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General Assembly
Tenth emergency special session
Agenda item 5**Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and
the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory****Security Council**
Seventy-sixth year**Identical letters dated 22 October 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**

In the light of recent developments, I must once more draw the international community's urgent attention to Israel's escalating illegal policies and practices in Occupied Palestine. Unfazed by the continual demands for cessation, including by the Security Council, Israel persists with its colonization of our land and systematic repression of our people with impunity, confident that it will not be held accountable under the law.

This brazen impunity has led, inter alia, to yet another attack by Israel, the occupying Power, on Palestinian civil society organizations in a clear attempt to intimidate and forcibly silence their reporting and exposure of Israel's violations against the Palestinian people. Seemingly assured that there will be no consequences for such aggression against human rights defenders, Israeli Minister Gantz today declared six leading Palestinian human rights and civil society organizations "terrorist" organizations. Those specifically targeted include Al-Haq, a prominent human rights organization; Addameer, which supports Palestinian political prisoners and detainees; the Union of Agricultural Work Committees; the Bisan Center for Research and Development; the Union of Palestinian Women's Committees; and Defense for Children International – Palestine.

This false and libellous slander is part of a systematic campaign against Palestinian civil society for daring to expose the occupation's crimes, including violations against women and children. It is another attack on the Palestinian people's fundamental right to oppose this illegal occupation and expose and resist its crimes. The international community cannot permit such a blatant assault without consequence.

We call upon the Security Council, the General Assembly and all other relevant actors to clearly condemn and reject such actions by the occupying Power and to defend these organizations' right to carry out their civil society roles and work without persecution and to defend the Palestinian people's right to advocate for their freedom



and human rights and stand against such constant defamation and dehumanization. Moreover, we stress that Israel, the occupying Power, is fully responsible for the safety of the staff of these organizations after such slanderous incitement against them.

This is the reality of the volatile situation in Occupied Palestine, where any and all peaceful, legitimate means are criminalized by Israel while it bestows upon itself free reign to carry on with its litany of crimes against our people under one false pretext after another. In this regard, as repeatedly cautioned, and contrary to the perception of “calm” being peddled by Israel, its destructive colonial settlement policies are intensifying by the day, with Jerusalem the prime target. Palestinians in the City face a barrage of State-sponsored attacks and unlawful measures blatantly aimed at displacing them from their homes and lands in an incremental yet constant process of dispossession and displacement.

From illegal settlement construction to home demolitions, forced expulsions and land appropriation, the situation in Jerusalem is critical, as Israel feverishly schemes to cut the city off from the rest of the occupied West Bank. As stressed in the Security Council meeting, on 19 October 2021, by Dr. Hanan Ashrawi, “Jerusalem is being targeted in a deliberate campaign of annexation and distortion. Israel now brazenly declares its intent to complete the settlement siege of Jerusalem and destruction of the territorial contiguity of the West Bank, with its outrageous plans for ‘E-1’, Qalandiya airport, ‘Pisgat Ze’ev’ and ‘Giv’at Hamatos’”.

Only 48 hours after that Security Council meeting, the Israeli government announced the so-called “pre-approval” of the illegal construction of more than 3,000 settlement units. As this announcement again blatantly contradicts every principle and norm reaffirmed by the Council, the ball is once again in the Council’s court, and its legal tools and mechanisms to ensure that accountability must be invoked. Continued inaction will only reward Israel’s colonial schemes and embolden its impunity, as proven over and over again.

For decades, the United Nations has called for a halt to Israel’s colonial settlement activities. More than 800 General Assembly resolutions and 80 Security Council resolutions have been adopted, yet no tangible measures have ever been taken to end, reverse or even deter Israel’s illegal actions, allowing it to entrench its occupation, sabotage the two-State solution and consolidate an apartheid regime over the Palestinian people. While the Security Council continues to deliberate, but fails to act or impose consequences, Israel is actively codifying discriminatory laws and pursuing demographic engineering, planting illegal colonies, transferring populations and fragmenting the Palestinian land, in grave breach of international law.

The international community must demand once again that Israel immediately cease all of its illegal settlement activities in all manifestations in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. Israel must abide by its legal obligations, including under the Fourth Geneva Convention, as reaffirmed in Security Council resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#), or suffer the consequences of its rogue behaviour.

As emphasized by Mr. Daniel Levy in his briefing to the Security Council, also on 19 October, “there is an accountability deficit when it comes to Israel’s actions. If the unlawful and peace-negating policies of Israel continue to be met with impunity, then there should be no expectation of positive change.” As we approach the fifth anniversary of the adoption of resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#), the response to ongoing Israeli crimes and violations is clear: implementation. The Council must uphold the Charter of the United Nations and follow through on its own legislation. This is the only way to effect change vis-à-vis the situation in Occupied Palestine and to salvage the prospects for, and advance towards, a just solution.

This must include action to uphold the law and international consensus on occupied East Jerusalem. We thus call again upon the international community to take the necessary measures to uphold international law as the Holy City faces a deteriorating and dangerous situation. There, accompanied by Israeli occupying forces, extremist and State-sponsored settler groups continue their coordinated incursions into the Aqsa Mosque, provoking worshippers and violating the sanctity and historic and legal status quo at the holy site. These recurrent provocations and assaults are clearly intended to assert Israeli control and sovereignty over Haram al-Sharif, as part and parcel of its attempts to entrench the occupation and its erasure of Jerusalem's Palestinian, Arab, Muslim and Christian dimensions and identity.

We warn once again that such behaviour, alongside constant attempts to alter the demography, character and legal status of Jerusalem, including through the seizure and demolition of Palestinian homes, properties and infrastructure, is inflicting serious harm on the Palestinian inhabitants of Jerusalem and recklessly inflaming religious tensions and must be stopped. Ensuring accountability is therefore urgent.

Measures of accountability are also essential as a means of affording to the Palestinian people the international protection they have long been denied in spite of the constant perpetration of violence and human rights violations by Israel, the occupying Power, causing harm to children, women and men in all areas across Occupied Palestine. As recently reported by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, between 8 and 18 October 2021 alone, 41 children were arrested in East Jerusalem and 1 killed in Bethlehem, in grave breach of Israel's obligations under international law, including the Fourth Geneva Convention and the obligation to protect children in line with the human rights covenants, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

In this regard, Israeli settler attacks also continue to harm and terrorize our people. Although Palestine's fall olive harvest has begun, continuing a sacred tradition passed down for generations, it has been marred yet again by Israeli violence and incitement. While Israeli occupying forces prevent harvesters from accessing their lands, settler mobs are perpetrating systematic and coordinated harassment and attacks on Palestinian families, causing injuries to civilians, obstructing livelihoods through the destruction of harvest tools and property, setting fire to olive trees, stealing harvest produce and ruining this annual celebration of Palestinian culture and history. In just one example, on 20 October, settler mobs attacked olive groves in Mazra'ah al-Qibliyah, near Ramallah, and cut down more than 200 olive trees, most of which were between 40 and 50 years old, adding to the destruction and uprooting of more than 1,500 trees this year, as documented even by Israeli non-governmental organizations.

We recognize the support extended by many members of the international community present in Occupied Palestine who have accompanied Palestinian harvesters as a sign of solidarity and symbolic protection from such attacks. Here, we echo the call of the British Consul General, Diane Corner: "Settlers who are responsible for crimes against Palestinians must be held to account and incidents should be thoroughly investigated by the Israeli authorities, who should take all necessary measures to protect Palestinians against such violence." Moreover, as the olive harvest season is crucial to the livelihoods of hundreds of thousands of Palestinian families, we underscore the call recently made by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs that: "As the occupying Power, Israel must ensure that Palestinians are able to participate in, and fully benefit from, this activity. This includes ensuring that farmers can access their olive groves throughout the year, and that their trees and agricultural property are protected from damage and theft."

As the longest-standing item on the United Nations peace and security agenda, the question of Palestine concerns the entire international community. Those believing that this question can be marginalized, set aside and diminished are mistaken. International law and the Charter require action to resolve and bring an end to this injustice. As cautioned by Dr. Ashrawi before the Security Council: “Volatile situations of injustice and oppression do not shrink; they expand and explode, with disastrous consequences.”

The permanent responsibility of the United Nations towards the question of Palestine must be upheld, and it remains the primary responsibility of the Security Council to maintain international peace and security. Combating impunity and ensuring accountability are imperative in this regard. While some believe that the Council is spending “too much time” on this issue, the reality is that it has not done enough.

The Security Council must do more, at all levels, to assert its authority on this issue and ensure the implementation of its resolutions. The lives and future of millions of people, oppressed and deprived of their fundamental rights by an illegal occupation and apartheid regime, are dependent on responsible, moral action. Urging them yet again to continue “waiting”, to remain “patient”, to accept this unjust fate while generation after generation is persecuted, generation after generation is lost, is as inhumane as it is irresponsible.

It is time to end the repetitive cycle of inaction and lack of accountability that has prolonged the suffering, denying peace to this land, where the living are being tormented and even the deceased cannot rest in peace, as ancient Palestinian cemeteries in Jerusalem are being destroyed and erased by Israel, the occupying Power. In the face of such grave violations and flagrant impunity, we once again call upon the international community to act, upholding collective and individual responsibilities under international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions without delay to end this historic injustice and bring forth a new era of peace.

This letter is in follow-up to our 733 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 7 October 2021 (A/ES-10/880–S/2021/856), 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 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