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

Security Council
Seventy-sixth year

Identical letters dated 14 April 2021 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

I must draw urgent attention to escalating tensions in Occupied East Jerusalem as Israel, the occupying Power, persists in its violations against the Palestinian inhabitants of the City, against the sanctity of holy sites, against the freedom of worship and against the exercise of democracy.

As Muslims around the world yesterday began the observance of the holy month of Ramadan with a shared sense of sacrifice, community and hope, the Palestinian people's first day of observance was, regrettably, again marred by the heavy hand of the occupation and its continuing aggressive, disrespectful actions, in violation of international law and basic decency. Moreover, such provocative actions further aggravate already high tensions in the City caused by Israel's incessant illegal and destructive policies, including its rampant demolition of Palestinian homes and settlement colonization activities.

In addition to their continued imposition of restrictions on access to Haram al-Sharif, even during this holy month of Ramadan, Israeli occupying forces yesterday cruelly seized the iftar (end of fast meals) intended for distribution to people who were fasting near Aqsa Mosque. The occupying forces raided the compound, harassed and intimidated Waqf staff, broke the door of Bab al-Asbat minaret and cut the wires to the loudspeakers of both Bab al-Magharibah and Bab al-Asbat minarets, preventing the call for evening prayers. The occupation's soldiers went on to attack worshipers who were leaving the compound after the *Tarawih* prayers, and confrontations ensued, injuring several civilians.

Such actions by Israel, the occupying Power, constitute blatant violations of international law and United Nations resolutions regarding Occupied East Jerusalem. These actions further violate the sanctity of Aqsa Mosque, the third holiest mosque in Islam, violate the historic and legal status quo at Haram al-Sharif and violate Jordan's custodianship of the Muslim and Christian holy sites in the City. Moreover, while fully aware of the ongoing circumstances of the coronavirus disease



(COVID-19) pandemic, the aggressive and arbitrary restrictions imposed by the occupation against Palestinian worshippers violate their rights to freedom of worship and religion, as enshrined in international human rights law.

Such actions are a provocation not only against the Palestinian people but Muslims as a whole and risk inflaming already-high tensions and religious sensitivities, threatening to transform the conflict into an endless religious conflict with grave consequences for regional and international peace and security.

The international community, including the Security Council, must demand that Israel immediately cease its violations and provocations and abide by its obligations as the occupying Power in Occupied East Jerusalem, in accordance with international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions, including Security Council resolutions, from resolution [49 \(1948\)](#) to resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#). Moreover, Israel must be called upon to fully respect the historical and legal status quo at the holy sites and cease all incursions into the holy sites, including Aqsa Mosque compound, and cease its attacks against worshippers and Waqf officials and staff.

At the same time, Israel continues to interfere with the Palestinian democratic electoral process in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, and especially in Occupied East Jerusalem, as previously indicated in our letter dated 9 April 2021. In that letter, we informed you of the Israeli raid on a hotel in the City on 6 April to forcibly disband a civil society event on Palestinian elections. This has been followed by other obstructive and hostile actions, including the arrest of several Palestinian candidates in the West Bank and the issuing of summonses to various Jerusalemite candidates for interrogation. These actions were preceded in recent months by the repeated detention, interrogation and restrictions imposed on the Palestinian Governor of Occupied East Jerusalem, Adnan Ghaith. In fact, since 2006, Israel has arrested about 60 Palestinian Legislative Council members, seven of whom remain in detention.

Such measures expose the ill intent of the occupying Power to undermine the participation of Jerusalem's Palestinian residents and candidates in the upcoming elections, the first of which is scheduled to be held on 22 May for the Palestinian Legislative Council. Such actions obstruct their right to partake in this democratic national process and ultimately obstruct their right to self-determination. As noted by the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Monitor in a statement on 7 April, "The Israeli measures aimed at disrupting the Palestinian legislative elections in the city of Jerusalem are part of Israel's policy of abolishing the Palestinian presence in the city and imposing Israeli sovereignty over it, in contravention of the rules of international laws and relevant United Nations resolutions".

In this regard, it must once again be underscored that Israel is not the sovereign in East Jerusalem, that East Jerusalem remains occupied territory and an integral part of the Occupied Palestinian Territory as a whole, that the Fourth Geneva Convention remains applicable and that all such actions by the occupying Power are illegal and null and void. We recall the numerous Security Council resolutions in this regard, including resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#), in which the Council underlined "that it will not recognize any changes to the 4 June 1967 lines, including with regard to Jerusalem, other than those agreed by the parties through negotiations".

We call upon the international community to uphold international law and call specifically upon the Security Council to implement its relevant resolutions without exception. The international community must act forthwith to compel a halt to Israel's violations throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, including Israeli aggressions on holy sites, including at Aqsa Mosque and including provocations and attacks by extremist Israeli settlers. Palestinian worshippers must be protected from attacks, and their right to freedom of worship and religion must be respected. We also call for pressure to bring a halt to Israeli obstruction of the

participation of Palestinian Jerusalemites in the electoral process and to avert its obstruction of the elections, whether in Jerusalem or in the rest of Occupied Palestine.

Respect for international law, including humanitarian and human rights law, United Nations resolutions and signed agreements, is paramount to preventing the further escalation of tensions and deterioration of the situation, protecting the Palestinian civilian population and preserving the prospects for a just and peaceful solution. We urge the international community to act responsibly and without delay.

The present letter is in follow-up to our 710 letters regarding the ongoing crisis 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 9 April 2021 (A/ES-10/856-S/2021/342), 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, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators must be brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the present letter circulated 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