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

Security Council
Seventy-eighth year

Identical letters dated 13 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

Trampling international law and ignoring the repeated international calls for respect, Israel, the occupying Power, is forging ahead with its unlawful and destructive attempts to impose a fait accompli in Occupied Palestine through the intensification of its illegal measures of colonization and annexation and collective punishment.

On 12 February, the Israeli government decided to “legalize” nine settlement outposts that have been established by extremist Jewish settler groups on land forcibly and illegally seized from Palestinians. It also decided to connect dozens of other illegal settlement outposts to Israel’s infrastructure, such as water and electricity. Accompanying these decisions, was the announcement of plans to construct another 10,000 residential units in settlements already illegally established by Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem.

These unlawful decisions are being openly boasted about by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and the extremist, far-right politicians in his cabinet, who brag about their intentions to expand and entrench this illegal occupation and to collectively punish the Palestinian people through such punitive measures in response to recent acts of violence.

Moreover, such decisions and associated statements by Israeli officials are further proof of a deliberate Israeli policy to colonize and annex the Palestinian land, in grave breach of international law, that is to say, constituting war crimes, and in direct contempt of the international community, particularly the United Nations Security Council, which has repeatedly demanded the cessation and reversal of Israeli settlement activities and a halt to such actions imperilling the two-State solution on the 1967 lines. The most recent relevant pronouncement of the Security Council – resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#) – was unequivocal in this regard.

In resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#), the Council, inter alia, reaffirmed that “the establishment by Israel of settlements in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967,



including East Jerusalem, has no legal validity and constitutes a flagrant violation under international law and a major obstacle to the achievement of the two-State solution and a just, lasting and comprehensive peace”, and reiterated “its demand that Israel immediately and completely cease all settlement activities in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, and that it fully respect all of its legal obligations in this regard”.

Moreover, the Council condemned “all measures aimed at altering the demographic composition, character and status of the Palestinian Territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem, including, inter alia, the construction and expansion of settlements, transfer of Israeli settlers, confiscation of land, demolition of homes and displacement of Palestinian civilians, in violation of international humanitarian law and relevant resolutions”, and specifically recalled the obligation under the Quartet road map, endorsed by the Council in its resolution 1515 (2003), “for a freeze by Israel of all settlement activity, including ‘natural growth’, and the dismantlement of all settlement outposts erected since March 2001”.

Explicitly related to its illegal, colonial settlement enterprise, Israel also continues to destroy Palestinian homes and other civilian structures, under the pretext that they lack occupation-issued permits and as a punitive measure. Such actions, which deprive Palestinian families of shelter and the human security that only a home can provide, rendering them homeless and forcibly displacing them, constitute flagrant violations of the Fourth Geneva Convention prohibitions on the pillaging and plundering of civilian properties and the forced transfer of the occupied population. Moreover, such acts of dispossession violate their human right to adequate housing.

The cruel irony is that Israel is forcibly displacing and dispossessing Indigenous Palestinian families, one after the other, at the very same time that it is constructing tens of thousands of residential units for the Israeli settlers it continues to illegally transfer to the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, with the direct aim of forcibly and artificially altering the demography, character and status of the territory. Such actions constitute grave breaches of international humanitarian law and grave violations of international human rights law, as such illegal policies are clearly being pursued to privilege and benefit Israeli Jews while deliberately discriminating against and harming Palestinians, representing yet another example of the decades-long Israeli apartheid against the Palestinian people.

In this connection, United Nations special rapporteurs today called for international action to stop Israel’s systematic demolition of Palestinian homes and the displacement and expulsion of Palestinian civilians, alerting that, in January 2023 alone, Israel demolished 132 Palestinian properties across 38 communities, including 34 homes and 15 donor-funded structures. Underscoring the illegality and dangers of this ongoing, systematic practice, which is particularly acute in occupied East Jerusalem, where hundreds of families are under threat of losing their homes, they stressed that: “Direct attacks on the Palestinian people’s homes, schools, livelihoods and water sources are nothing but Israel’s attempts to curtail the Palestinian right to self-determination and to threaten their very existence.”

Here, I regret to inform that Palestinian civilian lives also continue to be endangered by this illegal colonial, racist occupation and that the number of victims, including children, continues to rise as Israel persists with its violent aggressions against the Palestinian people. Among the casualties since my last letter to you are the following:

Amir Ihab Al-Bustami, age 21, was killed today in an Israeli military raid on Nablus. Seven other Palestinians were injured by the Israeli occupying forces, who also targeted medical personnel with the Palestine Red Crescent Society who were attempting to aid the wounded.

On 12 February, a 14-year-old Palestinian boy, Qusai Radwan Waked, was killed in an Israeli raid on Jenin. The boy died after being shot in the stomach by Israeli soldiers.

On 11 February, a Palestinian youth, Mithkal Suleiman Rayyan, age 27, was shot in the head and killed by Israeli settlers from an illegal outpost near the town of Salfit, yet another victim of the violence by Israeli settlers, who are being further armed by the occupying Power and who roam the Occupied Palestinian Territory as gangs and militias terrorizing the Palestinian people.

This dangerous situation requires immediate action by the international community. It is imperative that action be taken to uphold legal obligations, including under the Geneva Conventions, including to ensure the protection of the Palestinian people. Serious and immediate efforts must be made to implement all relevant United Nations resolutions towards bringing a halt to Israel's aggressions against the Palestinian people, including all measures of colonization and annexation of the Palestinian land, and towards salvaging the prospects for a just and peaceful solution.

The Security Council is duty-bound to act in accordance with its mandate, under the Charter of the United Nations, for the maintenance of international peace and security. The Council must speak with one voice to send a clear and firm message to Israel, the occupying Power, that its grave violations will not be tolerated, that it must cease all illegal policies and measures forthwith, and that it will face accountability for its flagrant contempt of international law and the international community.

Underscoring the urgency of accountability towards remedying this dismal, unlawful situation, we echo the statement made today by the special rapporteurs, in which they stressed: "We regret that impunity prevails, in particular for human rights violations and potential war crimes committed by the occupying Power. It is high time for international adjudication bodies to determine the nature of the Israeli occupation and seek justice and accountability for all crimes committed in the Occupied Palestinian Territory."

We call on the Security Council to act now and to seek, as it has repeatedly committed itself to do, all practical means and measures to implement its own resolutions, including resolution 2334 (2016), and we call also on all peace- and justice-loving nations to uphold their obligations under international law and responsibilities towards the Question of Palestine at this crucial moment.

The present letter is in follow-up to our 778 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 6 February 2023 (A/ES-10/926-S/2023/89) 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) Riyad **Mansour**
Minister
Permanent Observer