



DIVISION FOR
PALESTINIAN RIGHTS

Bulletin

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

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*The Bulletin can be found in the United Nations Information System
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I. UN HUMAN RIGHTS HIGH COMMISSIONER CALLS FOR DE-ESCALATION

On 3 February, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Volker Türk, issued a [statement](#) reflected in the following press release.

UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk on Friday urged an end to the “illogic of escalation that has been building up, to the detriment of the human rights of Palestinians and Israelis”.

“Rather than doubling down on failed approaches of violence and coercion that have singularly failed in the past, I urge everyone involved to step out of the illogic of escalation that has only ended in dead bodies, shattered lives and utter despair,” Türk said.

“I fear that recent measures being taken by the Government of Israel are only fuelling further violations and abuses of human rights law and violations of international humanitarian law.”

“Last year saw record numbers of Palestinians killed in the occupied West Bank including East Jerusalem – and the highest number of fatalities of Israelis inside Israel and in the occupied West Bank in many years. Already this year, we have seen more bloodshed, more destruction, and the situation continues to grow more volatile,” he added.

In 2022, the UN Human Rights Office documented 151 killings of Palestinians by Israeli security forces in the occupied West Bank including East Jerusalem, plus one boy who was killed by either the Israeli security forces or a settler. Another two Palestinians were killed by Israeli settlers. In many of the cases involving security forces, there are serious concerns of excessive use of force and arbitrary killings.

So far this year, 32 Palestinians have already been killed in the occupied West Bank by Israeli security forces, with two more killed by settlers.

In 2022, 24 Israelis were killed inside Israel and in the occupied West Bank including East Jerusalem by Palestinians, and seven more have been killed so far this year.

Israeli authorities on 29 January announced measures to seal off immediately family homes of those suspected of having perpetrated attacks on 27 and 28 January in occupied East Jerusalem, including an attack in a settlement near a synagogue. More than 40 people, including family members, were arrested purportedly in relation to the attacks. Two families of the suspected attackers were forcibly evicted from their homes. Other proposed measures include revoking identity documents, citizenship and residency rights and social security benefits of family members of suspected attackers, and accelerating demolitions of houses for lack of building permits. If implemented, these may amount to collective punishment.

“Measures of collective punishment – including punitive forced evictions and house demolitions – are expressly prohibited under international humanitarian law and are incompatible with international human rights law provisions,” Türk said.

“Plans by the Government of Israel to expedite and expand the licensing of firearms, with the stated intention of ‘adding thousands of (Israeli) civilians carrying firearms’ – coupled with hateful rhetoric – can only lead to further violence and bloodshed.”

“We know from experience that the proliferation of firearms will lead to increased risks of killings and injuries of both Israelis and Palestinians. The Israeli authorities must work to reduce the availability of firearms in society,” the High Commissioner added.

There have already been several reports of violence between Israeli settlers and Palestinians, particularly in the occupied West Bank over the past week.

“Rather than fuelling a worsening spiral of violence, I urge all those holding public office or other positions of authority – indeed everyone – to stop using language that incites hatred of ‘the other’,” Türk said. “Such fomenting of hatred is corrosive for all Israelis, Palestinians, all of society.”

The High Commissioner called for urgent measures to de-escalate tensions, including – crucially – ensuring that killings and serious injuries are investigated in accordance with international standards.

“Impunity has been rife, sending a signal that excesses are allowed,” he said. “The obligation under international human rights law is to investigate loss of life in any context of law enforcement – credibly and effectively – regardless of whether there was an exchange of fire between security forces and armed individuals.”

Türk called on Israel to ensure that all operations of its security forces in the occupied West Bank including East Jerusalem, are carried out with full respect for international human rights law, in particular the rules regulating the use of force in law enforcement operations. Use of firearms is allowed only as a last resort, when there is an imminent threat to life or serious injury.

“The people of Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory need their leaders to work – urgently – to create conditions conducive to a political solution to this protracted, untenable situation,” Türk stressed.

II. PALESTINIAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE BUREAU REJECTS ISRAELI RETALIATION AGAINST PA

On 3 February, the Bureau of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People issued the following [statement](#).

The Bureau of the United Nations General Assembly’s Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People rejects the punitive measures adopted by Israel, against the Palestinian Authority, for seeking the resolution of international disputes through legitimate and peaceful means, via the International Court of Justice, which is one of the principal organs of the United Nations, following the requests for an advisory opinion by the General Assembly on 30 December.

The Bureau calls for the immediate reversal of such unilateral punitive measures by Israel, the occupying Power, which could have severe consequences for the Palestinian Authority's financial situation and the welfare of the Palestinian people. Such actions exacerbate tensions and undermine the prospects of peace in the region.

The Bureau expresses its deep concern that 2023 continues the dangerous cycle of violence on the ground amidst increased political tension and a stalled peace process. Ongoing unlawful unilateral measures and provocations, including at the holy sites in East Jerusalem, are the primary causes of the recent and rising levels of violence and instability. The Bureau stands firmly for preserving the historic status quo at the Holy Sites in Jerusalem. It takes note of the Israeli Prime Minister's stated commitment to upholding the status quo and demands tangible action.

The Bureau further condemns the renewed Israeli military attacks against the Jenin Refugee Camp in the occupied West Bank that killed innocent Palestinians. The Bureau condemns the revenge killing of innocent Israelis by a Palestinian in East Jerusalem. The Bureau calls on Israel, the occupying Power, to abide by its obligation under international humanitarian law, including to ensure the protection, security and welfare of the Palestinian people living under its occupation. It urges the international community to intervene so as to stop the circle of violence and ensure accountability in accordance with international law.

The Bureau firmly believes in supporting an immediate and unconditional end to Israel's illegal, half-century-old occupation and establishing a two-State solution, with the achievement of the independence and sovereignty of the Palestinian State based on the 1967 lines, and the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including to self-determination, and a just solution for the plight of the Palestine refugees, in line with United Nations resolutions, international law and bilateral agreements.

III. OIC CONDEMNS ESCALATION OF CRIMES IN THE OPT

On 6 February, the General Secretariat of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation issued the following [press statement](#).

The General Secretariat of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation condemned in the strongest terms the crime committed again by the Israeli occupation forces, in Aqabat Jabr camp near the city of Jericho, resulting in the death of five Palestinian citizens and the injury of many others, in addition to imposing a siege on the city of Jericho.

The Organization held the Israeli occupation authority fully responsible for the continuation of its colonial settlement policies of premeditated killing, home demolitions in occupied East Al-Quds, and the displacement of its residents, in a flagrant violation of the Geneva Conventions and international law. It renewed its call to the international community for urgent intervention in order to put an end to these daily attacks and crimes, hold the perpetrators accountable, and provide international protection for the Palestinian people.

IV. ICJ SETS DEADLINES FOR SUBMISSIONS FOLLOWING REQUEST FOR ADVISORY OPINION

On 8 February, the International Court of Justice issued the following [press release](#).

Following the request by the General Assembly of the United Nations for the International Court of Justice to render an advisory opinion on the legal consequences arising from the policies and practices of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem (see [press release](#) No. 2023/4 of 20 January 2023), the Court has made an Order organizing the proceedings.

In its Order dated 3 February 2023, the Court decides that “the United Nations and its Member States, as well as the observer State of Palestine, are considered likely to be able to furnish information on the questions submitted to the Court for an advisory opinion”. Pursuant to Article 66, paragraph 2, of its Statute, it fixes 25 July 2023 as the time-limit within which written statements on the questions may be presented to the Court, and 25 October 2023 as the time-limit within which States and organizations having presented written statements may submit written comments on the written statements made by other States or organizations, in accordance with Article 66, paragraph 4, of the Statute.

The subsequent procedure has been reserved for further decision.

V. EU APPALLED BY THE ATTACK IN EAST JERUSALEM

On 10 February, the Spokesperson for the European Union Delegation to the State of Israel issued the following [statement](#).

The European Union is appalled by today’s terror attack in East Jerusalem, which killed a six-year-old child and a young man and injured other people.

The EU strongly and unequivocally condemns terrorism in all its forms.

We send our deepest condolences to the families of the victims and wish those injured a speedy recovery.

VI. PALESTINIAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE CHAIR PARTICIPATES IN LAS CONFERENCE ON JERUSALEM

On 12 February, the Chair of the Palestinian Rights Committee, Ambassador Cheikh Niang, delivered the following [statement](#) in Cairo at the League of Arab States High-Level Conference “Supporting the City of Jerusalem and its Population.”

On behalf of the United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, I would like to thank the League of Arab States for organizing this 2023 Jerusalem Conference on “Resilience, Development” and for inviting me to participate, as Chair of our Committee.

The General Assembly established the Committee in 1975 to promote the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to self-determination, to support the achievement without delay of an end to the Israeli occupation that began in 1967 and of the two-State solution on the basis of the pre-1967 borders, the just resolution of all final status issues and to mobilize international support for and assistance to the Palestinian people. Since its beginning in promoting Palestinian rights, the Committee has always been a strong advocate for the rights of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, a city at the centre of the Question of Palestine. In implementing its mandate, the Committee recognizes East Jerusalem as an integral part of the Palestinian territory occupied by Israel since 1967, as affirmed in numerous General Assembly and Security Council resolutions, and as, such a long-standing unresolved crucial item on the UN agenda.

This year we will solemnly mark the 56th anniversary of the 1967 Arab – Israeli war and the onset of Israel’s occupation of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip. The continued Israeli occupation has resulted in the additional displacement of hundreds of thousands of Palestinian civilians, including from their homes in East Jerusalem, while Israel's illegal policies and practices, such as the ongoing settlement colonization, creeping annexation, displacement, dispossession, destruction of Palestinian property and deliberate demographic changes, are gravely undermining the rights of Palestinians, and a future of independence, sovereignty and contiguity for the Palestinian State and the realization of the two-State solution.

The Committee remains concerned over the high levels of violence we continue to witness throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in East Jerusalem, as well as alarming developments in recent weeks, with clashes, attacks, settler-related violence and Israeli military operations, which continue to cause civilian casualties, including among children. The year 2022 registered the highest number of Palestinian fatalities since the United Nations started systematically documenting them in 2005, with 154 Palestinian killed by Israeli forces in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, in 2022 according to OCHA.

The Committee expresses its concern that 2023 continues this dangerous cycle of violence on the ground amidst increased political tension and a stalled peace process. unlawful unilateral measures and provocations and incitement by Israelis, including at the Holy Sites in East Jerusalem, are the primary causes of the recent and rising levels of violence and instability. The Committee has called for the violence, provocations, including at Holy Sites and incitement of Israeli settlers, to stop and for all perpetrators to be held accountable. It stands firmly for preserving

the historic and legal status quo at the Holy Sites in Jerusalem as entrusted to the Hashemite custodianship and calls on Israel to respect international law, including the many relevant UN resolutions concerning Jerusalem.

The intensely inflammatory atmosphere in the City demonstrates the urgent need to sustain international attention on the Question of Palestine, including Jerusalem, and on the inalienable rights of the Palestinian People and mobilize the international community on tangible efforts to justly resolve the conflict.

The status of Jerusalem has always been central to the Committee's events, with considerable attention drawn to Israel to stop the policies aimed at altering the demographic composition, character and status of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in East Jerusalem. Every year, the Committee organizes an international conference on Jerusalem, jointly with the Organization for Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and with the participation of the League of Arab States.

The Conference on Jerusalem is one of the most critical events in the Committee's programme of work, designed to inform about the realities in occupied East Jerusalem and to remind the international community that the final status of Jerusalem must be a vital part of the resolution of the Palestine question.

A recent Committee conference on Jerusalem, titled "Annexation in Practice – Palestinian Lives in Jerusalem", addressed, with testimonies from affected Palestinians, including women and children, a wide range of crucial issues, such as forced demographic change in Jerusalem as a violation of Palestinian rights and international humanitarian law and a threat to peace. Last year's conference gave the opportunity to young Palestinian activists to discuss their views on the topic "Palestinian Youth in East Jerusalem under Occupation".

The Committee also uses its platform, including the Conferences of Jerusalem, to focus international attention on the plight of Palestinians in the occupied territory and as refugees in neighbouring countries. In this regard, the Committee has partnered with UNRWA to raise global awareness of the Agency's crucial role as a lifeline for the 5.9 million Palestinian refugees and highlight its pivotal role in regional peace and stability. In Jerusalem, the Agency plays a crucial role in supporting the Palestinian people. It has delivered services and maintains facilities in East Jerusalem since 1950, providing essential education to Palestinian children in its schools in East Jerusalem and in the Jerusalem periphery. The Agency operates in a challenging environment due to the constant threat by Israeli authorities that seriously hamper its activities, including unlawful measures to shut down the Agency's activities in the City.

Let me once more appeal to the LAS and all its members here today to contribute and help to ensure sufficient and predictable funding for UNRWA to ensure the continuity of its vital support to Palestine refugees, pending a just solution for their plight in accordance with General Assembly resolution 194 (III).

Supporting efforts to realize the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and to peacefully resolve the question of Palestine peacefully remains an important priority for the Committee.

The Committee has just concluded its independent legal study on "The legality of the Israeli occupation of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem", which will constitute

a crucial reference in connection with the General Assembly's request to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) for an advisory opinion on the prolonged occupation and violation of the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination. Likewise, the Committee's engagement with the UN Human Rights Council's International Commission of Inquiry, which started in October 2022 following the release of the first report, identified opportunities for joint advocacy on the rights of the

Palestinian people. The Committee supports the peaceful, legal approach to solving the Palestinian question and urges all Member States and the LAS to support these efforts.

Let me also state that the Committee categorically rejects the punitive measures being pursued by Israel, against the Palestinian Authority, for seeking justice through legitimate and peaceful means, including via the International Court of Justice, which is one of the principal organs of the United Nations, following the request for an advisory opinion made by the General Assembly on 30 December 2022. We call on Israel to immediately reverse such unilateral, illegal measures.

The importance of sustained advocacy and awareness raising on the Question of Palestine is demonstrated by the request of the UN General Assembly request to the Committee to organize the commemoration of the 75th anniversary of the Nakba with a high-level event at UNHQ on 15 May 2023. We invite the LAS and all the Members of the League of Arab States to join hands with the Committee and continue our efforts to promote a just solution to this historic injustice.

The Committee stands ready to help garner the support needed to advance the peace process toward ending the Israeli occupation that began in 1967. The Committee supports all efforts to accelerate an immediate and unconditional end to Israel's illegal, half-century-old occupation and establishing a two-State solution, with the achievement of the independence and sovereignty of the Palestinian State based on the 1967 lines, and the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including to self-determination, and a just solution for the plight of the Palestine refugees, in line with UN resolutions, international law and bilateral agreements.

VII. STATUS OF JERUSALEM CANNOT BE ALTERED BY UNILATERAL ACTIONS, UN SECRETARY-GENERAL TELLS LAS CONFERENCE

On 12 February, United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres addressed the following [video message](#) to the League of Arab States High-Level Conference "Supporting the City of Jerusalem and its Population."

I welcome the initiative of the League of Arab States in convening this conference to focus on the challenges faced by the Palestinian population in Jerusalem. I share your deep concerns.

Jerusalem — Al-Quds is not only a treasured home for so many — it also holds a unique place in the hearts of millions of Muslims, Jews and Christians the world over.

As we have seen time and again, what happens in Jerusalem reverberates globally — and tensions, incitement and violence often spill into wider instability.

It is therefore imperative that all parties exercise restraint and refrain from provocations, inflammatory actions and rhetoric. I am very concerned by the unilateral initiatives that we have seen in recent weeks.

The position of the United Nations is clear: The status of Jerusalem cannot be altered by unilateral actions, including settlement activities in occupied East Jerusalem; it can only be resolved through negotiations between the parties.

Jerusalem's demographic and historical character must be preserved — and the status quo at the Holy Sites must be upheld, in line with the special role of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

The United Nations remains committed to help Israelis and Palestinians chart a credible path forward: Towards an end of the occupation; towards two States living side by side with Jerusalem as the capital of both; towards lasting security, peace and dignity for all. Thank you. *Shukran*.

VIII. EU REJECTS ISRAELI GOVERNMENT'S DECISION TO LEGALIZE SETTLEMENT OUTPOSTS

On 13 February, Peter Stano, Lead EU Spokesperson for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, issued the following [statement](#).

Israeli authorities announced on Sunday that they would consider nine illegal settler outposts in the occupied West Bank as legal under Israeli law. The European Union rejects this decision and reiterates its position that settlements are illegal under international law and that it will not recognise any changes to the 1967 borders other than those agreed by the parties. The EU renews its call on the Israeli authorities to halt settlement construction and to reverse these latest decisions as a matter of urgency.

The EU is gravely worried by the heightened tensions and increased violence. In the current worrying context, it is important to consider steps to de-escalate the situation and avoid unilateral decisions and actions that would undermine the viability of a negotiated two-state solution to the conflict, and fuel more tensions.

The EU stands ready to help the parties to rebuild a path towards dialogue and work together to reverse the negative cycle of violence and to avoid any further loss of lives.

IX. OIC CONDEMNS THE ISRAELI DECISION TO “LEGITIMIZE” OUTPOSTS, CALLS ON THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL TO ASSUME RESPONSIBILITIES

On 13 February, the General Secretariat of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation issued the following [press release](#).

The General Secretariat of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) strongly condemned the Israeli occupation government’s approval of a bill aimed at legalizing nine settlement outposts and plans to build thousands of new settlement units in the occupied Palestinian territory, including the city of Al-Quds. It stressed that “these illegal measures aimed at perpetuating its colonial regime, are null and void under international law and relevant UN Security Council resolutions, especially Resolution [No. 2334](#) of December 23, 2016”.

The General Secretariat also affirmed that “the Israeli settlement policy is illegitimate and reflects Israel’s persistence in undermining the two-state solution, in addition to being a flagrant aggression against the rights of the Palestinian people.” It also called on the international community, especially the UN Security Council, to implement its resolutions and exercise its role in the face of the successive Israeli violations, and to compel Israel, the occupying power, to respect its international obligations and put an end to its settlement policy on all the land of the State of Palestine occupied since 1967, including the city of Al-Quds.

X. UN SPECIAL RAPPORTEURS SAY ISRAEL SHOULD BE HELD ACCOUNTABLE FOR ACTS OF “DOMICIDE”

On 13 February, UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian Territory occupied since 1967 Francesca Albanese; Special Rapporteur on the right to adequate housing Balakrishnan Rajagopal and Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons Paula Gaviria Betancur issued the following [statement](#).

The international community must take action to stop systematic and deliberate housing demolition and sealing, arbitrary displacement and forced evictions of Palestinian people in the occupied West Bank, UN experts* said today.

In the month of January 2023 alone, Israeli authorities reportedly demolished 132 Palestinian structures across 38 communities in the occupied West Bank, including 34 residential and 15 donor-funded structures. This figure represents a 135 percent increase, compared to the same period in 2022, and includes five punitive demolitions.

“The systematic demolition of Palestinian homes, erection of illegal Israeli settlements and systematic denial of building permits for Palestinians in the occupied West Bank amounts to “[domicide](#)”.

The experts reiterated [their concern](#) over the situation in Masafer Yatta, where over 1,100 Palestinian residents remain at imminent risk of forced eviction, [arbitrary displacement](#) and demolitions of their homes, livelihood, water and sanitation structures. In November 2022, Israeli

authorities demolished a donor-funded school in Isfey al Fauqa. Four other schools in the area are under demolition orders.

“Direct attacks on the Palestinian people’s homes, schools, livelihoods and water sources are nothing but Israel’s attempts to curtail the Palestinians’ right to self-determination and to threaten their very existence,” the experts said.

“Israel’s tactics of forcibly displacing and evicting the Palestinian population appear to have no limits. In occupied East Jerusalem, tens of Palestinian families also face imminent risks of forced evictions and displacement, due to [discriminatory zoning and planning regimes](#) that favour Israeli settlement expansion – the act that is illegal under international law and amounts to a war crime.”

The experts also expressed alarm at the Israeli Government’s endorsement and escalated practice of punitive evictions and demolitions, and other punitive measures applied to alleged perpetrators of “terrorist” attacks and their family members, such as revoking identity documents, citizenship and residency rights and social security benefits.

On 29 January, Israeli authorities announced measures to immediately seal off family homes of those suspected of carrying out the attacks on 27 and 28 January in occupied East Jerusalem, including the attack in the Neve Yacoub settlement on 27 January which killed at least seven Israelis. Two families of the alleged attackers were forcibly evicted from their homes, and more than 40 people, including family members, were reportedly arrested in relation to the attacks.

“The rule of law must prevail in any State action against acts of violence. The sealing of family homes of suspected offenders and the subsequent demolition of their homes is in fundamental disrespect of international human rights norms and the rule of law. Such acts amount to collective punishment which is strictly prohibited under international law,” the experts said.

“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,” the UN experts said.

The experts have repeatedly raised concerns with the Government of Israel on these issues. No response has been received to date.

XI. SPECIAL COORDINATOR WENNESLAND, UNRWA DEPUTY COMMISSIONER-GENERAL STENSETH, BRIEF SECURITY COUNCIL

On 20 February, United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process Tor Wennesland and UNRWA Deputy Commissioner-General Leni Stenseth briefed the Security Council ([S/PV.9263](#)).

Mr. Wennesland: We are witnessing a surge in violence, including some of the deadliest incidents in nearly 20 years. I am concerned that developments on the ground are continuing their negative trajectory, gaining in both pace and intensity. At the same time, unilateral actions are moving the parties still further apart, exacerbating tensions and driving the conflict. Immediate efforts are required to reduce tensions, but restoring calm is not, on its own, a recipe for progress.

The United Nations, along with regional and international partners, has engaged intensively with all parties to de-escalate the situation. I appreciate in particular the Council's efforts to focus its attention on the situation here, as reflected in the presidential statement ([S/PRST/2023/1](#)). I call upon the parties to match security efforts with political steps that can halt the negative slide and restore hope in an end to the conflict and prospects for a viable two-State solution.

Since I last briefed the Council (see [S/PV.9246](#)), we have seen an alarming number of fatalities. Forty Palestinians, including one woman and seven children, have been killed in the occupied West Bank. In the same period, 10 Israelis, including one woman, three children and one security personnel, as well as one woman foreign national, have been killed.

A significant number of Palestinian casualties have occurred in the context of Israeli security forces search and arrest operations and clashes with armed Palestinians, including in Area A of the occupied West Bank. On 26 January, 10 Palestinians, including militants and a 61-year-old woman, were killed in the Jenin refugee camp. A few days later, on 30 January, Israeli security forces killed five armed Palestinians during an arrest operation that led to an exchange of fire in the Aqbat Jabr refugee camp, near Jericho. Those killed were later claimed by Hamas as members of its armed wing.

Two terrorist attacks were carried out in occupied East Jerusalem. Six Israelis, including a child and one foreign national, were killed in a shooting attack perpetrated by a Palestinian outside a synagogue on 27 January, and three Israelis, including two children, were killed in a ramming attack on 10 February. Two Palestinians were killed by settlers in the occupied West Bank, one while attempting to carry out a stabbing attack on 21 January and one shot in a confrontation with a group of settlers near a Palestinian village on 11 February. On 13 February, a 13-year-old Palestinian boy stabbed a member of the Israeli security forces in East Jerusalem, during which a second Israeli security forces member was shot and killed in a friendly fire incident.

As the Secretary-General noted last month, the current escalation of violence is deeply worrisome. There can never be any excuse for acts of terrorism or the targeting of civilians, which must be clearly condemned and rejected by all. The celebration or glorification of such attacks is abhorrent and must be unequivocally condemned. I reiterate that the perpetrators of all acts of violence must be held accountable and swiftly brought to justice. Security forces must exercise maximum restraint and use lethal force only when strictly unavoidable to protect life. I am

particularly appalled that children continue to be the victims of violence and involved in violent incidents. Children must never be the targets of violence, used or put in harm's way.

Amid the mounting violence, there has also been a concerning deterioration in relations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority (PA). Following the 26 January Israeli search and arrest operation in Jenin, the Palestinian Authority announced that security coordination with Israel "no longer exists". Following the 27 January terrorist attack in Jerusalem, the Israeli Security Cabinet announced a series of measures, including steps to reinforce security and strengthen Israeli settlements, as well as punitive measures against the perpetrators of the attacks in Jerusalem and their families.

On 2 February, Israel's Finance Minister announced an increase in monthly deductions from clearance revenues that Israel collects on behalf of the PA. The deductions — carried out in line with an Israeli law mandating the Government to withhold the equivalent of what it says the PA pays to Palestinian perpetrators of attacks against Israelis or to their families — will be doubled from approximately \$15 to \$30 million per month. In the light of those deductions, the PA said that it expected to maintain and potentially increase measures, such as paying partial salaries for PA employees, which will severely impact the delivery of health, education and social support services. The financial implications of those various factors clearly contribute to undermining the stability of the PA.

Significant decisions were announced by the Government of Israel related to settlement advancements and settlement outposts. On 12 February, the Israeli Security Cabinet announced that it had decided to authorize nine illegal outposts in the occupied West Bank. It also said the Civil Administration's Higher Planning Committee would convene in the coming days to advance housing units in settlements, and that police and border police units in Jerusalem would be reinforced and their operations expanded. Such outposts increase the settlement footprint and create friction points in the occupied West Bank. The announcement was met with widespread opposition from the Palestinian Authority and members of the international community. Many emphasized that such unilateral moves exacerbate tensions and undermine prospects for a negotiated two-State solution.

Israeli settlements, including outposts, are illegal under international law and remain a substantial obstacle to peace. Demolitions and seizures of Palestinian-owned property also remain a serious concern. During the reporting period, Israeli authorities demolished, seized or forced owners to demolish 52 Palestinian-owned structures in Areas B and C and 46 in occupied East Jerusalem, displacing 130 Palestinians, including 68 children. The demolitions were carried out owing to the lack of Israeli-issued building permits, which are nearly impossible for Palestinians to obtain.

On 7 February, Israel's High Court of Justice instructed the Government to submit by 2 April its response to a petition seeking a forced implementation of standing demolition orders against the Bedouin village of Khan Al-Ahmar. The Government had requested a postponement until 1 June. Also on 7 February, Israeli authorities said they would postpone the demolition of a multi-story structure housing approximately 100 Palestinians in the East Jerusalem neighbourhood of Silwan. The postponement came a day after the police had told residents that they would move forward with the demolition. I am concerned about the significant increase in demolitions,

particularly in East Jerusalem. I urge Israel to cease that practice, in line with its obligations under international humanitarian law.

Turning to Gaza, the relative calm of the past few months was interrupted by exchanges of fire during the reporting period, once again demonstrating the fragility of the ceasefire. Palestinian militants in Gaza fired rockets from the Strip towards Israel on six occasions. A total of 11 rockets were fired: five were intercepted by the Iron Dome system, two landed in open areas and one fell short in Gaza. In retaliation, Israeli security forces carried out air strikes on 14 occasions against what it said were Hamas militant targets in the Strip, causing damage. I reiterate that the indiscriminate launching of rockets towards Israeli population centres violates international law and must stop immediately.

The United Nations has continued to deliver vital humanitarian and development assistance to Palestinians in Gaza and remains engaged with all the parties to reduce access restrictions to support the Gaza economy and basic service delivery. Increasing the movement of goods, in particular between Gaza and the West Bank, is vital for the Gaza economy to grow and generate employment opportunities. Such linkages can help sustain a vision for a political solution to Gaza's challenges.

I welcome the important regional and international diplomatic efforts during the reporting period aimed at preventing a deterioration on the ground. In January, United States Secretary of State Antony Blinken visited Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory, meeting with Israeli and Palestinian leaders in an effort to advance concrete steps by both parties to lower the temperature, foster greater cooperation and bolster people's security. The visit coincided with a visit by senior officials from Egypt and Jordan, who met together with President Abbas on 31 January.

...

We have seen ominous signs of what awaits if we fail to address the current instability. Preventing more violence is an urgent priority that requires not only coordinated security measures but also considerable political efforts. As such, I urge both sides to refrain from taking unilateral steps that could further inflame the situation. I reiterate my appeal to the parties to rein in violence and incitement and hold perpetrators accountable. In particular, there is a need to address instability in the West Bank, characterized by spiralling tensions between Israeli security forces and armed Palestinian factions and friction points between settlers and Palestinians, which drives more violence and emboldens extremists. Restoring security coordination and ensuring that Palestinian security forces can operate effectively is key. At the same time, I urge a halt to all settlement expansion, demolitions and evictions, which fuel those tensions.

With the holy month of Ramadan once again coinciding with the Passover and Easter holidays this year, joint efforts are needed to ensure that this period passes safely and peacefully for all. Provocations, disinformation and efforts by extremists to stoke violence must be addressed swiftly and effectively. In that context, I reiterate the Secretary-General's call for all parties to refrain from steps that could escalate tensions in and around the holy sites, and for all to uphold the status quo, in line with the special role of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

As we continue to work with the parties and regional and international partners to calm tensions, we must identify and pursue every opportunity to advance our long-term goal: an end to

the occupation and the establishment of two States, living side by side in peace and security, on the basis of the 1967 lines, in line with United Nations resolutions, international law and previous agreements.

Ms. Stenseth:

....

A growing number of Palestine refugees in the region stand on the brink of despair. Multiple crises, conflicts, the never-ending occupation, the socioeconomic ramifications of the coronavirus disease pandemic and the rising global food and fuel prices caused by the conflict in Ukraine have pushed a growing number of Palestine refugees into poverty. Competing global priorities and shifting regional dynamics have almost annihilated any remaining attention to the plight of Palestine refugees today.

Meanwhile, the political, socioeconomic and security conditions that surround the refugees continue to deteriorate. In the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, this year has already witnessed a record-high number of deaths among Palestinians, including Palestine refugees. Casualties among Israelis are also of grave concern. We can almost anticipate that coming weeks will likely bring more violence, deaths and more life-changing injuries, including for bystanders and children in the West Bank. I echo the Special Coordinator's call to reduce tensions and prevent further loss of life. This cycle of violence must end before it is too late.

For UNRWA, the violence in the West Bank hampers our operations and exacts a heavy toll on the Palestine refugees whom we serve. Palestine refugees living in the northern West Bank, including in and around Jenin and Nablus, are particularly vulnerable to surrounding violence and tensions, which have at times forced UNRWA to interrupt its critical services, including its health centres. Urban spaces within, and around, densely populated refugee camps should not be venues for clashes with automatic weapons and tear gas. Children, including refugee children, have been far from immune to the spiralling violence, which has created an explosive and dangerous environment of fear, anger, desperation and hopelessness.

In Gaza, years of blockade and conflict have isolated the population from the rest of the world, creating a human tragedy that is hard to describe. More than 80 per cent of Palestine refugees in the Strip are poor, and nearly all of them rely on food assistance from UNRWA. Nearly half of the children attending UNRWA schools in Gaza have shown signs of trauma — scars that may be with them for the rest of their lives. In Gaza, we must always be prepared for an outbreak of conflict, not least because our schools are usually the only safe havens for people who flee their homes. We repeatedly call on all parties in Gaza and the West Bank to respect our neutrality and the inviolability of our premises.

In Syria, the recent devastating earthquake is adding to the hardship and despair of a population already grappling with the shattering 12-year-old conflict and its aftermath. Approximately 62,000 Palestine refugees living in four camps have been affected by the earthquake, with 90 per cent of them in need of emergency assistance already prior to the earthquake.

In Lebanon, the collapse of the economy has hit the most vulnerable the hardest, among them Palestine refugees, 93 per cent of whom are now living in poverty. Children in Palestine refugee

camps are exposed to multiple forms of violence, exploitation, abuse and neglect, as their caregivers and communities have exhausted their resources and ability to create a safe and protective environment for children. The situation is so desperate that Palestine refugees are increasingly willing to risk their lives at sea in a desperate attempt to lead a dignified life.

In Jordan, despite overall stability, Palestine refugees struggle with socioeconomic conditions that are worsening with the declining national economy. Gender-based violence and negative coping strategies, including early marriage and child labour, are on the rise in all our fields of operation. Across all fields, Palestine refugees feel abandoned by the international community.

UNRWA has continued to deliver on its mandate against the challenging background. By providing public-like services, including education, health and social services, UNRWA has contributed to the human development of Palestine refugees and has helped maintain a relatively stable environment around them. As we look at the Middle East, UNRWA remains one of the few standing pillars of stability — a pillar of stability for Palestine refugees, for the countries that host them and for the region. UNRWA is, in fact, one of the most successful multilateral and collective efforts of the past 75 years. As we speak, half a million children are going to our 700 schools throughout the region. The schools are a beacon of hope for Palestine refugee boys and girls and often the only hope that they have in what is otherwise a desperate situation. UNRWA schools produce the future partners for peace that the region needs and that the Council is constantly seeking.

The lack of adequate, sustainable, and predictable funding has put UNRWA in an impossible situation.

We have reached the limit of what we can do with the resources we have available today. Our total income in 2022 was approximately the same as in 2013, while the needs and costs are exponentially greater today. The status quo is no longer sustainable. And, as the quality of our services declines, so will our ability to contribute to the region's stability. Avoiding UNRWA's implosion is in our collective interest and should be our collective responsibility. In the absence of a political solution, UNRWA remains irreplaceable, including in terms of its stabilizing role. UNRWA's contribution to peace and security is extraordinarily cost-effective, helping to secure the present and future of millions of people in a highly fragile region.

There can be no peace or security in the region without the fulfilment of the basic rights of all, including Palestine refugees. We call on the Council today not to abandon them. We call on the Council today to give them back hope by redoubling efforts to find a political solution. And we on the Council and all Member States to continue supporting UNRWA politically and financially, ensuring that it has the resources it needs to deliver on its mandate. As we approach the seventy-fifth commemoration of the UNRWA mandate, let me conclude by reiterating our Commissioner-General's invitation to reflect on how the international community should live up to its commitment and responsibility to Palestine refugees while a just and lasting solution to their plight is found.

XII. SECURITY COUNCIL EXPRESSES CONCERN, DISMAY OVER ISRAELI SETTLEMENT EXPANSIONS, ADOPTING PRESIDENTIAL STATEMENT

At the 9263rd meeting of the Security Council, held on 20 February 2023, on “The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question”, the President of the Council made the following statement on behalf of the Council ([S/PRST/2023/1](#)).

“The Security Council reaffirms the right of all States to live in peace within secure and internationally recognized borders, and stresses that both the Israeli and Palestinian people are entitled to equal measures of freedom, security, prosperity, justice, and dignity.

“The Security Council reaffirms its unwavering commitment to the vision of the two-State solution where two democratic States, Israel and Palestine, live side by side in peace within secure and recognized borders, consistent with international law and relevant UN resolutions.

“The Security Council expresses deep concern and dismay with Israel’s announcement on February 12, 2023, announcing further construction and expansion of settlements and the “legalization” of settlement outposts.

“The Security Council reiterates that continuing Israeli settlement activities are dangerously imperilling the viability of the two-State solution based on the 1967 lines.

“The Security Council strongly underscores the need for all parties to meet their international obligations and commitments; strongly opposes all unilateral measures that impede peace, including, inter alia, Israeli construction and expansion of settlements, confiscation of Palestinians’ land, and the “legalization” of settlement outposts, demolition of Palestinians’ homes and displacement of Palestinian civilians.

“The Security Council condemns all acts of violence against civilians, including acts of terrorism, and calls for the strengthening of ongoing efforts to counter terrorism in a manner consistent with international law, and for all parties to clearly condemn all acts of terrorism and refrain from incitement to violence, and reiterates the obligation of all parties regarding the pursuit of accountability for all acts of violence targeting civilians, and recalls the obligation of the Palestinian Authority to renounce and confront terror.

“The Security Council calls on all parties to observe calm and restraint, and to refrain from provocative actions, incitement and inflammatory rhetoric, with the aim, inter alia, of de-escalating the situation on the ground, rebuilding trust and confidence, demonstrating through policies and actions a genuine commitment to the two-State solution, and creating the conditions necessary for promoting peace.

“The Security Council emphasizes the importance of the safety and well-being of all civilians, and calls for full respect for international humanitarian law, including the protection of the civilian population, and also calls for facilitating access of humanitarian workers to populations in need, and reiterates the need to take appropriate steps to ensure the safety and well-being of civilians and their protection.

“The Security Council notes with deep concern instances of discrimination, intolerance and hate speech motivated by racism or directed against persons belonging to religious communities, in particular cases motivated by Islamophobia, antisemitism or Christianophobia,

“The Security Council calls for upholding unchanged the historic status quo at the holy sites in Jerusalem in word and in practice, and emphasizes in this regard the special role of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.”

XIII. PALESTINIAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE ELECTS BUREAU, ADOPTS 2023 PROGRAMME OF WORK

On 22 February, the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People held its 410th meeting. With Secretary-General António Guterres presiding, the Committee elected the Bureau, with the Permanent Representative of Senegal as the Chair of the Committee, and the Permanent Representatives of Cuba, Indonesia, Namibia, and Nicaragua as Vice-Chairs. The Committee also adopted its [Programme of Work for 2023](#). The [statement](#) by the Secretary-General is reproduced below.

It is my privilege to join this meeting of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. I congratulate the Chair, Ambassador Cheikh Niang, and other members of the Bureau on your election. And I commend all of you for your tireless commitment.

We meet as the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory is at its most combustible in years. Just this morning, we had more deeply concerning news. An operation by Israeli security forces and ensuing clash in Nablus left 10 Palestinians dead and over 80 injured.

Deadly cycles of violence keep accelerating. Tensions are sky high. And the peace process remains stalled. The situation in Jerusalem/Al-Quds is becoming more fragile amidst provocations and acts of violence in and around the holy sites. It radiates instability across the region and beyond.

The position of the United Nations is clear: The status of Jerusalem cannot be altered by unilateral actions. Jerusalem’s demographic and historical character must be preserved — and the status quo at the holy sites must be upheld, in line with the special role of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

2022 was the deadliest year for Palestinians since the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs began systematically tracking fatalities in 2005. Two months into the new year, violence rages on without reprieve. Across the occupied West Bank and Gaza, hopelessness is spreading, feeding anger and despair. Each new settlement is another roadblock on the path to peace. All settlement activity is illegal under international law. And it must stop.

At the same time, incitement to violence is a dead end. Nothing justifies terrorism. It must be rejected by all. Our immediate priority must be to prevent further escalation, reduce tensions and restore calm.

I am deeply concerned by Israel's recent punitive measures against the Palestinian Authority following the [resolution](#) of the General Assembly seeking an International Court of Justice advisory opinion on the occupation. There should be no retaliation with respect to the Palestinian Authority in relation to the International Court of Justice. These measures risk further destabilizing the Palestinian Authority at a time when it is already struggling with a dire fiscal crisis that is undermining its ability to provide services to people.

Meanwhile, another vital lifeline for Palestinians — the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) — continues to confront the impossible task of meeting soaring needs with stagnating funding. And yet, UNRWA remains remarkably resilient, high-performing and highly cost-effective. I urge all donors to live up to their commitments and ensure UNRWA has the predictable and sustained support it needs to fulfil its critical mission.

In this context, let me also note the importance of easing the movement of goods and people in and out of the Gaza Strip. I reiterate my call to work towards a full lifting of the debilitating closures in line with United Nations Security Council resolution [1860](#) (2009).

Our ultimate goals remain unchanged: end the occupation, realize a two-State solution. But, we must face today's reality. The truth is that trends on the ground mean time is working against us. The longer we go without meaningful political negotiations, the further these goals slip from the reach.

Regional and international partners must collectively work — with greater urgency and determination — to help Palestinians and Israelis restore a credible political horizon. The outlines of the solution are clear — they are laid out in United Nations resolutions, international law and bilateral agreements.

What is needed is the political will and courage to make the difficult choices for peace. A peace that ends the occupation and ensures two States — Israel and an independent, viable and sovereign Palestinian State — living side by side within secure and recognized borders, with Jerusalem as the capital of both States. A peace in which Palestinians and Israelis alike enjoy equal measures of democracy, opportunity and dignity in their lives. A peace, in short, that is just, comprehensive and lasting.

I pledge to keep working to support this goal.

XIV. SPECIAL COORDINATOR WENNESLAND APPALLED BY THE LOSS OF CIVILIAN LIVES IN NABLUS

On 22 February, the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Tor Wennesland, issued the following [statement](#).

Earlier today, 11 Palestinians, including an elderly man and a minor, were killed and some 100 were injured, during an Israeli security forces' arrest operation and ensuing clashes with armed Palestinians in Nablus in the occupied West Bank.

I am deeply disturbed by the continuing cycle of violence and appalled by the loss of civilian lives.

I am continuing my engagement with all concerned parties to deescalate the situation. I urge all sides to refrain from steps that could further enflame an already volatile situation.

XV. EU HIGH REPRESENTATIVE BORRELL DEPLORES THE DEATH OF CIVILIANS DURING ISRAELI MILITARY OPERATION IN NABLUS

On 22 February, the EU High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Josep Borrell, issued the following [statement](#).

Today, in Nablus, in the occupied Palestinian territory, during a military operation by the Israeli Security Forces, at least 10 Palestinians, including one minor were killed and nearly 100 were injured.

The EU deplores the death of civilians and reiterates that the use of force must be proportionate, in full respect of international humanitarian law, and come only as a last resort when strictly unavoidable to protect life.

The EU is deeply alarmed by the spiraling violence in the West Bank. It is of utmost importance that all parties work towards restoring calm and de-escalating tensions to avoid further loss of life.

The EU strongly supports the 20 February [Presidential Statement](#) adopted by the UN Security Council, and urges all parties to fully adhere to it.

XVI. UN HUMAN RIGHTS HIGH COMMISSIONER CONCERNED BY ESCALATING VIOLENCE IN ISRAEL AND OPT

On 23 February, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Volker Türk, issued the following [statement](#).

UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk on Thursday expressed concern at the escalating cycle of violence in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory after 11 Palestinians were killed and at least 100 injured with live ammunition in an Israeli operation in Nablus, followed by Palestinian rocket attacks on Israel and Israeli airstrikes on Gaza.

“I am deeply concerned that scores of Palestinians, including a boy and three older men, were killed and hundreds injured in the Israeli operation in Nablus, and by airstrikes and rocket attacks between Israel and Palestinian armed groups in the Gaza Strip,” said Türk. “I reiterate my recent call to halt the illogic of escalation that has been building up to the detriment of the human rights of both Palestinians and Israelis.”

The High Commissioner also expressed concern at the Israeli security forces’ use of explosive weapons during the operation in Nablus. “Conducting an operation involving shoulder-launched explosive projectiles and other weapons typically associated with hostilities in a highly populated area in broad daylight at a time of heightened public activity suggests concerning disregard for the lives and security of bystanders,” Türk said.

“All law enforcement security operations must be conducted in full compliance with international human rights law, including by ensuring that all killings and serious injuries are investigated in accordance with international norms and standards,” he added.

XVII. EU CONDEMNS ISRAEL’S APPROVAL OF MORE THAN 7,000 HOUSING UNITS IN ILLEGAL SETTLEMENTS

On 23 February, the European Union Spokesperson for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Nabila Massrali, issued the following [statement](#).

The European Union condemns yesterday’s approval, by the Israeli authorities, of plans for advancing more than 7,000 housing units in illegal settlements across the occupied West Bank. This exceeds the total number advanced during all of 2022, which was a record year in terms of illegal settlement expansion.

The EU reiterates its position that settlements are illegal under international law.

The EU renews its call on the Israeli authorities to halt settlement construction and to reverse these latest decisions as a matter of urgency.

XVIII. PALESTINIAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE BUREAU CONDEMNS EXTREME VIOLENCE BY ISRAELI FORCES IN NABLUS, CALLS FOR PALESTINIANS’ PROTECTION

On 24 February, the Bureau of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People issued the following [statement](#).

The Bureau of the United Nations General Assembly’s Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People condemns the Israeli forces’ raid in Nablus in the occupied West Bank that killed 11 Palestinians, including an elderly man and a minor, and injured 100 Palestinians to date.

The Bureau is deeply concerned by the deadly cycles of violence and the senseless loss of civilian lives, mainly Palestinians, which keep growing. The Bureau stresses the need for

accountability for all illegal Israeli policies and measures in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem.

The Bureau welcomes United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process Tor Wennesland's engagement with all concerned parties to de-escalate the situation. The Bureau appeals for urgent Security Council and international action to protect the Palestinian people.

The Bureau reiterates the need for a de-escalation of violence and a just and peaceful resolution of the conflict leading to the unconditional end to Israel's illegal occupation and establishing a two-State solution, with the achievement of the independence and sovereignty of the Palestinian State based on the 1967 lines, with East Jerusalem as capital, and the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including to self-determination, and a just solution for the plight of the Palestine refugees in the context of their right of return, in line with United Nations resolutions, international law and bilateral agreements.

XIX. OIC ISSUES COMMUNIQUÉ ON ESCALATION OF AGGRESSION BY ISRAEL

On 27 February, following an open-ended meeting, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation's Executive Committee adopted the following [communiqué](#).

The Executive Committee of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) at its open-ended meeting held on Monday 27 February 2023 on the escalation of aggression by Israel, the illegal colonial occupation authority, against Nablus and the entire territory of the State of Palestine, including Al-Quds Al-Shareef, at the OIC General Secretariat, Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia,

Guided by the principles and objectives enshrined in the OIC and UN Charters and the resolutions of the Islamic Summit and the Council of Foreign Ministers on the cause of Palestine and Al-Quds Al-Shareef,

Commending the steadfastness of the Palestinian people in countering the ongoing barbaric aggression by Israel, the illegal colonial occupation authority, and affirming its support for the just struggle of the Palestinian people to reclaim their national rights, including their right to self-determination and to actualize the sovereignty of the State of Palestine on their independent land, with Al-Quds Al-Shareef as its capital,

Closely following the barbaric military campaign and aggression being conducted by the Israeli colonial occupation army in the territory of the state of Palestine, including Al-Quds Al-Shareef, the most recent being the aggression against Nablus on 22 February 2023 which claimed the lives of 11 martyrs and injured scores of Palestinian civilians, including children and the elderly,

Affirming that the ongoing Israeli crimes and violations in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Al-Quds Al-Shareef and the continuation of its colonial policies constitute serious war crimes, crime against humanity, flagrant violation of relevant international legitimacy resolution, and grave threat to security and stability in the entire region,

1. Strongly condemns the continued violations by Israel, the illegal colonial occupation authority, in the occupied Palestinian territory, including the recent heinous crimes in Nablus which claimed 11 lives and left scores of Palestinian civilians injured; also condemns strongly the ongoing crimes by gangs of Israeli colonialists, supported and protected by the Israeli occupation army, working as a branch of the army against unarmed Palestinian citizens and their properties. Affirms that these growing crimes have reached dangerous levels that cannot be ignored and must be confronted at all levels, including by listing the colonialists, their groups and leaders in the international terrorism list. Holds, in this regard, the Israeli colonialist occupation government fully responsible for the colonialists' crimes in Hawara, Zaatara, Burin and other parts of the State of Palestine, including Al-Quds Al-Shareef. Calls on the international community to assume its responsibility in restraining the armed colonialists and the Israeli army from these atrocities and crimes against the unarmed Palestinian people and holding their perpetrators accountable;

2. Holds Israel, the illegal colonial occupation authority, fully responsible for the repercussions of such barbaric acts and heinous crimes perpetrated by the occupation army against the Palestinian people; and affirms that the Israeli colonial settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, the illegal bill aimed at legalizing 9 settlements and the plans to build thousands of new settlement units, are illegal, constitute an obstacle to peace and undermine the two-state solution;

3. Calls on the international community, in particular, the Security Council to assume its responsibility of maintaining international peace and security and to take all necessary measures to provide protection for the Palestinian people, end continued Israeli violations and ensure compliance by Israel, the illegal colonial occupation authority, with international legitimacy resolutions and international law;

4. Requests the group of OIC ambassadors at relevant international organizations to act urgently to condemn the continued Israeli crimes and violations against the Palestinian people, their territory and holy sites, and to demand activation of international protection for the Palestinian people in line with international law, including international humanitarian law and human rights law;

5. Requests the Secretary-General to contact international actors and address letters to all Member States of the Security Council, the United Nations Secretary General, the High Commissioner for Human Rights, and the President of the European Union to convey the stance of the OIC on this continued violations of the State of Palestine's territory, including Al-Quds Al-Shareef and to demand for cessation and deterrence of these Israeli attacks and provide international protection for the Palestinian people;

6. Invites international actors parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention to assume their responsibility, to impose respect for the Convention in the occupied State of Palestine, including Al-Quds Al-Shareef, and to take necessary practical measures to stop the ongoing violations and crimes perpetrated by Israel, the illegal colonial occupation authority, and the gangs of Israeli settlers against the civilian Palestinian nationals;

7. Urges the International Criminal Court to launch criminal investigation and hold accountable perpetrators of war crimes and crimes against humanity and other crimes that were and are still being committed by Israel, the occupation power, against unarmed Palestinian people,

including the crimes of aggression, colonial settlement, annexation, premeditated killing of Palestinian civilians and forced expulsion;

8. Demands urgent international intervention to stop the Israeli campaign of arbitrary arrest of many Palestinians in the State of Palestine's territory, including Al-Quds Al-Shareef, work for their release and stop unfair treatment to them; emphasizes the illegality of Israeli occupation courts and their decisions, specifically the recent bill providing for their denial from treatment; and affirms that the freedom of all prisoners is an essential condition for peace;

9. Calls for support for the efforts and orientation of the State of Palestine to continue its action at the International Court of Justice, under the United Nations General Assembly's adoption of a resolution at its 77th session calling for the Court's advisory opinion on the essence of the Israeli colonial occupation in the State of Palestine's territory and the consequences of its existence and associated illegal practices. Welcoming the International Court of Justice's determination of dates for states and international organizations to file written submissions at the Court, Calls on OIC Member States and the General Secretariat to be ready to file relevant written and oral submissions for presentation before the Court;

10. Reiterates the importance of continuing coordination and cooperation between the OIC, the League of Arab States and the African Union to ensure comprehensive follow-up of the dangerous and escalating situation in the occupied State of Palestine, including Al-Quds Al-Shareef, to ensure that necessary steps are taken to activate international protect for the Palestinian people and compel Israel, the illegal colonial occupation authority, to desist from these criminal acts;

11. Requests the Secretary-General to follow up the implementation of this Communiqué and submit a report thereon to the next session of the Council of Foreign Ministers.

XX. UN SPECIAL COORDINATOR WENNESLAND GRAVELY CONCERNED BY VIOLENCE IN HUWWARA, NEAR NABLUS

On 27 February, the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Tor Wennesland, issued the following [statement](#).

I am gravely concerned by the deteriorating security situation in the occupied West Bank, particularly the violence we have witnessed in the past 24 hours in Huwwara, near Nablus.

My condolences to the family of the two Israeli brothers killed in a shooting attack yesterday by a Palestinian perpetrator and to the family of the Palestinian killed during a rampage by vigilante settlers in retaliatory attacks, which resulted also in many Palestinians injured and homes in Huwwara set ablaze.

Security forces have the responsibility to maintain security and prevent individuals from taking the law into their own hands.

There can be no justification for terrorism, nor for arson and acts of revenge against civilians. All perpetrators of violence must be held accountable. Violence, provocations, and incitement must stop immediately and be unequivocally condemned by all.

I am encouraged by the commitments reaffirmed by the parties in the final Communiqué of the Aqaba meeting, including on efforts to de-escalate the situation on the ground. I urge both sides to make all efforts to address the core issues driving the conflict in line with UN resolutions, international law and previous agreements, including the principles of Oslo.

The United Nations remains committed to supporting Palestinians and Israelis to achieve a just and lasting peace. There are no shortcuts to peace.

XXI. EU HIGHLY CONCERNED BY THE LATEST WAVE OF VIOLENCE IN OPT

On 27 February, the European Union's Lead Spokesperson for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Peter Stano, issued the following [statement](#).

The European Union is highly concerned by the continuously spiraling violence in the occupied Palestinian territory. It condemns the terror attack in the West Bank on Sunday, in which two Israelis lost their lives, and yet another attack on Monday claiming the life of one more Israeli.

The EU condemns the outbreak of settlers' violence, which resulted in the killing of one Palestinian, injuring of several hundreds of Palestinians and burning of houses and shops, causing the unacceptable destruction of Palestinian property.

High Representative/Vice-President Josep Borrell contacted Israeli and Palestinian authorities on Sunday night to convey the message that violence and terror must stop, that all civilians must be protected and that immediate measures of de-escalation are necessary.

All parties need to take immediate steps to end this deadly cycle of violence, prevent further loss of life, ensure accountability and bring the perpetrators to justice.
