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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 11 May 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

Every single day, Israel, the occupying Power, proves that it has absolutely no regard for the life of any Palestinian man, woman or child subjugated to its control. And every single day that the world allows such impunity to reign without consequence, this colonial, apartheid, occupying State is emboldened to carry on with crimes and cruelty without hesitation or fear of the cost.

Today, yet another crime was perpetrated against the Palestinian people by this criminal occupation. Israeli occupying forces murdered in cold blood a veteran Palestinian journalist, Shireen Abu Akleh, age 51, in Jenin in occupied Palestine.

Shireen was hit in the head by live fire as she and her team from Al Jazeera News arrived at the Jenin refugee camp to report on an Israeli occupying forces raid of the camp. She was wearing her PRESS jacket and helmet, and yet was shot and killed by a bullet that entered her head through her ear – which the helmet was not covering – a precise shot by Israeli snipers trained, permitted and ordered to kill and maim Palestinians. A second journalist, Ali Al-Sumodi, was also hit, sustaining a gunshot wound in his back. The journalists accompanying Shireen attest to their being approached and shot at by Israeli occupying forces. We call for a full, independent, international investigation of this appalling crime.

Shireen was killed as she stood side by side with her colleagues, who have been traumatized by the loss of their beloved peer, another victim of Israel's depravity, of soldiers incited to shoot to kill by an Israeli government and military that have for decades tried to brand the Palestinian people as "terrorists" as part of a blatant campaign to justify Israel's aggressions against our people and to erase their very existence in their homeland.

It is a fact that this libelling has extended to every Palestinian man, woman and child and has included human rights defenders and journalists, who have been branded and targeted in an attempt to silence their voices and advocacy for our people. We see this in the criminalization of Palestinian civil society organizations as



“terrorist organizations” and, today, in the response, among others, of Israeli occupying forces spokesperson Ran Kochav, who flippantly stated in regard to Shireen’s killing: “They’re armed with cameras, if you permit me to say so”, effectively also criminalizing journalists.

We reject such unfounded, callous characterizations and accusations, and we recognize and pay tribute to Shireen’s life and work. She was a courageous voice for her people and a national symbol of truth and perseverance in the face of a cruel occupation and injustice that the Palestinian people have endured for far too long. Today, her family, friends, colleagues and Palestine mourn her tragic loss and the silencing of her brave voice. In her own words: “I chose journalism to be close to people, and I knew that it wouldn’t be easy to change the situation. But at least I managed to bring Palestinians’ voices to the world.”

Shireen Abu Akleh was born in 1971 in Jerusalem to a Palestinian Christian family with roots in Bethlehem. She studied at the Rosary Sisters’ High School in the Beit Hanina neighbourhood in East Jerusalem. She attended university in Jordan, studying architecture, but her stated love for her land and people led to her decision to pursue a degree in journalism to tell their story. Following earlier work in her career, she joined Al Jazeera in 1997 as its correspondent in Palestine until her untimely death today, her life and dreams abruptly ending as she was assassinated in the line of duty.

Israel’s assassination of Shireen is part of its long-standing, well-documented war of harassment, intimidation and violence against Palestinian journalists and the severe restrictions on freedom of expression and movement and access of the press, in grave breach of international law and norms regarding press freedoms and protections. She is also yet another victim of the international community’s inaction in the face of serial Israeli war crimes and terrorism against the Palestinian people.

Just two weeks ago, the International Federation of Journalists, the Palestinian Journalists Syndicate and the International Centre of Justice for Palestinians made a formal submission to the International Criminal Court regarding Israel’s systematic targeting of journalists in Palestine, as well as the targeting and destruction of media offices, especially in the Gaza Strip, as witnessed in the May 2021 Israeli military aggression. According to the International Federation of Journalists, at least 46 journalists have been killed by Israeli occupying forces since 2000. And, yet, there has been no accountability.

The international community must hold Israel, the occupying Power, accountable for the crimes it has perpetrated today and for all other war crimes it is perpetrating against the Palestinian people. We implore the international community, at the forefront of which is the Security Council, to act forthwith to put an end to this vicious cycle of impunity and inhumanity and to ensure justice for the Palestinian people.

In this regard, I also regret to inform you that today, another young Palestinian life was terminated by the occupying Power. Israeli occupying forces shot and killed 18-year-old Thaer Al-Yazouri. Thaer was shot by a bullet to the chest by Israeli occupying forces who had raided Al-Bireh town, near Ramallah. His devastated family is mourning the loss of their beloved son and joins the thousands upon thousands of Palestinian families traumatized by this ruthless, illegal, colonial, apartheid occupation and calling for justice.

We thus once again call upon the Security Council to uphold its obligations and ensure international protection for the Palestinian people, in accordance with international humanitarian and human rights laws and its own resolutions, and reiterate our calls to the international community to urgently pursue accountability

for all these crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, and its military forces and settler militias against our people.

The present letter is in follow-up to our 753 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 May 2022 ([A/ES-10/900-S/2022/377](#)), 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
