

**REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF
UN SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 2334 (2016)**

delivered by

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Mr. President,

Excellencies,

Today's briefing is devoted to the thirty-fifth report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolution 2334 (2016). It covers the period from 18 June to 19 September.

Security Council resolution 2334 (2016) calls on Israel to “immediately and completely cease all settlement activity in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem” and to “fully respect all of its legal obligations in this regard.” Settlement activity has, nevertheless, accelerated.

During the reporting period, the Israeli planning authorities advanced or approved approximately 20,810 housing units in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem.

This includes in Area C, approximately 5,430 housing units which were advanced, and some 10,600 units which were approved, while in East Jerusalem 4,780 housing units were advanced. On 11 August, tenders were published for 4,030 housing units in the settlements of Maale Adumim and Ariel. On 20 August, the Israeli High Planning Committee advanced a plan for the construction of more than 3,400 housing units in the E1 area. On 2 July, 15 Israeli ministers and the speaker of the Knesset signed a petition calling for Israel to annex the occupied West Bank, and on 23 July, the Knesset adopted a non-binding motion calling for the “application of Israeli sovereignty” across all settlements in the West Bank.

Demolitions and seizures of Palestinian-owned structures also accelerated. Citing the lack of Israeli-issued building permits, which are almost impossible for Palestinians to obtain, Israeli authorities demolished, seized or forced people to demolish 455 structures in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, displacing 420 persons, including 175 children and 118 women. Thirty of these structures were donor funded.

Evictions of Palestinians from their homes in East Jerusalem also continued.

Mister President,

Security Council resolution 2334 (2016) calls for “immediate steps to prevent all acts of violence against civilians, including acts of terror, as well as all acts of provocation and destruction.” Acts of violence against civilians continued to escalate, with the high number of fatal incidents across the Occupied Palestinian Territory and Israel precluding me from detailing all.

Israeli military actions intensified throughout Gaza, striking schools, hospitals, residential buildings, and hitting IDP tents and people trying to access aid, resulting in high numbers of

Palestinian casualties, continued massive displacement of civilians and widespread destruction, including to civilian infrastructure.

According to the Gaza Ministry of Health, at least 7,579 Palestinians were killed, and at least 37,201 were injured in Gaza, a majority of whom are reportedly women and children in the reporting period. And one thousand nine hundred and eleven were reportedly killed while attempting to collect aid, including in the vicinity of militarized distribution sites. According to Israeli sources, 37 Israel Defense Forces soldiers were killed in hostilities in Gaza. According to Israeli sources, 48 hostages are still being held captive by Palestinian armed groups in Gaza following the recovery during the reporting period of the bodies of five hostages by Israel Defense Forces; Twenty-five of the remaining hostages are believed to be deceased. 30 UN personnel were killed during the reporting period.

Hamas and other armed groups in Gaza continued to sporadically fire rockets indiscriminately toward Israel. Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad released four videos appearing to show hostages in an emaciated condition.

On 8 August, the Israeli Government announced its decision to take control of Gaza City. Israeli forces have carried out heavy bombardment of Gaza City since late August, hitting residential areas, including numerous multi-story buildings, tents, schools, as well as other public infrastructure, resulting in high numbers of casualties. On 27 August, the IDF instructed residents to leave for the southern part of the Strip and launched a large-scale ground operation, with intensified attacks forcibly displacing Palestinian civilians and demolishing civilian objects, especially residential building with reports indicating the destruction of whole neighbourhoods through controlled detonations.

Meanwhile, violence in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, continued at an alarming rate.

Overall, in the occupied West Bank, 46 Palestinians, including one woman and 12 children, were killed during ISF operations, armed exchanges, airstrikes, settler attacks, demonstrations and other incidents. Eight hundred and ninety Palestinians, including 152 children, were injured, including 319 by ISF due to tear gas inhalation and 130 by live ammunition, and 230 by Israeli settlers and other civilians.

According to Israeli sources, 7 Israelis, including one woman, were killed by armed Palestinians and another 62, including one child and at least one woman, and 14 ISF personnel were injured by Palestinians in shooting, stabbing and ramming attacks and other incidents.

Israeli security forces' large-scale operation continued in northern West Bank cities and refugee camps, particularly in Tulkarm and Jenin, alongside operations across other areas in the West Bank, including in Area A. On 31 August, new military orders declared parts of Nur Shams and Tulkarm refugee camps closed military zones. While there have been some limited returns, tens of thousands of Palestinians remain displaced from northern refugee camps.

Children continued to be killed by Israeli security forces, for example, a 13-year-old Palestinian was shot and killed on 25 June during a search operation west of Jenin. On 22 and 23 July, also in Jenin, two boys – a 15-year-old and a 13-year-old – were shot and killed after reportedly throwing

stones at ISF. On 8 September, Israeli forces shot and killed two Palestinian boys, aged 14, who were attempting to enter the Jenin refugee camp.

Israeli security forces carried out at least 2,500 search-and-arrest operations in the occupied West Bank. Israel currently holds at least 2,662 Palestinians in administrative detention, amidst persistent reports of abuse during detention.

Daily settler-related attacks intensified, often in the presence of Israeli forces. On 25 June, three Palestinians were killed by ISF after dozens of settlers attacked the village of Kafr Malik, northeast of Ramallah. In Aqraba town, southeast of Nablus, on 2 August, Israeli settlers shot and killed a 24-year-old Palestinian man and injured eight others.

Palestinian attacks against Israelis also continued. On 8 September, two Palestinians opened fire at a bus station at the Ramot junction, northwest of East Jerusalem, killing six Israelis and injuring 21 others. The attackers were both killed at the scene.

Mister President,

The Security Council, in its resolution 2334 (2016), called upon both parties to refrain from provocative actions, incitement and inflammatory rhetoric. Unfortunately, such acts continued.

Hamas praised and claimed responsibility for the 8 September attack against Israeli civilians in Jerusalem and praised the 18 September attack in which two Israeli soldiers were killed at the Al-Karama /Allenby Bridge calling both “heroic operations”. Hamas officials continued to call for additional violent attacks against Israelis; PA-affiliated official media and social media continued to glorify perpetrators of past attacks against Israelis.

Senior Israeli officials continued to call for the mass displacement of Palestinians outside Gaza, expansion of Israeli military operations towards a full control of Gaza by Israel and reestablishment of settlements in Gaza. Some also called for annexation and advancement of settlements in the occupied West Bank that would “bury” the idea of a Palestinian State and called for stopping all humanitarian aid and life-saving services into Gaza until all hostages are released. A senior official released a statement asserting that “there will be no Palestinian state to the west of the Jordan river” and highlighting his past efforts to prevent the creation of a Palestinian state. Senior Israeli officials also conducted inflammatory visits to Jerusalem's Holy Sites, with one openly violating the status quo.

Mister President,

Resolution 2334 (2016) reiterated calls by the Middle East Quartet for “affirmative steps to be taken immediately to reverse negative trends on the ground that are imperiling the two-State solution.”

After 23 months of fighting, the humanitarian situation in Gaza is beyond the breaking point. On 22 August, the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification confirmed famine in Gaza governorate, marking the first time a famine has been officially confirmed in the Middle East region. More than half a million people are facing widespread starvation. Famine is projected to expand to Deir al-Balah and Khan Younis by the end of September. According to MoH in Gaza,

as of 19 September, 440 malnutrition-related deaths, including 147 children, were documented since October 2023.

Increased mass IDF evacuation orders and the expansion of Israeli militarized zones have pushed people into less than 14 percent of the Gaza Strip. Since 14 August, nearly over 380, 000 displacement movements have been recorded, with most people moving from Gaza City towards the already overcrowded south where displacement sites are overpopulated and health and water infrastructure have sustained severe damage, exposing the population to grave health risks.

Aid is frequently offloaded from trucks including by starving and desperate people, and in some cases looted by armed criminal groups before reaching warehouses. Israel has allowed an increase in some types of aid entering Gaza, as well as commercial traffic. This step has helped to reduce the prices of some key commodities but falls far short of what is needed to address humanitarian needs in the Strip. Following a shooting attack at the Al-Karama/Allenby crossing with Jordan, the entry of aid for Gaza via the crossing was suspended along with all other cargo.

The Palestinian Authority continues to face a severe fiscal crisis, undermining public service delivery. Israel continues to withhold all Palestinian clearance revenues, which the Palestinian Authority says now totals some USD 2 billion in withheld revenues since October 2023.

On 20 July, Palestinian President Abbas issued a decree announcing elections for the Palestinian National Council. The decree also established a preparatory committee tasked with making the arrangements for the organization of the process, which held its first meeting on 7 August.

President Abbas also established a committee to draft an interim constitution via decree on 18 August. It is intended to define separation of powers, democratic governance, the peaceful transfer of authority, and the legal framework for elections.

Mr. President,

In resolution 2334 (2016), the Security Council also called upon all States “to distinguish, in their relevant dealings, between the territory of the State of Israel and the territories occupied since 1967.” On 2 September, Belgium announced its intention to impose sanctions on Israel including, *inter alia*, a ban on the importing of products from settlements, a review of public procurement policies with Israeli companies and, restrictions on consular assistance to Belgians living in illegal settlements.

Resolution 2334 (2016) also called upon “all parties to continue, *inter alia*, to exert collective efforts to launch credible negotiations on all final status issues in the Middle East peace process.”

On 28-30 July, France and Saudi Arabia co-chaired the High-Level International Conference for the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution. The Conference culminated in the “New York Declaration” outlining an “actionable framework” for the implementation of the two-State solution. On 12 September, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution endorsing the “New York Declaration”.

Mister President,

In closing, allow me to share the Secretary-General's observations on the implementation of Security Council Resolution 2334 (2016) in the Occupied Palestinian Territory – the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip.

1. Israeli settlement expansion continues to accelerate, alongside the proliferation of outposts and steps in the Israeli Knesset promoting the annexation of the West Bank. Israeli settlements have no legal validity and constitute a flagrant violation of international law and UN resolutions. They are systematically shrinking the territory of the Palestinian State and further entrenching Israel's unlawful occupation. The advancement of the E1 plan is a calamitous development. If implemented, it would effectively sever the connection between the northern and southern West Bank, further undermining the contiguity of an independent and sovereign Palestinian state, increasing the risk of forced displacement, and fueling tensions.
2. The Government of Israel must abide by its obligations under international law. I recall the findings by the International Court of Justice in its Advisory Opinion of 19 July 2024, which declared, *inter alia*, that the State of Israel is under an obligation to cease immediately all new settlement activities, evacuate all settlers, and bring to an end its unlawful presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory as rapidly as possible. I am also deeply concerned by statements of intent by Israeli Government officials to further annex all or parts of the Occupied Palestinian Territory.
3. In addition to settlement activities, Palestinians face displacement, demolitions and crippling movement and access restrictions that stifle the economy and severely limit access to employment, hospitals, schools, and agricultural land. These policies are further fueling frustration and hopelessness while severely undermining the Palestinian Authority. The demolition and seizure of Palestinian structures, including internationally funded humanitarian projects entail numerous human rights violations and raise concerns about the risk of forcible transfer. I call on the Government of Israel to cease the demolition of Palestinian-owned structures in accordance with its international obligations.
4. I once again strongly condemn the horrific attacks by Hamas and other Palestinian armed groups on 7 October 2023 and the continued holding of hostages in horrendous conditions in Gaza. All hostages must be released immediately and unconditionally. I condemn Hamas' appalling videos depicting emaciated Israeli hostages. While in captivity, hostages must be treated humanely and allowed to receive visits and assistance from the International Committee of the Red Cross.
5. I am appalled by the escalation of Israeli military operations throughout the Gaza Strip, which continues to bring death at unprecedented rate and destruction to Palestinians. I condemn the killing of civilians in Gaza, including women and children. The situation in Gaza is morally, politically, and legally intolerable. Mass casualty incidents have mounted as operations in Gaza City expand. The collective punishment of the Palestinian people can never be justified and must end immediately. The forced displacement of the Palestinian population from any part of the Occupied Palestinian Territory is unacceptable and violates international law. I strongly reject any form of ethnic cleansing.

6. The protection of civilians is paramount in any armed conflict. Parties to a conflict have an obligation to respect international humanitarian law. I am concerned over what may be violations of international humanitarian law, including possible non-compliance with the requirements of distinction, proportionality, and precautions in attack and the prohibition on the use of human shields. Member States have an obligation to ensure respect of international humanitarian law.
7. I call for an immediate and permanent ceasefire; the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages; and unfettered humanitarian access across Gaza. I welcome the continued efforts of the mediators to reach a deal and urge all sides to end these devastating hostilities immediately. There is no military solution. The International Court of Justice has issued legally binding provisional measures in the case named Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in the Gaza Strip.
8. The continued heightened level of violence in the West Bank is deeply alarming. I call on Israel, as the occupying power, to protect the Palestinian population against attacks and intimidation. I condemn all acts of violence against civilians, including acts of terror. I am deeply concerned that persistent and intensifying settler attacks, including sometimes in the proximity and with the support of Israeli security forces, are further displacing Palestinian communities, including in Area C. Residents continue to be denied the right to return home. Palestinian attacks against Israelis must also cease. All perpetrators of violent attacks must be held accountable.
9. Reported mistreatment of Palestinians held by Israel is deeply disturbing. All detainees must be treated humanely and Palestinians arbitrarily detained by Israel must be released.
10. I am also disturbed by the multiple instances in which officials on both sides have glorified violence and engaged in dangerous provocations, incitement and inflammatory language, which must be rejected by all.
11. I am appalled at the horrific humanitarian situation in Gaza with unbearable levels of suffering and untenable living conditions. Famine in Gaza is a man-made disaster. I call on Israel to fulfill its obligations under international law, including allowing and facilitating the rapid and unimpeded humanitarian access into and throughout Gaza. The recent limited increase in humanitarian aid, is nowhere near what is required. The UN and our partners have a proven and principled plan to get aid to a desperate population. We must be allowed to safely and securely distribute assistance to people in need wherever they are.
12. All parties must respect and protect humanitarian personnel. I mourn the United Nations personnel killed in Gaza and strongly condemn the killing of all health and humanitarian personnel. These incidents must stop and be thoroughly and independently investigated, and perpetrators must be held accountable. I express my deepest appreciation to UNRWA, all the UN agencies and personnel, and humanitarian aid workers, who remain committed to their work across the OPT despite the significant security risks. I recall that the inviolability of United Nations premises must be respected at all times. I also strongly condemn the killing of journalists in Gaza.

13. Israel's implementation of punitive economic and fiscal measures is destabilizing Palestinian institutions and threatening the viability of the Palestinian Authority. I urge Israel to immediately cease all such unilateral steps.
14. I reiterate my call to the parties to respect and uphold the *status quo* at the Holy Sites in Jerusalem, taking into account the special and historic role of Jordan.
15. The announcement of Palestinian National Council elections, within a year after the conflict in Gaza comes to an end, is welcomed along with steps taken toward their preparations.
16. I commend France and Saudi Arabia for co-chairing the High-level International Conference on the Two-State Solution and call on the international community to seize this momentum and mobilize the political will and resources for tangible, irreversible steps for the achievement of the two-State solution.
17. The UN stands ready to support all efforts to advance a just, comprehensive, and lasting peace. The continued devastation and misery on the ground, particularly over the past two years, have reinforced the absolute need for Israelis, Palestinians, regional States, and the broader international community to take urgent steps that will end the unlawful occupation and enable the parties to re-engage on the long-delayed political path to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in line with international law and UN resolutions, realizing a two-State solution – Israel and Palestine, of which Gaza is an integral part – live side-by-side in peace and security within their secure and recognized borders on the basis of pre-1967 lines, with Jerusalem as the capital of both states.

Thank you.