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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 28 June 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

The intensity of violent and racist attacks by Israeli occupying forces and mobs of extremists against Palestinian civilians has become rampant as the lack of accountability emboldens such crimes and impunity, aggravating already high tensions and portending further deterioration and destabilization of the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem.

In spite of repeated warnings of the rising dangers of such State-sponsored attacks and incitement against the Palestinian people, nothing has been done to halt the violence or hold the perpetrators accountable. Although we have warned that, in spite of the 21 May “ceasefire”, Israel has not for a single minute ceased its violation of Palestinian rights, its oppression of our people and colonization of our land, nothing has been done. It is past time for the international community to act to bring an end to Israel’s impunity, which has been permitted for far too long, an unconscionable appeasement for which the Palestinian people are paying the ultimate price.

As reflected in the latest report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#), despite the international outcry about the looming threat of the expulsion of Palestinian families from their homes in the Shaykh Jarrah and Silwan neighbourhoods of occupied East Jerusalem, Israel’s forced displacement drive in the Occupied Palestinian Territory continues apace.

In the three months of the reporting period only, the Israeli authorities demolished, seized or forced Palestinians to demolish 72 structures, resulting in the displacement of 78 people, including 47 children and 15 women, and leaving 357 others affected. At least 218 Palestinian households comprising 970 people, including 424 children, have eviction cases currently pending in Israeli courts. And just this week, Israel announced plans for another massive demolition campaign, issuing hundreds of demolition orders throughout the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, forging ahead with its illegal demographic and geographic engineering, which has always been a central pillar of its colonization and annexation policies.



On 17 June, the Israeli occupation forces raided Palestinian towns and villages near Al-Khalil (Hebron) and issued demolition orders against dozens of Palestinian homes in Yatta and Masafer Yatta. On 20 June, the Israeli occupation forces demolished agricultural structures in Al Khader, near Bethlehem, and issued demolition orders against several homes and structures in the area. On 22 June, the Israeli occupation forces issued demolition orders against 20 Palestinian homes in Rujayb, near Nablus. The following day, the Israeli occupation forces issued demolition orders against commercial buildings in Dayr Qiddis, near Ramallah. Using the unjustifiable pretext that Palestinians under its military occupation build “illegally” as a result of the lack of occupation-issued building permits, Israel’s narrative on demolitions is designed to be deceptive in order to conceal the reality on the ground. According to the Israeli non-governmental organization Breaking the Silence, Israel has rejected nearly 99 per cent of Palestinian building permit applications over the years, making it impossible for Palestinians to build and develop their communities, while it ravages them with Israeli settlements and settlers.

In occupied East Jerusalem, the Israeli occupation forces have intensified their military presence in the Silwan neighbourhood, where 17 Palestinian homes face imminent demolition next month after occupation authorities abandoned previous legal agreements and ruled in favour of establishing a settler park called “The King’s Garden”. If Israel continues with the demolition campaign in Silwan, more than 1,500 Palestinians will be displaced, most of whom are women and children. This wave of looming home demolitions is without doubt part of Israel’s “Greater Jerusalem” scheme, which aims to ethnically cleanse occupied East Jerusalem of Palestinians through the settlement colonization and Judaization of the city, as apparent in Silwan, Shaykh Jarrah and elsewhere.

These illegal and inhumane policies are not simply arbitrary schemes that have emerged out of the blue, but rather part of decades-old systematic pattern of policies forged to impose a coercive environment on the occupied Palestinian population, determined to uproot them from their homes only to be replaced by Jewish settlers. These illegal actions are being carried out in countless ways every single day in grave breach of international humanitarian and criminal law and in violation of Security Council and General Assembly resolutions, including the specific prohibitions on policies and measures aimed at altering the character, demographic composition and status of the Holy City of Jerusalem.

In this regard, in its latest reporting on Israel’s demolition of Palestinian homes and structures, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs explicitly details the repressive reality endured by millions of Palestinians under Israel’s 54-year-long occupation:

The restrictive and discriminatory planning regime applied in Area C and East Jerusalem makes it virtually impossible for Palestinians to obtain the requisite Israeli building permits. Public and confiscated land in those areas has been allocated almost exclusively to Israeli settlements or to the military. Most private land has been zoned as agricultural or ‘green’, or is not planned, impeding the issuance of permits in these areas. To meet their housing and livelihood needs, many Palestinians are left with little choice than to build without permits, risking demolition and displacement, or to move elsewhere. Along with other constraints, the restrictive planning regime applied by Israel in Area C contributes to the creation of a coercive environment on residents, leading to risk of forcible transfer. In addition to demolition and the threat of demolition of homes, schools and livelihoods, other pressures include the denial of service infrastructure; access restrictions on farming and grazing land; poor law enforcement on violent settlers; and the revocation of residency rights, among other policies and practices.

In addition to the ongoing displacement of Palestinians for further settlement construction, State-sponsored settler violence has also intensified as armed settlers are rampaging throughout the occupied West Bank, spreading terror and attacking Palestinians while enjoying the unconditional protection of the Israeli occupation forces. On 20 June, mobs of settler extremists fired live ammunition at Palestinian residents in Dayr Sharaf, near Nablus. On 21 June, armed settlers attacked four Palestinian girls in Shaykh Jarrah, including with pepper spray, causing severe burns to the face. The following day in Shaykh Jarrah, Israeli parliamentarian Bezalel Smotrich led an armed settler raid that provoked further incitement and attacks against Palestinians in the neighbourhood. On 23 June, mobs of armed settlers blocked the main road between Al-Khalil and Jerusalem, further restricting Palestinian movement, which already suffers from the expansion of settlements, outposts, the apartheid wall and military checkpoints.

Unchecked settler violence is clearly a central tool of Israel's illegal occupation and settlement colonization, creating an ever more coercive environment in areas that Israel seeks to devour through de facto or de jure annexation. In this regard, we must draw attention to the proliferation of armed settler groups in and around Bayta, near Nablus, where Jewish extremist groups, such as "Lehava", "La Familia", "Price Tag" and "Hilltop Youth", are constantly attacking residents in a coordinated campaign to take over the town's Jabal Sbeih. Under the protection of the Israeli occupation forces, extremist groups set up mobile homes and caravans atop the mount as a prelude to establishing yet another illegal settlement near Nablus, increasingly fragmenting the Occupied Palestinian Territory and further mirroring the Bantustans of apartheid South Africa.

We reiterate that, whether annexation is implemented partially or totally, gradually or in one fell swoop, de facto or de jure, it is illegal and requires that the international community take serious, tangible action, in accordance with the clear obligations stipulated in international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions, most recently Security Council resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#).

Bayta has also become a scene of raids and incursions by the Israeli occupation forces, which regularly fire live ammunition at civilians protesting against the expropriation of the village's land for the expansion of an illegal outpost. On 17 June, a Palestinian teenager succumbed to wounds after being shot by the Israeli occupation forces in Bayta. Sixteen-year-old Ahmad Zahi Bani Shamsa was shot in the head with live ammunition after the Israeli occupation forces opened fire on Palestinians nearby. Ahmad is the fourth Palestinian child to be killed by the Israeli occupation forces in Bayta this year, as the Israeli occupation forces and settler mobs have turned the town into a military zone. On 18 and 21 June, the Israeli occupation forces once again violently attacked a weekly anti-settlement rally in Bayta, injuring more than 50 Palestinians with rubber-coated metal bullets, concussion grenades, tear gas canisters, sound bombs and direct physical attack.

Meanwhile, in the besieged Gaza Strip, Israel continues to launch air strikes in violation of the "ceasefire" that came into effect last month. On 18 June, Israeli warplanes struck neighbourhoods in Bayt Lahya and Khan Yunis, causing extensive damage to infrastructure and agricultural fields. This series of air strikes comes less than a month after Israel's barbaric 11-day bombardment of besieged Gaza and is the second air strike campaign since the "ceasefire". Israel's inhumane blockade and relentless attacks on Gaza's 2 million inhabitants have had devastating effects on every aspect of Palestinian life, in what constitutes a massive collective punishment and massive violation of human rights tantamount to a crime against humanity.

In this regard, we highlight the humanitarian recovery appeal of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East calling for

the provision of immediate humanitarian assistance to meet the immense needs of Palestinian children, women and men devastated by the Israeli military aggression, and reiterate our deep gratitude for the critical and tireless efforts of the many United Nations personnel and agencies assisting the Palestinian people.

As the international community witnesses the growing scope and scale of Israel's impunity, the Security Council must ultimately come to the realization that Israeli exceptionalism is not only destroying the prospects for justice and peace for both the Palestinian and Israeli peoples, but also destroying the foundations of international law and the credibility of the Security Council, the General Assembly and the United Nations as a whole. The Security Council must acknowledge that the cycle of repeated statements and condemnations does not correspond with its responsibilities to act in line with its primary duty for the maintenance of international peace and security. This starts by taking concrete measures to enforce resolutions that have long recognized the gravity of the violations being perpetrated by the occupying Power and long demanded their cessation. All resolutions adopted by the Security Council must be implemented and the practice of exempting Israel from the laws that we are all obliged to respect must end.

The actions of the Security Council on the question of Palestine will determine whether future generations will continue to live under colonial occupation and apartheid, or whether they will restore hope and contribute towards bringing an end to this grave injustice and achieving a just and peaceful solution. After all that we have witnessed in the past months, there can be no return to the unjust status quo ante, whereby Israel is permitted to carry on with its illegal occupation without consequence. The colonization, apartheid and blockade and the longest belligerent occupation in modern history being inflicted on Palestine must be brought to an end, and Israel's intransigence makes it clear that only accountability at this stage can make that possible.

Silence and inaction have protected the oppressor for too long. The international community, in particular the Security Council, cannot continue to wait for compliance; international law and the Charter of the United Nations have explicit legal tools and mechanisms to ensure accountability and justice. We call for the will of the Council and the international community at large to employ those tools without delay to end this historic injustice.

This letter is in follow-up to our 724 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 June 2021 (A/ES-10/870-S/2021/544) constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of those 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 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