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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 6 August 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

Recent disturbing developments compel me to once again draw attention to the critical situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, as a result of ongoing and escalating illegal policies and practices of Israel, the occupying Power. While we continue to warn about the intensity of Israeli attacks and human rights violations being perpetrated against the Palestinian people, Israeli impunity is only further emboldened by the lack of accountability.

All of this is regrettably happening with the full knowledge of the international community, which is witnessing these grave crimes, including the killing of innocent children, women and men, all in the name of entrenching the longest belligerent occupation in modern history. Yet, the international community remains paralysed despite repeated appeals by many governments, parliaments, civil society and peoples of conscience across the world to bring an end to this injustice, enabling Israeli impunity to mutate at an alarming rate, as international law and human lives are trampled and the prospects for a just peace are destroyed.

As detailed in previous letters, the scale of coordinated violations by Israeli occupation forces and extremist Israeli settlers is reaching unprecedented levels, resulting in the cold-blooded killing of Palestinian civilians and the mass dispossession of our people as the Israeli Government presses ahead with its illegal colonization enterprise. The international community must act with urgency to bring a halt to these crimes through accountability and real justice. Failure to do so will invalidate the Security Council's credibility and defy the will of the international community, with far-reaching consequences.

Today, 6 August, yet another innocent Palestinian man was killed by the Israeli occupation forces, which once again responded with lethal force to the legitimate civilian protests against Israeli colonization schemes in the village of Beita. Emad Ali Dwaikat, age 37, was shot dead by the Israeli occupation forces as he protested alongside other villagers from Beita trying to save their land from confiscation and



settlement. Emad was the father of four young children, four daughters who have now been orphaned by this criminal occupation, devastating his family and forever altering their lives.

On 28 July, Israeli occupation forces fatally shot another Palestinian child in Beit Ummar, near Al-Khalil (Hebron). The child, Mohammad al-Alami, age 11, was killed while returning from shopping groceries with his father. Israeli occupation forces fired more than a dozen bullets at their vehicle, fatally shooting the 11-year-old boy in the chest, soaking with blood the bundle of bread his father had bought for the family. Mohammed was the eleventh Palestinian child to be killed by Israel in the occupied West Bank in 2021. As stressed by Defense for Children International – Palestine, “Israeli forces routinely unlawfully kill Palestinian children with impunity, resorting to intentional lethal force in situations where children pose no threat.”

Israeli impunity knows no limits. The following day, Israeli occupation forces did not allow the al-Alami family to bury Mohammad in dignity, but rather intensified their military presence in Beit Ummar and attacked Mohammad’s funeral procession with the firing of live ammunition. Palestinian families are unable to bury their loved ones in peace, as the barbarity of the Israeli occupation is designed to inflict unimaginable suffering on every aspect of Palestinian life, even the most sacred and solemn rituals of humankind. As a result of the attack on the funeral, another young Palestinian man, Shawkat Awad, age 20, was killed by gunshots to the head and stomach. Awad is the fourth Palestinian to be killed in the occupied West Bank last week alone.

On 24 July, Israeli occupation forces shot and killed a 17-year-old boy, Mohammad al-Tamimi, in Nabi Saleh, near Ramallah, after a convoy of Israeli military vehicles stormed the village. The boy did not pose any threat to the heavily armed Israeli soldiers who have become accustomed to indiscriminately firing at and killing Palestinians with zero consequences. According to Defense for Children International – Palestine, Israeli occupation forces shot Mohammad with live ammunition in his back, as the bullet exited through his abdomen, tearing a large hole and exposing his intestines.

On 26 July, Yousef Nawaf Mhareb, age 17, succumbed to his injuries after being shot in the neck by live Israeli military fire, causing severe damage to his spinal cord. Yousef remained unconscious in an intensive care unit for 74 days before succumbing to his wounds. Since the beginning of 2021, a total of 78 Palestinian children have been killed by Israel throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem.

Israel’s 54-year occupation is inflicting mass psychosocial trauma on Palestinian children and youth, having a severe impact on their well-being and mental health, as child rights are gravely violated without consequence and children are left without protection. Palestinian children, like all children throughout the world, have the right to live a safe, secure and peaceful childhood. The routine killing of Palestinian children by Israel should remind the international community, in particular the Security Council, that children are protected under the Fourth Geneva Convention and other provisions of international law, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child, to which Israel is a signatory. We call on the international community to act immediately to bring an end to the occupation’s State-sponsored killing of Palestinian children, for which Israel must be fully held accountable.

In a desperate attempt to conceal the cold-blooded killings of Palestinian children in recent weeks and undermine advocacy for protection of Palestinian children, Israeli occupation forces actually raided Defense for Children International – Palestine headquarters in Al-Bireh on 29 July. In a video widely shared on news

networks and social media, more than a dozen Israeli soldiers ransacked the office and confiscated computers, hard drives and files related to Palestinian child detainees represented by Defense for Children International – Palestine in Israeli military courts. This blatant crackdown is part of the Israeli campaign to silence non-governmental organizations such as Defense for Children International – Palestine from exposing the cruel reality that Palestinian children face under military occupation.

The latest crackdown by Israel is clearly designed to make the work of non-governmental organizations and journalism increasingly difficult, as both fields face constant attacks and operational restrictions in violation of international humanitarian law. For instance, since the start of the year, Israeli occupation forces destroyed, raided and ransacked 11 media offices and printing presses throughout Occupied Palestine. Despite repeated attempts to conceal the truth, such attacks only further highlight this illegal occupation's record of grave crimes and violations.

Palestinian families also remain at imminent risk of forced expulsion and mass dispossession due to unlawful and inhumane Israeli policies of forcibly removing Palestinians from their land and homes and replacing them with Jewish settlers, particularly in and around Jerusalem. In this regard, we must again draw urgent attention to the ongoing dispossession campaigns in the Sheikh Jarrah and Silwan neighbourhoods of occupied East Jerusalem.

To avoid opposing the State-backed settler groups spearheading the displacement campaign owing to unfounded claims, the Israeli supreme court delayed a “verdict” on the forced expulsion of four Palestinian families in Sheikh Jarrah and offered the families an unjust “compromise”, seeking to avoid international censure and appease the State-backed “Nahalat Shimon” and “Ateret Cohanim” settler groups and their baseless claims.

As a result of the court's inconclusiveness over the unfounded claims, the judges proposed a settlement whereby Palestinian families would be given so-called “protected tenancy” status on the condition that they would recognize “Nahalat Shimon's” ownership over the land and pay rental fees to the settler group as their landlords. This unjust scenario is detached from reality and will never be acceptable, as these families were uprooted from their homes in 1948 and face a second Nakba driven by these nefarious settler groups, who are leading a drive to force Palestinians from their homes, specifically in the city of Jerusalem.

As repeatedly stressed by Israeli non-governmental organization Ir Amim, “Although successive Israeli governments have framed these cases as standard property disputes, they are rather part and parcel of a coordinated and systematic campaign aimed at uprooting Palestinian families and supplanting them with settlers to create Israeli enclaves in the heart of Palestinian neighbourhoods.”

The Palestinian people are compelled to ask: how can a court with absolutely no jurisdiction in occupied territory be reasoned with? How can a decision by a court with close ties to State-backed settler groups be considered sensible? How can a panel of judges who live in illegal settlements be a voice of reason?

This is the devastating reality for hundreds of Palestinian families in Jerusalem, who do not have a fighting chance in Israeli courts from the beginning owing to institutionalized discrimination and systematic oppression akin only to apartheid. As Mohammed al-Kurd of Sheikh Jarrah, whose family is under threat of expulsion from their home, stated after the hearing: “The judges are colonizers, the entire regime was built on the ethnic cleansing of Palestinians and the rubble of our stolen land.”

In Silwan, Israel also continues to intensify its judiciary intimidation and attacks on Palestinian families in the Batan al-Hawa neighbourhood. According to Ir Amim,

a total of 85 Palestinian families, numbering 700 individuals, are at risk of large-scale displacement by the “Ateret Cohanim” settler group. To justify the dispossession in Silwan, Israel says it will replace hundreds of Palestinian homes with an illegal settlement called “Shimon Hatzadik”, along with a religious theme park for settlers under the name “King David Park.” It is the height of cruelty and absurdity that, while entire Palestinian families face the risk of being uprooted from their homes and their lives torn apart, Israel and settler groups coordinate schemes to expedite and solidify the colonial apartheid in occupied East Jerusalem for tourism and entertainment.

Such campaigns of forced displacement and mass dispossession, which promote and perpetuate the perceived supremacy and privilege of one group over another, a blatantly discriminatory and apartheid practice, constitute grave breaches of international law and serious violations of Security Council and General Assembly resolutions which prohibit any attempts to alter the character, demographic composition and status of the Holy City of Jerusalem. We recall again Security Council resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#), in which the Council, inter alia, condemned “all measures aimed at altering the demographic composition, character and status of the Palestinian Territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem, including, inter alia, the construction and expansion of settlements, transfer of Israeli settlers, confiscation of land, demolition of homes and displacement of Palestinian civilians, in violation of international humanitarian law and relevant resolutions”.

Regrettably, international inaction only further fuels Israeli impunity with respect to the cost of human lives, both in the present and the future. The number of children killed by Israel this year alone should have sparked outrage within the Security Council. Attempts by Israel to normalize its occupation and killing of Palestinian children, even going so far as to claim the children are responsible for their own deaths, should not be tolerated or in any way excused. The existence of an entire nation of people and the very foundations of international law and the credibility of the Council, General Assembly and United Nations as a whole depend on action and accountability. The time to act is long overdue. It is time to stop rewarding impunity. Israel cannot continue to be exempt from the same laws and standards that apply equally to every State. The Council must make it clear: no country, big or small, is above the law.

With diplomatic, political and legal mechanisms available, coupled with 88 Security Council resolutions, it is high time for international action to finally hold Israel, the occupying Power, accountable for its violations and crimes against the Palestinian people. As Special Rapporteur Michael Lynk has stated: “A deep-rooted problem at the heart of this conflict has not been the clarity of international law, but the unwillingness of the international community to enforce what it has proclaimed.”

Seventy-four years of dispossession, 54 years of occupation, 30 years of stalling the peace process and 15 years of blockade constitute a massive, ongoing and worsening historic injustice that prove the intent by Israel to pursue and maintain oppression, colonization and apartheid. As Israel openly persists in defying the international system through the dangerous reality it has created on the ground, the international community, particularly the Security Council, is at a critical moment and must act to pursue accountability in accordance with the rule of law and principles of human decency. The Council is not being called on to reinvent the wheel on the Palestine question. Instead, the Council must build on its Charter duties by upholding its legal, political and moral obligations and implementing its own resolutions to protect human lives and bring an end to this injustice.

The present letter is in follow-up to our 728 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 23 July 2021 (A/ES-10/875-S/2021/678) 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 would be grateful if you would arrange to have this 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) Riyadh **Mansour**
Minister
Permanent Observer
