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

Identical letters dated 8 October 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

An all-out war has been declared by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian civilian population in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. This endless campaign of State terror is claiming civilian lives by the minute, slaughtering children, women and men in yet another punitive military assault against the besieged Gaza Strip, reminiscent of the deadly aggressions by Israel in 2008–2009, 2012, 2014, 2018–2019, 2021 and 2022.

At the writing of the present letter, the death toll in Gaza stands at: 313 Palestinians killed, including at least 20 children, over 2,000 injured, and thousands of families displaced, now over 20,000 civilians, in just the past 24 hours. The scenes of devastation inflicted are harrowing. The occupying Power has also declared that it will cut off the supply of electricity, fuel and goods to the Gaza Strip, inflicting an even more dire humanitarian situation and untold trauma on the entire population, including children and women, and elderly, sick and disabled persons.

The situation has reached the dangerous, explosive point that we have continually and explicitly warned of, yet to no avail. Crisis after crisis, our pleas for the international community to act on the collective political, legal, humanitarian and moral responsibilities towards this prolonged injustice remain unheard. Even as the occupying Power becomes more ferocious, racist and extreme, its systematic assaults on the Palestinian people and human rights violations escalating by the day, the pleas for the international protection of our people remain unmet.

These developments did not occur in a vacuum. They are preceded by the killing this year of hundreds of Palestinians, among them 47 children, and the injury of thousands more by the Israeli occupying forces, both army and armed settler militias, in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem – a toll that has already surpassed the deadliest year for Palestinians in 2022 since the United Nations began recording casualties – and are preceded by decades of Israel's unrelenting:

Military raids on Palestinian villages, towns, cities and refugee camps,
terrorizing and attacking defenseless civilians



Arrest, detention, imprisonment and abuse of thousands of Palestinian civilians, including children and women

A suffocating 16-year air, land and sea blockade of more than 2 million Palestinians in Gaza and collective punishment of the entire Palestinian population by blockade, walls, permit regimes, closures and 645 checkpoints

Terror and violence by Israeli settlers marauding throughout the Palestinian territory, intimidating, harassing, killing and maiming Palestinian civilians and torching, vandalizing and destroying their properties akin to pogroms

Seizure of Palestinian land and seizure and demolition of homes and properties for the construction of more colonial settlements and the wall and annexation of more Palestinian land

Forced displacement of Palestinians across the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, including transfer of entire communities from their lands, amounting to ethnic cleansing

Attacks on holy sites, targeting in particular Al-Aqsa Mosque/Al-Haram Al-Sharif, and provocations, incitement and assaults on Palestinian Muslim and Christian worshippers, breaching international law and the historic, legal status quo

Exploitation and theft of Palestine's natural resources and wealth, and impoverishment of the Palestinian people

Humiliation and demonization of the Palestinian people and their subjugation to racist, discriminatory, dehumanizing policies and practices amounting to apartheid

All perpetrated by Israel's army, terrorist settlers and government officials systematically, unapologetically and brutally imposing this illegal colonial occupation and apartheid regime, deliberately depriving an entire nation of people of their inalienable human rights, including to self-determination and to live in freedom and dignity in their own homeland, and endangering their very existence, in grave breach of international law and every single moral standard and in perpetuity with no end in sight.

This occupation breeds incessant violence, assaulting and claiming Palestinian lives and endangering Israelis. And, once again, as it pursues only the violence and terror it knows, traumatized Palestinian families in Gaza are desperately on the run, displaced from their homes to the only refuge available to them – schools of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East – as Israel rains bombs and missiles on them, indiscriminately killing, wounding and destroying and openly threatening even more wanton attacks, with no regard for the sanctity of human life.

This savagery must end. The Security Council must call for an immediate halt to the violence, for a ceasefire and for the protection of civilians. International law, including humanitarian and human rights law, must be respected. It cannot be that all rules are suspended, with exception of the one Article of the Charter of the United Nations repeatedly invoked by some, while an occupying Power declares war on the civilian population it has been illegally occupying and oppressing for decades.

The root causes of this grave situation must be addressed. The facts are known to all. Israel, the occupying Power, is fully responsible for this situation as a result of its insistence on subjugating the Palestinian people and stripping them of their rights, their land and their heritage in pursuit of its illegitimate colonial annexationist agenda and domination schemes.

The Security Council must end its paralysis and move immediately to uphold its Charter duties in the face of growing threats to international peace and security. It must rise to its responsibilities regarding the Palestine question and offer the political horizon that has been missing for far too long. United Nations resolutions must be implemented; Israel cannot continue being allowed to act as a State above the law, evading accountability even as it breaches the law and dismisses the Security Council with contempt.

And, where the occupying Power has clearly abdicated its obligations to ensure the protection of the occupied civilian population – in fact openly declaring them the “enemy”, declaring war on them and threatening to reduce an entire civilian area “to rubble” – it is urgent for the international community to step in and protect civilian lives, as demanded by international humanitarian law and countless Security Council resolutions and the obligations incumbent on all High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention.

The decades-long calls – by the Security Council, the General Assembly, the Human Rights Council, and the International Court of Justice and across the international community as a whole – to bring an end to the Israeli occupation and an end to this ongoing Nakba against the Palestinian people and to assist them in realizing their rights, including to self-determination and return, must be immediately, seriously and truly acted on, not treated as mere slogans or rhetoric or illusions. The legitimate national aspirations and inalienable human rights of a people can neither be quashed, nor will they ever be forsaken, no matter the passage of time, no matter the force used against them. It is time to come to terms with the fact that peace and security will remain elusive for as long as they are denied.

Further delays and detours cannot be justified. Further negligence, false equivalencies and equivocating are unconscionable. Millions of civilian lives are at stake. The future of Palestine and the region is at stake, and whether it will be one of peace and justice, security and stability, or one of chaos and war, death and destruction. We urge the Security Council and all peace-loving nations to act now on their solemn obligations under the Charter, including to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war.

The present letter is in follow-up to our 803 previous 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 3 October 2023 ([A/ES-10/952-S/2023/731](#)) 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