

**STATEMENT TO THE SECURITY COUNCIL**

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THE INALIENABLE RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE**

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

New York, 27 July 2023

Mr. President,

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People thanks the United Kingdom for its Presidency of the Security Council this month and expresses appreciation for the briefing of the Assistant Secretary-General for the Middle East, Asia and the Pacific, Mr. Mohamed Khaled Khiari.

In recent weeks, Israel's excessive use of force and deployment of heavy weaponry against densely populated civilian areas, has caused Palestinian casualties, including among children, and widespread destruction. The raid in the Jenin refugee camp on 19 June, the largest Israeli incursion in the West Bank in 20 years, triggered a cycle of violence resulting in more than 12 Palestinian and four Israeli fatalities and fueled tensions in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem. The Committee seconds the plea of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights for Israel to align its policies and actions in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, with international human rights standards and humanitarian law. Such measures include safeguarding the right to life and fulfilling its obligations under international humanitarian law to maintain public order and safety.

Increasing violence by armed settlers, working in coordination with Israel's security forces, deserves the urgent attention of the Security Council. The settler's systematic attacks on Palestinian civilians and their raids on Palestinian villages, setting fire to dozens of homes and vehicles and agricultural fields, have intensified dramatically. From 20 June to 25 June, Israeli settlers targeted several Palestinian towns and villages in the occupied West Bank, causing extensive damage and terrorizing civilians. As stated by Special Coordinator Wennesland in the 27 June briefing, these attacks often happen with the protection or in the proximity of Israeli occupying forces. In May, the living structures of the Palestinian herding community of Ein Samiya in the occupied West Bank were repeatedly demolished, community members were subjected to settler violence, and were eventually displaced.

Israel condemned such settler attacks, calling them "nationalist terrorism" by its own Head of Security Agency and Police Commissioner - other senior Israeli figures called them "Pogroms". But condemnation is not enough. Israel must immediately take decisive steps to halt these attacks, ensure accountability, and protect Palestinians according to its responsibility as the occupying Power.

We renew our appeal to the Security Council to ensure a mechanism to protect the Palestinian people from the occupying forces' incursions and provocative actions.

Excellencies,

Such attacks are the direct result of Israel's expanding settlement policy, in utter disregard for international law and resolutions of this Security Council, including resolution 2334 (2016), which repeatedly declared all settlements in the OPT, including East Jerusalem, to be illegal and demanded an immediate halt and reversal of related policies and practices, as they are tantamount to de facto annexation. So far this year, Israel has advanced plans for over 10,000 housing units in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, with the clear intent to further colonize and fragment the Palestinian territory and illegally cement its own control.

It is of utmost concern that Israeli political actors are inflaming the situation rather than calling for calm. During the violence in Jenin, an Israeli cabinet member urged Israeli security forces to "blow up buildings and assassinate terrorists...dozens, hundreds or if needed, thousands" and called on settlers to "run to the hilltops" and establish "additional outposts."

The Committee strongly condemns the inflammatory rhetoric and actions of Israeli authorities, which support illegal land confiscation and violate international law, and urges Israel to stop incitement and provocations against the Palestinian people and fully comply with its obligations as the occupying Power under international law.

Excellencies,

The Committee decries the lack of accountability for illegal Israeli actions, including during the Israeli military aggression on Gaza in May 2023. We call for the immediate lifting of the blockade on this part of the Palestinian territory and respect for relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolution 1860 (2009). The Committee reiterates that the indiscriminate launching of rockets towards Israeli population centres is prohibited by international humanitarian law.

People worldwide hope for their children to inherit good health and prosperity. The children of Palestine have, however, only inherited occupation. In his report of 5 June 2023 on Children and Armed Conflict, the Secretary-General reported more than 3,133 grave violations verified against Palestinian children, including the killing of 54 of them between January and December 2022 in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. The Committee calls for a halt to Israel's use of force against children and appeals to all stakeholders in this conflict, Israeli and Palestinian, to abide by their domestic and international legal obligations and protect children. It further calls on all UN human rights mechanisms, including the SRSG on Children and Armed Conflict, to take action in accordance with their mandates to ensure accountability for Israel's human rights violations in the OPT.

The Committee expresses appreciation in this regard for the efforts of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territory occupied by Israel since 1967 in advocating for protection of Palestinian children and the civilian population as a whole, in accordance with international law.

Excellencies,

Israel's occupation has now become doubly punitive towards Palestine refugees. As the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) struggles to sustain its lifesaving activities for Palestine refugees, the two-day Israeli military operation in June 2023 in the Jenin refugee camp – home to nearly 24,000 people – damaged at least 900 houses rendering many of them uninhabitable, interrupted essential services, left the crucial UNRWA's health centre unusable and at least 3,500 refugees displaced.

The Committee condemns Israel's actions against Palestine refugees and the destruction of UNRWA's lifesaving investments. We call on all donors and partners to make funds immediately available to UNRWA for the humanitarian response in the Jenin camp and to ensure sustainable and predictable funding for the Agency to enable it to faithfully uphold its mandate.

The Committee reiterates that a just and lasting peace will only be achieved with the end of Israel's occupation, the end of illegal settlements that further and entrench the occupation, and the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including to self-determination and freedom, which they have been too long denied.

Thank you.