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

Security Council
Seventy-seventh year

Identical letters dated 21 January 2022 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 write again, a week since my letter dated 14 January ([A/ES-10/888-S/2022/30](#)) and only two days since the most recent Security Council meeting on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestine question, owing to the escalating repression of and attacks against Palestinian families in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, by Israel, the occupying Power.

As roundly condemned in the Council, Palestinians in occupied East Jerusalem are facing intensified discrimination and oppression, so institutionalized and systemic as to be akin only to apartheid, as Israel persists with a mass dispossession campaign aimed at consolidating its control of the City via settlement expansion, forced displacement and demographic engineering, all in grave breach of international law.

As repeatedly cautioned, and contrary to the perception of “calm” being peddled by Israel, its destructive and illegal policies are expanding by the day, with Jerusalem the prime target of its colonial schemes. Palestinians in the city face a barrage of State-sponsored attacks and illegal measures blatantly aimed at displacing them from their homes and lands in an incremental yet constant process of dispossession and displacement, an ongoing Nakba being endured before the eyes of the international community.

In the early morning of 19 January, just hours before the Security Council was to convene a high-level meeting to yet again address this injustice, another Palestinian home was demolished and another Palestinian family was cruelly and forcibly displaced by the Israeli occupation forces in a crime openly monitored and documented by the international community. Despite such international awareness and presence, the home was demolished in plain sight, reflecting the extent of Israel’s impunity and contempt for international law and human rights.

The international community witnessed the desperation of Mahmoud Salhiyeh, who climbed to the roof of his home to stave off the demolition and threatened to



burn his own home rather than have it demolished by Israel. Given the urgency of the matter, hundreds of diplomats, United Nations officials, representatives of non-governmental organizations, journalists and activists travelled to the area, where they witnessed the large-scale deployment of Israeli occupying forces in and around Sheikh Jarrah, placing the neighbourhood under siege in preparation for the perpetration of a deliberate crime.

What happened next was predictable and consistent with Israel's reigning impunity. At 3 a.m., large numbers of militarized forces broke into the home while the Salhiyeh family slept, assaulted them and arrested several members of the family. Moments later, Israeli bulldozers entered the neighbourhood and destroyed the family's home and refuge, forcing Mahmoud, his wife Lital, and their children and their grandmother into the freezing cold, dispossessed and displaced by this criminal, colonial occupation.

Like so many other Palestinian families, the Salhiyehs have now been forcibly displaced for the second time as Israel seeks to completely erase Palestinian history and presence in and around Jerusalem through the dismembering and ethnic cleansing of Palestinian cities, towns and villages from 1948 to the present day.

The Salhiyeh family is originally from Ein Karem, a Palestinian village that was ethnically cleansed during the Nakba. Living through a second Nakba, the family is without a home in their own homeland, yearning to return to their ancestral home that still stands today in Ein Karem and is occupied by Israelis but denied their right to return by Israel and its inhuman, racist and discriminatory laws and policies against the Palestinian people.

Let us not kid ourselves. Israel's destruction of the Salhiyeh home is not a coincidence. Even with the world's eyes on Sheikh Jarrah, the timing and flagrancy of the home's demolition were meant as a loud and clear message from Israel to both the Palestinian people and the international community that it does not care one iota about international law and will persist with its violations and mockery as it has for decades, fearing no consequences. But our collective message must be louder and clearer: accountability.

We recall once again that Israel is the occupying Power and has no sovereignty rights whatsoever in occupied East Jerusalem, including the Old City and its holy sites, regardless of its illegal measures to alter the City's demography, character and status or any unilateral declarations, so-called "Basic Law" or otherwise. We call upon the international community, particularly the Security Council, to act now to address the ongoing forced displacement campaign in Sheikh Jarrah, Silwan, Tur, Isawiyyeh and the rest of Occupied Palestine to avert the further destabilization of this volatile situation with grave ramifications that are preventable if accountability is actualized in line with the Security Council's duties and its own resolutions.

Israel is no longer testing the patience of the international community; its impunity has reached an all-time high, with its colonial apartheid occupation prevailing over the will of the international community as decades of inaction, unaccountability and unimplemented resolutions embolden ever more crimes. It is therefore incumbent upon the international community, particularly the Security Council, to go beyond statements and condemnations to take long-overdue action on accountability to protect human lives, end direct and indirect complicity in these crimes and bring an end to this historic injustice.

Despite Israel's relentless attempts to displace and expel Palestinian families from Jerusalem, their steadfastness reflects the Palestinian people's *sumoud* in their homeland. Jerusalem's centuries-old agricultural terraces – which were built by Palestinians expelled from their land and were revealed after fires spread through the

City last summer – are just one of the many reflections of our people’s connection to their land, symbols of an oppressed land awaiting the return of its people, who remain resilient and persevere despite incredible odds, knowing that one day they will know justice, freedom and peace.

The present letter is in follow-up to our 741 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 14 January 2022 (A/ES-10/888-S/2022/30), 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
