146 and 147 of the Convention.

Moreover, in this regard, we reiterate our calls on the Security Council, the General Assembly and the entire United Nations system, including the Secretary-General, to act with urgency to tangibly uphold international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions, including Security Council resolution 904 (1994) and its specific call for disarming Israeli settlers and for a temporary international presence, with a view to ensuring the safety and protection of the Palestinian civilian population and bringing a halt to Israel's grave breaches.

Doing so is paramount in order to save civilian lives, avert further calamities for the Palestinian and Israeli peoples and ensure a desperately needed and long-overdue horizon for justice and peace to end this decades-long, man-made crisis and historic injustice.

The present letter is in follow-up to our 777 letters regarding the ongoing historic injustice against the Palestinian people and the crimes being perpetrated by Israel, the occupying Power, 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 31 January 2023 (A/ES-10/925-S/2023/73) 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 must be held accountable and the perpetrators 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) Riyadh **Mansour**
Minister
Permanent Observer