



General Assembly

Distr.: General
12 September 2024

Original: English

Seventy-ninth session

Item 49 of the provisional agenda*

Israeli practices and settlement activities affecting the rights of the Palestinian people and other Arabs of the occupied territories

Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the Occupied Syrian Golan

Report of the Secretary-General**

Summary

The present report, prepared pursuant to General Assembly resolution [78/78](#), provides an update on Israeli settlement activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the occupied Syrian Golan. It covers the period: 1 June 2023–31 May 2024.

* [A/79/150](#).

** The present document was submitted for processing after the deadline for reasons beyond the control of the submitting office.



I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution [78/78](#) and provides an update on the implementation of the resolution from 1 June 2023 to 31 May 2024. It is based on direct monitoring and information-gathering conducted by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, and on information provided by Government sources, United Nations entities and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The report should be read in conjunction with related reports of the Secretary-General and of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights submitted to the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council.¹

2. The report contains an update on settlement advancement and its impact on the human rights of the Palestinian people. Section III highlights settler violence against pastoral communities, which, combined with Israeli policies, has forced the displacement of those communities in unprecedented numbers, compared with previous reporting periods. It also contains an update on Israeli settlements in the occupied Syrian Golan.

II. Legal background

3. International human rights law and international humanitarian law apply concurrently in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, namely, Gaza and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan. This includes the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War (Fourth Geneva Convention), which is binding upon Israel as the occupying Power. A detailed analysis of the applicable legal framework can be found in previous reports of the Secretary-General.²

III. Update on settlement activities

A. Legal and policy initiatives of the Government of Israel

4. The advancement of settlements in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the transfer by Israel of its own civilian population to the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, has been ongoing for decades.³ Policies of the current Government of Israel are aligned to an unprecedented extent with the goals of the Israeli settler movement to expand long-term control over the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and to steadily integrate the occupied West Bank into the State of Israel.⁴ The expansion of settlements in the West Bank along with settler violence, in many cases with the acquiescence and support or participation of Israeli security forces, have led to numerous human rights violations.

5. The year 2023 was already on track to having the highest recorded number of Palestinian fatalities, including child fatalities, since the United Nations began systematically recording casualties in 2005. On 7 October 2023, Hamas and other Palestinian armed groups launched large-scale attacks in Israel. The attacks included the commitment of numerous acts of terror in southern Israel, in the Gaza periphery, while thousands of rockets were launched towards population centres in Israel. Since

¹ See [A/HRC/55/72](#); and [A/HRC/55/28](#).

² See [A/HRC/34/38](#); and [A/HRC/34/39](#).

³ [A/HRC/52/76](#), para. 2; and [A/78/554](#), para. 4.

⁴ [A/HRC/55/72](#), para. 6.

7 October 2023, Israeli sources have reported that more than 1,500 Israelis and foreign nationals were killed in that context, including at least 338 women and 38 children, and 690 members of the security forces. In addition, some 250 people, including both Israelis and foreign nationals, including approximately 65 women and 34 children, were abducted and taken into Gaza, with some subsequently released in November during a seven-day humanitarian pause. The subsequent Israeli military response resulted in a catastrophic situation for the 2.1 million inhabitants of Gaza, with more than 40,700 Palestinians killed by the date of reporting, according to the Ministry of Health in Gaza, the majority of whom were women or children, in major part as a result of the means and methods of warfare of Israel.

6. Since the attacks of 7 October 2023, there has been a further marked expansion of settlement activity in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem. Violence by the Israeli security forces and settlers against Palestinians increased dramatically and continued during the reporting period, further entrenching the discriminatory and oppressive system of Israeli control over Palestinians.⁵

7. The transfer of authority to approve the demolition of illegal structures in settlements to the Finance Minister of Israel, who serves as an additional Minister in the Ministry of Defense, under the new Civil Administration,⁶ which began in May 2023, has reportedly led to a sharp decrease in law enforcement operations against settlers.⁷ On 2 September 2023, the Government of Israel confirmed that the additional Minister had cancelled the establishment of a “special enforcement unit” intended to address violations of planning and construction laws by settlers,⁸ which raised concerns that law enforcement operations against unauthorized Israeli construction in settlements would be further scaled down.

8. On 29 May, the Head of the Israel Defense Forces Central Command and the Head of the Civil Administration (both military officers) issued two orders appointing a new civilian deputy for civilian affairs and delegating to him most of the authority of the military Head of the Civil Administration over the administration of the West Bank. The new deputy reports on substantive matters to civilian officials within the Ministry of Defense and is only operationally subordinate to the military chain of command.⁹ Those orders effectively redistributed powers from military to civilian officials, as agreed in the coalition agreements and the agreement between the Minister for Defense and the additional Minister.¹⁰ Such structural changes¹¹ ensure that, while the military chain of command retains responsibilities for security-related issues, the management of most areas of settlement advancement, land development,

⁵ Ibid., para. 8.

⁶ A/78/554, para. 6.

⁷ Hagar Shezaf, “Since Smotrich appointment, Israel nearly stopped enforcing law on illegal settlement construction”, *Haaretz*, 2 July 2023.

⁸ State response dated 9 September 2023 in High Court of Justice of Israel, *Peace Now v. the Military Commander of the West Bank*, Case No. HCJ 2368/18, Ruling of 9 May 2024. See פסק-דין 2368/18 בתיק בג”ץ (court.gov.il).

⁹ Order No. 2195 amended Israeli Military Order No. 947 (1981) to allow the delegation of authority from the head of Civil Administration to a deputy head for civilian affairs, answerable to the Civil Administration under the additional Minister in the Ministry of Defense, and to transfer the authority of the legal counsel in the Military Advocate General’s Office to civilian lawyers within the Ministry of Defense. In a subsequent order the Head of the Civil Administration appointed the deputy head of civil administration for civilian affairs and delegated all authorities listed in the previous order to him, see צו-בדבר-הקמת-מינהל-אזרחי-תיקון-מס-33-יהודה-והשומרון-מס-2195-תשפד-2024 כתב-מינוי-והאצלת-סמכויות-לסגן-ראש-המינהל-האזרחי-לעניינים-אזרחיים (www.idf.il); and צו-בדבר-הקמת-מינהל-אזרחי-תיקון-מס-33-יהודה-והשומרון-מס-2195-תשפד-2024 כתב-מינוי-והאצלת-סמכויות-לסגן-ראש-המינהל-האזרחי-לעניינים-אזרחיים (www.idf.il).

¹⁰ A/78/554, para. 6; and A/HRC/55/72, para. 7.

¹¹ A/78/554, para. 6.

planning and day-to-day life in Area C, as well as the legal advice that management relies upon, are vested with the additional Minister and his appointees in the Ministry.

9. The above delegation of administrative powers relating to land administration and settlements to Israeli civilian officials answerable to the additional Minister, elected and accountable to the population of Israel, appears to give further effect to the Government of Israel's "application of sovereignty" over the West Bank¹² and to consolidate the incorporation of the West Bank into the territory of Israel. According to the International Court of Justice, this amounts to annexation in violation of international law, including the Charter of the United Nations.¹³ These changes reflect the facts on the ground, namely, that Israel has been administering the West Bank as its own territory and in a manner that discriminates against the protected population.¹⁴

10. On 18 June, the Government of Israel simplified the approval process for Israeli settlement construction in the West Bank and expanded the authority of the additional Minister to approve one of the construction stages.¹⁵ Those changes have rendered the approval processes for construction by Israeli communities essentially identical for developments within Israel and inside settlements within the West Bank, further integrating the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, into Israeli territory.

11. Further steps were taken to extend the jurisdiction of Israeli local government entities to Israeli settlements and to ensure that Israeli settlers receive the same services as Israelis within Israel, further blurring the distinction between the exercise of sovereignty on Israeli territory and the administration of settlements in the West Bank.¹⁶ On 1 April, the Knesset amended the Municipalities Ordinance, enabling the Minister of the Interior to distribute revenues between municipalities proximate to one another, including municipalities in West Bank settlements.¹⁷ In March, the army's Central Commander ordered the provision of cellular coverage on all roads serving settlements in the West Bank.¹⁸ On 22 May, the Knesset passed, in a preliminary reading, a private bill to bring settlements from the South Hebron Hills into the jurisdiction of the Negev Hills local authority, to benefit from the budget of the Negev Development Authority.¹⁹

12. According to the NGO Peace Now, Israeli authorities continued to increase budgets to settlements; funds for settlements were set to amount to more than 737 million shekels (some \$200 million) in 2024, more than the 275 million shekels (\$74 million) budgeted in May 2023, with 20 per cent of the Transportation Ministry road construction budget to be directed to settlements.²⁰ In addition to having obtained the imposition of financial sanctions on mobile phone companies if they violate their coverage obligations in the West Bank "similar to the rest of the country", the Communications Ministry announced a plan to establish a cellular infrastructure in the West Bank during 2024, with a dedicated budget of 50 million shekels.²¹

¹² Ibid., para. 5.

¹³ *Legal Consequences Arising from the Policies and Practices of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, Advisory Opinion of 19 July 2024*, I.C.J. Reports, para. 170.

¹⁴ Ibid., paras. 120, 122, 126, 223 and 240; and A/78/554, para. 7.

¹⁵ See www.gov.il/BlobFolder/reports/seder-gov150623/he/Seder_Gov_n266-180623.pdf.

¹⁶ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) monitoring.

¹⁷ See <https://main.knesset.gov.il/activity/legislation/laws/pages/LawBill.aspx?t=lawsuggestionssearch&lawitemid=2203535>.

¹⁸ See www.gov.il/he/pages/03032024_2.

¹⁹ See <https://main.knesset.gov.il/activity/legislation/laws/pages/lawbill.aspx?t=lawsuggestionssearch&lawitemid=2210285>; and www.israelhayom.co.il/news/politics/article/15771301.

²⁰ OHCHR monitoring.

²¹ See www.gov.il/he/pages/03032024; and Tali Heruti-Sover, "Israel's Government is eliminating the green line – with money", *Haaretz*, 9 April 2024.

13. The situation in the West Bank was accompanied by calls by some Israeli Ministers and Members of the Knesset for the “voluntary migration” of Palestinians from Gaza and the re-establishment of settlements there.²² On 22 May, the Minister for Defense also announced the cancellation of the order prohibiting Israelis from entering areas in the northern West Bank. This follows the partial repeal of the 2005 disengagement law, under which Israel officially withdrew from the northern West Bank and Gaza, and raises concerns over the potential establishment of future settlements there.²³

14. During the first half of 2024, several Member States announced targeted restrictive measures on certain individual settlers accused of violence.²⁴ According to OHCHR monitoring, those measures do not appear to target those most responsible for settler violence.

B. Settlement expansion

Advancement, including planning, tenders and construction

15. Further steps were recorded towards the establishment and expansion of illegal settlements, including planning, tenders and construction, as well as the demolition of Palestinian structures, resulting in high numbers of displaced Palestinians. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights noted that Israeli settlements in the West Bank had already expanded by a record number by 30 April 2024, and that infrastructure developments, including roads that service-only settlements, jeopardized any practical possibility of a contiguous Palestinian State.²⁵

16. There has been a record surge in settlement activities since 7 October,²⁶ including the construction of outposts, roads, fences and roadblocks initiated by settlers with the endorsement or acquiescence of authorities.²⁷ Settlers increasingly seized control of Area C in the West Bank, marginalizing the Palestinian population. This was reportedly supported, planned and promoted by the Israeli authorities, including through funding farming outposts.²⁸

17. According to Peace Now, on 3 March, the Israeli Ministry of Housing commenced construction on a new settlement, known as “Amirim Neighborhood” or “Ariel West” in central West Bank. Although not bordering any other settlement, Israeli authorities stated it was part of the existing Ariel settlement. The construction effectively disconnects the Palestinian villages north of Salfit, such as Kifl Haris and Haris, from the rest of Salfit district.²⁹

²² OHCHR monitoring. See for example: Gila Gamliel, “Victory is an opportunity for Israel in the midst of crisis – opinion”, *The Jerusalem Post*, 19 November 2023 (opinion by Israel’s Intelligence Minister); <https://x.com/KnessetT/status/1755618456165376295> (Knesset TV interview of Israel’s National Security Minister); and Danny Danon and Ram Ben-Barak, “The West should welcome Gaza refugees”, *Wall Street Journal*, 13 November 2023 (tribune by two Members of the Knesset).

²³ [A/78/554](#), para. 20; and OHCHR monitoring.

²⁴ Council of the European Union, “Extremist settlers in the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem: Council sanctions four individuals and two entities over serious human rights abuses against Palestinians”, 19 April 2024; and White House, “Executive order on imposing certain sanctions on persons undermining peace, security, and stability in the West Bank”, 1 February 2024.

²⁵ [A/HRC/55/72](#), paras. 10 and 40.

²⁶ OHCHR monitoring.

²⁷ [A/78/554](#), para. 15.

²⁸ OHCHR monitoring.

²⁹ Peace Now, “Construction of a new settlement has begun in the heart of the West Bank”, 10 March 2024.

18. As the International Court of Justice reaffirmed in its 19 July advisory opinion, “the Israeli settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem ... have been established and are being maintained in violation of international law”.³⁰ The Court further stated that “Israel’s policies and practices, including the maintenance and expansion of settlements, the construction of associated infrastructure, including the wall, ... amount to annexation” and that “to seek to acquire sovereignty over an occupied territory ... is contrary to the prohibition of the use of force in international relations and its corollary principle of the non-acquisition of territory by force”.³¹

Plans and tenders

19. The advancement of plans for settlement construction increased further, following the increase in the previous reporting period. Plans for the construction of some 19,500 housing units were advanced or approved, including 11,300 in Area C and 8,200 in East Jerusalem. Overall, there was a 19 per cent increase in housing units advanced in East Jerusalem and Area C. This saw an 86 per cent increase in East Jerusalem and an 8 per cent increase in West Bank, respectively.³² Furthermore, Israel published tenders inviting bids from construction firms for approximately 1,600 housing units, including approximately 1,200 for East Jerusalem. This compares with tenders for approximately 1,350 new settlement housing units (1,260 in Area C, 90 in East Jerusalem) in the previous reporting period.

20. Meanwhile, there were 490 construction starts of housing units in Area C between 1 July 2023 and 31 March 2024, compared with approximately 1,200 between 1 July 2022 and 31 March 2023.³³

21. In 2023, the highest ever number of construction plans was promoted in West Bank settlements, including in East Jerusalem, including 24,700 housing units being advanced, approved or tendered – more than double the 2022 number.³⁴ For example, on 2 June, the Higher Planning Committee deposited a plan for the “Sha’ar Shomron” industrial zone, which design would create a “settlement continuum” in the area. The industrial zone would be the largest in the West Bank, nearly 2,700 dunams, with anticipated severe environmental impacts.³⁵

22. On 13 December, Israeli authorities approved the Lower Aqueduct plan, on both sides of the Green Line, adjacent to Kibbutz Ramat Rachel and the Palestinian neighbourhoods of Beit Safafa and Sur Baher. This was the first new major settlement to be approved in East Jerusalem since 2012. Its construction further threatens the viability of a contiguous Palestinian State as it would create a continuum between Givat Hamatos and Har Homa settlements, cut off East Jerusalem from Bethlehem and isolate Beit Safafa from the rest of East Jerusalem, further fragmenting the Palestinian population in East Jerusalem.³⁶ On 18 April, Israeli authorities published a tender for the construction of 1,047 houses in the settlement.

Declaration of “State land”

23. Declaration of “State land” is one of the methods used by Israel, the occupying Power, to appropriate Palestinian land, including lands that would have been classified as private property, in the West Bank and use it for settlement

³⁰ *Legal Consequences Arising from the Policies and Practices of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, Advisory Opinion of 19 July 2024*, para. 155.

³¹ *Ibid.*, paras. 173 and 179.

³² Information from the Office of the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ [S/2023/988](#), para. 66.

³⁵ OHCHR monitoring.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

development.³⁷ The International Court of Justice recently stated that “these land policies are not in conformity with Articles 46, 52 and 55 of the Hague Regulations”.³⁸

24. Israeli authorities declared around 10,800 dunams of land in the West Bank “State land” since the start of 2024, marking a new peak. On 29 February, 2,640.3 dunams were declared “State land” in the Palestinian villages of Abu Dis and el-Azariya, between Ma’ale Adumim and Keidar settlements and in the southern part of the so-called “E1” settlement project. This development places three Palestinian communities, (Abu Nuwar, Wadi Abu Al-Suwan, Abu Hindi) and more than 1,000 people at risk of forcible transfer. On 20 March, an extensive area of 8,000 dunams in the Jordan Valley was declared “State land”,³⁹ the largest such declaration since the Oslo Accords. On 1 April, the Civil Administration declared as “State land” 170 dunams (42 acres) of land surrounding an archaeological site east of Bethlehem and near the Etzion settlement bloc.⁴⁰

Outposts

25. According to Peace Now, during the reporting period, Israeli settlers established 30 new outposts, 22 of them after 7 October. The new outposts follow contiguous lines, fragmenting the land, further diminishing the viability of a Palestinian State. Particularly after 7 October, settlers established new roads, fences and obstacles that reshaped the geography of Area C and the West Bank.⁴¹ Settlers constructed 20 new roads between October and January alone, with many more constructed subsequently. Settlers also erected fences and other obstacles to block Palestinian access to large amounts of land, roads and services.

26. While outposts are illegal even under Israeli law, there is a consistent pattern of Israeli authorities’ involvement, assistance and financing of the construction of outposts,⁴² as well as their operation,⁴³ and their retroactive “regularization”. For example, on 2 August, the High Court of Justice of Israel dismissed a petition seeking the eviction of the illegal Homesh outpost in northern West Bank and restoring Palestinian landowners’ access to their adjacent land. Although the court based its decision on the grounds that the outpost had been relocated from privately owned Palestinian land,⁴⁴ access to the relocated outpost still passes through it, thus preventing Palestinians from gaining access to their land.

27. OHCHR monitored attacks by settlers from outposts on Palestinian communities, which contributed to their displacement. Settlers also appropriated Palestinian land, increasing the risks of permanent displacement and of those communities’ forcible transfer. For example, in the Barriyet Tuqu area, settlers

³⁷ A/HRC/52/76, para. 8.

³⁸ *Legal Consequences Arising from the Policies and Practices of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, Advisory Opinion of 19 July 2024*, paras. 120 and 122.

³⁹ Office of the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, “Security Council briefing on the situation in the Middle East, report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of UN SCR 2334 (as delivered by Special Coordinator Wennesland)”, 26 March 2024.

⁴⁰ OHCHR monitoring.

⁴¹ OHCHR, “The human rights situation in the occupied West Bank including East Jerusalem: 7 October–20 November 2023”, 27 December 2023, para. 34.

⁴² OHCHR monitoring.

⁴³ Ibid. See for example, Peace Now, “The Ministry of Agriculture funds illegal farm outposts”, May 2024.

⁴⁴ High Court of Justice of Israel, *Iman Fawzi Abd a-Rahman Saif and Others v. Commander of IDF Forces in the West Bank and Others*, Case No. HCJ 2821/19, available at <https://supremedecisions.court.gov.il/Home/Download?path=HebrewVerdicts/19/210/028/r75&fileName=19028210.R75&type=4>.

established outposts in areas from which Palestinians had been displaced, contributing to the apparently intended permanency of the displacement.

C. Consolidation of settlements

Retroactive regularization of outposts

28. In the reporting period, Israeli authorities “legalized” one outpost. On 25 February, the Israel Defense Forces Central Command commander signed an order redefining the jurisdiction of “Mishmar Yehuda” outpost near Al-Ubediya, east of Bethlehem,⁴⁵ effectively turning it into a large urban settlement with over 417 dunams of land.⁴⁶ On 27 March, the Civil Administration announced plans to incorporate the Ahiya outpost into the Shilo settlement,⁴⁷ which would effectively “legalize” the outpost, set up in 1997, under Israeli law.

29. On 20 April, Israeli media reported that the Finance Minister and additional Minister in the Ministry of Defense had instructed various government ministries to allocate budgets and provide services to 68 outposts.⁴⁸ This followed a Cabinet decision⁴⁹ from February 2023 and coalition agreements to treat outposts as if they were legal for the purposes of budgets and services and to refrain from enforcing demolition orders, bypassing legalization procedures.⁵⁰

IV. Impact of settlements on human rights

30. Israeli military occupation of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, the accompanying violent attacks and human rights violations perpetrated by Israeli settlers and Israeli security forces, and the long-standing discriminatory system under which Israel exercises control over Palestinians, continued to subvert the rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to self-determination.⁵¹

31. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights observed that Israel subjected the Palestinian people to “long-standing systematic discrimination, oppression and violence”.⁵² The International Court of Justice recently concluded that a number of Israeli policies and practices in the Occupied Palestinian Territory were inconsistent with the obligations of Israel under international human rights treaties, including the prohibition of racial segregation and apartheid under article 3 of the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination.⁵³

⁴⁵ Information from the Office of the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process.

⁴⁶ OHCHR monitoring.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Hagar Shezaf and Jonathan Lis, “Israel’s Finance Minister orders ministries to provide services, infrastructure to illegal West Bank outposts”, *Haaretz*, 21 April 2024.

⁴⁹ See www.gov.il/BlobFolder/pmopolicy/dec6b-2023/he/dec-b6150323.pdf.

⁵⁰ OHCHR monitoring.

⁵¹ [A/HRC/55/144](#), para. 5; [A/78/554](#), para. 29; [A/75/376](#), paras. 13, 40 and 62; and [A/HRC/52/75](#), para. 2.

⁵² [A/HRC/55/72](#), para. 8.

⁵³ *Legal Consequences Arising from the Policies and Practices of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, Advisory Opinion of 19 July 2024*, paras. 154, 197, 206, 213, 222, 223, 229 and 238–243.

A. Housing, land and property rights

Demolitions, forced evictions and risk of forcible transfer

32. Demolitions and seizures of Palestinian-owned structures continued across the West Bank, including in East Jerusalem. On 19 July, the additional Minister in the Ministry of Defense announced a new border police unit, focusing on the enforcement of planning laws, and the expansion of enforcement to Areas A and B.⁵⁴ On 7 April, Israeli authorities transferred land enforcement authority, which Israel applies also in East Jerusalem, to the Minister of National Security,⁵⁵ who has repeatedly made calls to intensify demolitions of Palestinian structures.

33. Israeli authorities demolished 1,277 Palestinian-owned structures, including 459 inhabited residential buildings and 62 donor funded structures. This represents a sharp increase from 1,056 structures demolished and 1,194 displaced in the same period between 2022 and 2023, and represents the highest numbers recorded since 2009.⁵⁶

34. Israeli authorities demolished, seized or forced the owners to demolish 913 structures lacking Israeli-issued building permits, which remain almost impossible for Palestinians to obtain. The Civil Administration acknowledged that 95 per cent of Palestinian building permit applications in Area C are rejected. Over the past 20 years, on average less than 10 permits per year have been granted to Palestinians.⁵⁷

35. Israeli authorities demolished at least 10 structures in Area C, under Military Order 1797, which provides for the demolition of so-called “new” structures. It gives residents 96 hours’ notice of demolitions and limits legal remedies.⁵⁸

36. 156 Palestinian communities (comprising 2,664 Palestinians, including 766 men, 750 women, 579 girls, 593 boys) suffered total or partial displacement. Bedouin and other herding communities were especially affected, with 138 structures demolished, affecting 999 people and displacing 213 people (47 women, 48 men, 63 girls, 54 boys). Displacement increased after 7 October: at least 54 Palestinian households from 12 herding communities, comprising 115 people (26 women, 28 men, 34 girls, 27 boys) were displaced.

37. Demolitions in East Jerusalem remained of particular concern, particularly following 7 October. Since 7 October, a total of 142 demolitions were undertaken in East Jerusalem, including 77 of inhabited residential structures. In the three months following 7 October alone, 63 demolitions were undertaken in East Jerusalem, marking an 85 per cent increase compared with the same period the previous year.⁵⁹

38. Displacement and the application of discriminatory laws continued to undermine the rights of Palestinian children to have access to education.⁶⁰ On 17 August, shortly before the academic year started and following the displacement

⁵⁴ See <https://main.knesset.gov.il/activity/committees/foreignaffairs/news/pages/pr190723.aspx>.

⁵⁵ See www.gov.il/he/pages/dec1677-2024. The authority operates under the Israeli planning and construction law of 1965.

⁵⁶ Information from the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

⁵⁷ Knesset hearings transcripts, on file with the office for the Occupied Palestinian Territory of OHCHR. See also, Times of Israel staff, “Smotrich said pushing for demolishing Palestinian construction in W. Bank areas A, B”, *The Time of Israel*, 20 July 2023.

⁵⁸ On file with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, art. 13.

of much of the community, the elementary school in Ein Samiya was demolished, reportedly by Israeli security forces.⁶¹

39. The discriminatory housing, property and planning laws, policies and practices of Israel and the forced evictions arising therefrom, violate international law,⁶² including of Palestinians' right to adequate housing,⁶³ property, health, education, privacy, food, water and sanitation, and work. The International Court of Justice recently concluded that "Israel's planning policy in relation to the issuance of building permits, and ... its practice of property demolition for lack of a building permit, which treats Palestinians differently from settlers without justification, amounts to prohibited discrimination, in violation of articles 2, paragraph 1, and 26 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, article 2, paragraph 2, of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and article 2 of the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination".⁶⁴

40. Women and girls are particularly affected. Demolitions and forced evictions make them more vulnerable to gender-based violence when rendered homeless. In one case monitored by OHCHR, a female head of household reported facing gender-based violence while seeking accommodation following her displacement. In other cases, women have reported adverse impacts on their privacy. Women and girls also face increased water and sanitation challenges for menstrual hygiene, pregnancy, delivery and lactation. In addition, they often bear a higher demand for unpaid care and support work, increasing exposure to gender-based violence.⁶⁵

41. In its advisory opinion, the International Court of Justice recalled that, "under article 53 of the Fourth Geneva Convention, the destruction of real or personal property is 'prohibited, except where [...] rendered absolutely necessary by military operations'", an exception that the Court was not convinced applied to these punitive demolitions.⁶⁶ The Court further concluded that Israeli "forcible evictions, extensive house demolitions and restrictions on residence and movement, often leave little choice to Palestinians in Area C but to leave" and that Israeli "policies and practices are contrary to the prohibition of forcible transfer of the protected population under [...] article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention."⁶⁷

East Jerusalem

42. The Israeli authorities advanced the destruction of private property in the neighbourhood of Al-Bustan, Silwan, to create a park beside an illegal Israeli settlement. On 14 February, Israeli bulldozers demolished the house of Fakhri Abu Diab, spokesperson of the Silwan Land and Properties Committee, displacing 11 of his family members, including 5 children.⁶⁸ Like most houses in Al-Bustan, Abu

⁶¹ OHCHR monitoring. See also, United Nations, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, "Elementary school of Ein Samiya demolished", 17 August 2023.

⁶² [A/72/564](#), para. 25; and [A/75/376](#), para. 54.

⁶³ International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, art. 11; and [A/HRC/52/76](#), para. 34.

⁶⁴ *Legal Consequences Arising from the Policies and Practices of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, Advisory Opinion of 19 July 2024*, para. 222.

⁶⁵ [A/HRC/43/67](#), para. 44.

⁶⁶ *Legal Consequences Arising from the Policies and Practices of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, Advisory Opinion of 19 July 2024*, para. 211.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, para. 147.

⁶⁸ Tor Wennesland, Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, briefing to the Security Council on the situation in the Middle East, 22 February 2024; and Ir Amim, "Against backdrop of war, Israel accelerates home demolitions in East Jerusalem, razing homes in al-Walaja and al-Bustan, Silwan", 15 February 2024.

Diab's home lacked an Israeli-issued building permit. It was within an area designated by Israeli authorities as a "green area" following the unlawful annexation of East Jerusalem. Thousands of Palestinians are at risk of forced eviction following planned demolitions in Silwan, due to Israeli property, planning and zoning laws and policies that officials apply unlawfully and discriminatorily against Palestinians.⁶⁹

43. Israeli courts continued to order the eviction of Palestinians in East Jerusalem based on the application of discriminatory Israeli laws to occupied East Jerusalem.⁷⁰ On 11 April, the Supreme Court refused to hear an appeal from the Shhadeh family, residents of Batan al-Hawa, Silwan, against a 2022 eviction order.⁷¹ The refusal was based on a claim that the Shhadeh family's houses had been built on land that, prior to 1948, had been Jewish-owned. The Supreme Court gave the family until 1 June 2024 to leave.⁷² The family are one of 84 Palestinian families in Batan al-Hawa, totalling 700 people, who face eviction proceedings initiated by a settler organization in its efforts to control the Silwan neighbourhood. On 15 April, the Israeli Magistrate Court ordered the eviction of three Palestinian families from their houses in Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood, in favour of a settler real estate company, Nahlat Shimom.⁷³

44. Israeli authorities accelerated land titling in East Jerusalem.⁷⁴ According to Israeli NGOs that monitor this process, procedures were advanced for at least 215 blocks, each comprising several plots of land and/or buildings. During the reporting period, settlement of land title was finalized in 17 blocks, raising to 39 the total number of blocks in which the process has been concluded since its inception five/six years ago.⁷⁵ According to Ir Amin and Bimkon, in 90 per cent of the 39 cases, the process was finalized in favour of Israeli settlers or the Israeli State.

45. For example, authorities advanced the processes in the Armenian Quarter of Jerusalem's Old City after Israeli settlers violently attempted to seize land when a disputed land deal was cancelled.⁷⁶ The settlement of land title appears aimed at solidifying the settlers' attempted seizure and limited the community's ability to contest the deal.

46. The land titling process appears to be used to advance new settlements and expand Israeli control over territory in occupied East Jerusalem.⁷⁷ It places thousands of Palestinians across East Jerusalem at risk of forced eviction and forcible transfer. Land titling amounts to application of Israeli domestic laws, with long-term effect, to occupied territory. The International Court of Justice recently concluded that "the comprehensive application of Israeli law in East Jerusalem, as well as its application in relation to settlers throughout the West Bank, cannot be deemed 'essential' for any

⁶⁹ International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, art. 11; and [A/HRC/52/76](#), para. 34. See also, [A/78/554](#), para. 38.

⁷⁰ [A/75/376](#), para. 54; and Peace Now, "The Magistrate's Court ordered the eviction of a Palestinian family from Sheikh Jarrah", 16 April 2024.

⁷¹ See <https://supremedecisions.court.gov.il/Home/Download?path=HebrewVerdicts/23/000/002/o09&fileName=23002000.O09&type=4> (in Hebrew). See also, Ir Amim, "Israeli courts rule to evict over 35 Palestinians from their homes in Silwan and Sheikh Jarrah", 16 April 2024.

⁷² See <https://supremedecisions.court.gov.il/Home/Download?path=HebrewVerdicts/23/000/002/o09&fileName=23002000.O09&type=4> (in Hebrew).

⁷³ On file with the office for the Occupied Palestinian Territory of OHCHR.

⁷⁴ [A/78/554](#), para. 21; and [A/77/493](#), para. 11.

⁷⁵ On file with the office for the Occupied Palestinian Territory of OHCHR.

⁷⁶ OHCHR monitoring.

⁷⁷ [A/78/554](#), para. 22; and Ir Amim, "New analysis paper and status report: The grand land theft – ramifications of Israel's registration of land ownership in East Jerusalem", 25 June 2023.

of the purposes enumerated in the second paragraph of Article 64 of the Fourth Geneva Convention”.⁷⁸

Impact of movement restrictions on other social and economic rights

47. Movement restrictions imposed to facilitate settlement life and further settlement encroachment on Palestinian land continued to render Palestinian livelihoods unsustainable.⁷⁹ After 7 October, Israel security forces and settlers increasingly limited Palestinians’ access to main roads, fields and other villages, while facilitating the free movement of settlers, including possible perpetrators of violence against Palestinians.⁸⁰ Israeli security forces and settlers closed checkpoints and installed roadblocks to block Palestinians’ movement, particularly those near settlements and outposts, further limiting their access to farmland.⁸¹

48. For instance, between 7 and 10 October, settlers erected earth mounds blocking the main point by which the Al-Muntar Bedouin community gains access to the nearest urban centre, As-Sawahira- Ash-Sharqiya. Since then, 100 families from the community have been forced to use a 35-kilometre alternative road to gain access to resources, such as animal feed. The local school, serving 35 students, was forced to close. In parallel, settlers from nearby Tsan Kidar Farm outpost prevented access to the community’s fields and grazed their sheep on crops cultivated by the community. After legal aid organizations addressed the Civil Administration and petitioned the Israeli High Court to challenge the closure, Israel Defense Forces Central Command ordered the temporary seizure of the road for “security reasons,” allowing the restrictions to continue. On 25 February, the High Court of Justice endorsed the order until 1 July.

49. These movement restrictions caused by the settlement project continue to undermine the social and economic rights by Palestinians in the West Bank.⁸² For instance, the diversion of water supplies from Palestinian villages to settlements infringed residents’ access to basic amenities, while NGOs reported that run-off settlement wastewater had an adverse impact on Palestinian farming.

Settlements-related violence

50. The situation deteriorated after 7 October, following statements inciting discrimination, hostility or violence from multiple Israeli officials.⁸³ According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, during the reporting period, Israeli settlers perpetrated 1,350 attacks against Palestinians causing injuries (including 55 caused by firearms), of which 991 were committed after 7 October.⁸⁴

⁷⁸ *Legal Consequences Arising from the Policies and Practices of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, Advisory Opinion of 19 July 2024*, para. 139.

⁷⁹ United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), “UNCTAD report exposes economic strain on Palestinian welfare in West Bank due to Israeli restrictions”, 28 November 2023; International Labour Organization, “Impact of the war in Gaza on the labour market and livelihoods in the occupied Palestinian Territory”, Bulletin No. 4 (Beirut, 2024).

⁸⁰ Restrictions were already discriminatory before 7 October, see [A/77/493](#), para. 13.

⁸¹ OHCHR documented catastrophic impacts on Palestinian communities. See also, Gideon Levy and Alex Levac, “‘I have land – but I don’t’: West Bank olive harvest is yet another casualty of the Gaza War”, *Haaretz*, 13 January 2024.

⁸² *Legal Consequences Arising from the Policies and Practices of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, Advisory Opinion of 19 July 2024*, para. 134; and [A/78/303](#).

⁸³ OHCHR monitoring. See also, Times of Israel staff, “Visiting Evyatar, Ben Gvir tells settlers to ‘head for the hilltops’, expand outposts”, *The Times of Israel*, 23 June 2023; and Ronen Bergman and Mark Mazzetti, “The unpunished: how extremists took over Israel”, *New York Times*, 16 May 2024.

⁸⁴ On file with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

As a result, 12 Palestinians (10 men, 2 boys) were killed by settlers, 10 of which were after 7 October. Another 7 (6 men, 1 boy) were killed by either Israeli security forces or settlers, all after 7 October, and 484 were killed by Israeli security forces, also after 7 October.⁸⁵ This violence exacerbates a previously reported trend of rising human rights violations by settlers in recent years.⁸⁶

51. During the reporting period, 24 Israelis (16 men, 4 boys, 4 women, including 1 Palestinian citizen of Israel) were killed in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, due to alleged attacks by Palestinians, 14 of whom (9 men, 3 women, 2 boys) were killed after 7 October. Out of the 24 Israelis killed, 10 were members of the security forces.

52. Settler violence has been enabled by the complicity, acquiescence and support or participation of Israeli security forces. The lack of accountability that settlers enjoy is part of a well-documented State-sanctioned impunity, which in turn accelerated the displacement of Palestinians and created new facts on the ground.⁸⁷ Amid a marked increase in incitement by Israeli authorities following the 7 October attacks,⁸⁸ some Israeli officials appeared to condone and encourage settler violence,⁸⁹ even urging settlement as a purported response to violence by individual Palestinians.⁹⁰

53. Thousands of settlers from “settlements defence squads”, many with a history of attacks against Palestinians, have been drafted into regional army battalion units since 7 October,⁹¹ stoking a trend of significant attacks by known settlers armed and in Israeli military uniform.⁹² This has been accompanied by State supply of weapons to “settlement defence squads”,⁹³ contributing to increased violence against Palestinians. OHCHR monitored dozens of incidents of harassment and attack of Palestinians by members of Israeli security forces known to be settlers.

54. Palestinians continued to be denied equal protection, with particular challenges concerning access to justice for women and girls.⁹⁴ According to Yesh Din, police failed to successfully investigate 81 per cent of the 1,664 Israeli attacks on Palestinians filed by the NGO between 2005 and 2023. Moreover, 93.7 per cent of all investigations were closed without an indictment, and only 9 of the 107 indictments secured a conviction.⁹⁵ Of the 1,437 cases where Israeli police gave reasons for closing investigations, 64 per cent were because the offender was “unknown” and 20

⁸⁵ Overall, Israeli security forces killed 562 Palestinians in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem during the reporting period.

⁸⁶ United Nations, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, “UN and partners assess urgent humanitarian needs of herding communities in the occupied Palestinian Territory amid increased Israeli settler violence”, 4 August 2023.

⁸⁷ OHCHR, “The human rights situation in the occupied West Bank including East Jerusalem: 7 October–20 November 2023”.

⁸⁸ A/HRC/55/28, paras. 50 and 69; and OHCHR, “The human rights situation in the occupied West Bank including East Jerusalem: 7 October–20 November 2023”.

⁸⁹ OHCHR monitoring. See also, Anton Goodman, “Opinion: ‘Death to the Arabs’ – champions of settler violence now sit in the heart of Israel’s Government”, *Haaretz*, 1 March 2023.

⁹⁰ For instance, see <https://x.com/bezailesm/status/1774396025244983712?s=20>.

⁹¹ OHCHR, “The human rights situation in the occupied West Bank including East Jerusalem: 7 October–20 November 2023”, para. 36.

⁹² According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, armed Israeli settlers and Israeli security forces forced 142 persons, including 40 children, representing around 30 families to leave Wadi al Seeq on 12 October.

⁹³ OHCHR, “The human rights situation in the occupied West Bank including East Jerusalem: 7 October–20 November 2023”, para. 36.

⁹⁴ A/HRC/52/76, para. 45.

⁹⁵ Yesh Din, “Law enforcement on Israeli civilians in the West Bank (settler violence), data sheet, December 2023, p. 8.

per cent were on account of “insufficient evidence”.⁹⁶ The resulting mistrust in Israeli law enforcement, alongside fear of approaching police stations based in settlements, contributed to a low rate of reporting, with 57.5 per cent of victims of settler attacks not filing police complaints.

B. Case study: displacement of herding communities

55. Bedouin and other herding communities have been especially vulnerable to settler attacks aimed at taking over large swathes of Area C, causing displacement of communities in unprecedented numbers during the reporting period. Violence, threats of violence and the application of discriminatory property and planning laws create a climate of fear and intimidation that has compelled persons in multiple communities to abandon their homes, lands and communities. In total, 267 households comprising 1,623 people, including 777 children, were displaced; of those, 233 households comprising 1,395 people, including 659 children, were displaced after 7 October.⁹⁷

56. The cases below demonstrate the trends monitored by OHCHR. Settlers, increasingly armed with firearms, have conducted an organized campaign targeted at Bedouin and herding communities south and east of the West Bank central mountain range. They attack and intimidate communities at gunpoint, demand that they leave their homes and lands, and impose restrictions interfering with their livelihood and access to basic necessities. Settlers encroach on Palestinian land and prevent cultivation or grazing, including by deploying drones and vehicles to scare and scatter livestock, stealing and killing livestock and damaging farm property. Settler takeover of Palestinian grazing areas has led to the displacement of numerous communities.⁹⁸

57. The displacement of Palestinian communities is accompanied and driven by the establishment of settler outposts on Palestinian land. Eleven shepherding outposts, amassing 100,000 dunams, are estimated to have been constructed between 7 October and end of April.⁹⁹

58. The displacement of Bedouin and other herding communities is facilitated by discriminatory Israeli property and planning processes. For example, following settler destruction of herder structures, planning legislation is cited by the Civil Administration to prohibit displaced communities from rebuilding structures in Area C,¹⁰⁰ making their return impossible and their displacement permanent. Simultaneously, the State expropriates land for the benefit of Israeli settlers. For example, the declaration of 2,640.3 dunams¹⁰¹ as “State land” will effectively displace multiple Bedouin communities in favour of Israeli settlements.

59. Israeli security forces have accompanied, supported or participated in many attacks on herder communities, for example by shooting at Palestinians or seizing Palestinian livestock,¹⁰² contributing to the displacement of herding communities. Israeli security forces have also supported and participated in the takeover of Palestinian land and the construction of outposts. In addition, they have obstructed

⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 9.

⁹⁷ Compare with “over 1000” herders reportedly displaced by settler violence between the beginning of 2022 and end of May 2023, see [A/78/554](#), para. 43. See also, United Nations, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, “Factsheet: displacement of Palestinian herders amid increasing settler violence”, September 2023.

⁹⁸ OHCHR monitoring.

⁹⁹ See www.keremnavot.org/english.

¹⁰⁰ OHCHR monitoring.

¹⁰¹ See para. 24, above.

¹⁰² OHCHR monitoring.

their return, including by declaring military zones over the destroyed communities,¹⁰³ destroying structures once herder communities have been forced to flee, constructing roadblocks and shooting at herders trying to return to their homes.¹⁰⁴ Discriminatory law enforcement¹⁰⁵ denies Palestinians legal protection and remedy for property violations, which have escalated since 7 October. OHCHR has monitored multiple cases in which Israeli security forces cite “state of war” for declining to aid communities facing settler violence and to justify closures of vital roads.

Khirbet Zanuta

60. Khirbet Zanuta, in the south Hebron hills, is an established non-refugee, non-Bedouin herding community that represents the last Palestinian herder community in a band of growing settler-controlled land in Area C of south Hebron. Israeli settlers have allegedly strategically targeted herders, with the apparent intention of forcing them to leave.¹⁰⁶ Their displacement consolidates the settlers’ presence, while preventing Palestinian access to huge swathes of herding land.

61. Residents suffered five attacks between 12 and 28 October, including physical assault of children and women by armed settlers, as well as threats to kill their whole families. According to the head of the village council, violence and threats against the community forced more than 30 families of 250 people, including some 100 children, to leave the village between 28 October and 2 November. They have been unable to return to their homes, and the displacement risks becoming permanent.

62. Israeli settlers installed fences and dismantled the remaining infrastructure, impeding the residents’ return, destroying 10 structures by 10 December, including the donor-funded Zanuta Mixed School on 22 November.¹⁰⁷ Settlers maintained an unwavering presence in Zanuta, marking the site with Israeli flags and graffiti,¹⁰⁸ and preventing residents from visiting or harvesting their olives.¹⁰⁹

63. Israeli authorities have directly contributed to preventing the Zanuta community from returning by designating the site a “closed military zone” and prohibiting the rebuilding of destroyed structures on account of a lack of building permits.¹¹⁰ On 2 May, following a petition on behalf of residents of Zanuta, the High Court of Justice ordered the State to specify measures intended to ensure the return of the residents, their safety and the security of their property and livestock, in addition to accountability measures related to previous attacks.¹¹¹

Tuqu’ wilderness

64. Tuqu’ wilderness surrounds the town of Tuqu’, south of Bethlehem, comprising herding land and 800 dunams of olive orchards cultivated by Palestinian farmers. Prior to October, several Palestinian families had already been displaced. However, after 7 October, settlers intensified pressure on the Palestinian families in Tuqu’ to leave. Settlers closed the only access to and from the community, including to the

¹⁰³ Ibid. See also, Jeremy Sharon, “Palestinian villages abandoned due to settler violence declared closed military zones”, *The Time of Israel*, 24 December 2023.

¹⁰⁴ OHCHR monitoring.

¹⁰⁵ See para. 54, above.

¹⁰⁶ OHCHR monitoring. See also, Imad Abu Hawash, “Even bees can’t escape the Israeli settler violence”, *+972 Magazine*, 30 August 2023.

¹⁰⁷ OHCHR recorded 10 demolitions between the residents’ displacement on 6 November and 10 December 2023.

¹⁰⁸ On file with the office for the Occupied Palestinian Territory of OHCHR.

¹⁰⁹ OHCHR monitoring.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ High Court of Israel, Case No. HCJ 8117/23, available at <https://supremedecisions.court.gov.il/Home/Download?path=HebrewVerdicts/23/170/081/e29&fileName=23081170.E29&type=4>.

surrounding fields, and carried out attacks. According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, between 8 October and 2 November, 20 Palestinian families comprising 145 persons including 40 children were displaced.

65. On 8 October, armed settlers entered the community several times at night threatening to kill the residents if they did not leave. On 13 October, Israeli security forces killed a 26-year-old unarmed man who was trying to circumvent the closure and access the area. On 15 October, armed Israeli settlers, accompanied by Israeli security forces, demolished one agricultural property and occupied another. On 17 October, a group of armed settlers on quadbikes threw stones at four herders and chased them away, threatening to kill the herders if they saw them again. On 23 October, settlers vandalized and stole a family's property, looting equipment and bulldozing two animal sheds.

66. Displaced community members told OHCHR that they fled with their livestock, leaving their homes and farming infrastructure. Of the last eight families displaced, four are staying with residents of Sa'ir, while four have relocated to Tuqu' village, where pastureland scarcity renders grazing impossible. The attacks and displacement have devastated displaced residents, exacerbated by a lost olive harvest, destruction of farmland and death of livestock. One resident remarked that "the future is unpredictable" and that they risk losing their "main source of income."

67. Settlers and Israeli security forces appear to have acted in concert to prevent residents' return. OHCHR observed that settlers had destroyed infrastructure¹¹² and farming equipment, including a network of donor-funded water pipes connecting the wilderness with the Tuqu' Municipality, while simultaneously installing caravans, roads and electricity links to the Teko'a and Nikodim settlements. Between 7 October and 11 May, according to Kerem Navot, settlers built at least four new outposts¹¹³ and four new roads on Palestinian land in Tuqu', appropriating more than 550 acres, making it the largest such seizure by a single Israeli settlement (Teko'a).¹¹⁴ In tandem with State-supported violence, on 1 April, Israeli authorities declared 171 dunams surrounding the nearby Herodion archaeological site as "State land".¹¹⁵

Al-Mu'arrajat

68. Al-Mu'arrajat community in the Jordan Valley is also at risk of displacement. This Bedouin community of the Kaabneh tribe, comprises three villages totalling 250 Palestinians, situated between the lowlands of the Jericho governorate, northeast of Jericho and the highlands northwest of Jericho, on both sides of the Al-Mu'arrajat road in Area C.

69. Settlers from Mevot Yorihi settlement have attacked Palestinians, throwing stones at them and subjecting them to insults and threats, as part of a harassment pattern. On 26 October, Israeli settlers reportedly placed dolls, doused with red dye to imitate blood, on the doors of the Arab Al-Kaabna School. When these same dolls were used again in a settler attack on 23 January to adorn three settler-built mock child graves¹¹⁶ 120 metres from the Al-Kaabna school, it sparked "intense fear" among residents.¹¹⁷ Settlers have killed and stolen sheep, affecting herders'

¹¹² There are around 100 cisterns in the wilderness, many of them have been vandalized by the settlers.

¹¹³ On file with the office for the Occupied Palestinian Territory of OHCHR.

¹¹⁴ Ben Hubbard, "In the West Bank, guns and a locked gate signal town's new residents", *New York Times*, 1 June 2024.

¹¹⁵ On file with the office for the Occupied Palestinian Territory of OHCHR.

¹¹⁶ OHCHR monitoring. See also, www.instagram.com/p/C2cjG1aN4N9/.

¹¹⁷ See also, Al Jazeera, "The Bedouin clan resisting violent displacement by Israeli settlers", 26 February 2024.

livelihoods. On 31 January, an Israeli settler from the Zohar outpost ran over 12 sheep belonging to a community official, before stealing 10 others. Israeli security forces provided armed support to settler violations, for example, by supervising the grazing of settler-owned sheep on Palestinian land. On 11 March, a new pastoral outpost was being established, comprising an area cordoned off using poles and chicken-wire fencing, and a small tarpaulin structure.¹¹⁸

70. The intensity of the takeover, violence and threats against the Al-Mu'arrajat community have caused the residents in Al-Mu'arrajat centre to flee to Al-Mu'arrajat East, leaving Al-Mu'arrajat centre completely empty. Nevertheless, Al Mu'arrajat East continues to be targeted, threatening the displacement from the entire Al-Mu'arrajat lands.

71. Systematic and increasingly severe settler violence contributed to a worsening coercive environment, threatening Palestinian displacement from areas to which they have traditionally been tied.¹¹⁹ Israel, as the occupying Power, has an obligation to restore and ensure public order and civil life, while respecting the laws in force in the occupied territory, as well as international human rights law.¹²⁰ Evidence that the Israeli security forces and Civil Administration have deliberately impeded Palestinian communities' attempts to return to their homes raise concerns with respect to the Israeli security forces' support and approval of the displacement and an intention that the displacement be permanent. The International Court of Justice recently found that settler violence against Palestinians, impunity for settlers and the excessive use of State force against Palestinians contribute to "a coercive environment" and that "Israel's systematic failure to prevent or to punish" such activity contravenes its obligations under article 46 of the Hague Regulations, article 27 (1) of the Fourth Geneva Convention, and articles 6 (1) and 7 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.¹²¹

V. Settlements in the occupied Syrian Golan

72. Settlement expansion in the occupied Syrian Golan continued with the support of the Government of Israel. The General Assembly has recently reaffirmed that "the Israeli settlements...in the occupied Syrian Golan are illegal."¹²² The expansion involved both an increase in the number of Israeli settlements and the Israeli settler population, as well as the advancement of commercial activities,¹²³ including the approval of the construction of a wind turbine project.¹²⁴ These measures align with the plan of Israel to double the settler population in the occupied Syrian Golan by 2027,¹²⁵ with settlers already outnumbering the local Syrian population.¹²⁶ Israeli settlers in the occupied Syrian Golan are currently distributed across 35 different settlements.¹²⁷

73. On 20 June 2023, Israel began work on a wind turbines near Majdal Shams and Mas'adah in the occupied Syrian Golan. The Israeli Energix company carried out the

¹¹⁸ On file with the office for the Occupied Palestinian Territory of OHCHR.

¹¹⁹ [A/HRC/52/76](#), para. 36; [A/76/336](#), para. 19; and [A/HRC/40/42](#), para. 24.

¹²⁰ Hague Regulations concerning the Laws and Customs of War on Land, art. 43.

¹²¹ *Legal Consequences Arising from the Policies and Practices of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, Advisory Opinion of 19 July 2024*, para. 154.

¹²² General Assembly resolution [78/78](#).

¹²³ [A/HRC/55/72](#), paras. 47–48; and [A/79/187-E/2024/68](#), paras. 121 and 123.

¹²⁴ For more details on the situation, see [A/79/187-E/2024/68](#), para. 123, in particular.

¹²⁵ Israel, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Cabinet approves special plan to develop the Golan Heights", 26 December 2021,

¹²⁶ [A/78/554](#), para. 75.

¹²⁷ [A/78/127-E/2023/95](#), para. 113; and [A/78/554](#), para. 75.

work under the protection of Israeli police, which sparked clashes with Syrian protesters, resulting in minor injuries to three protesters and three officers.¹²⁸ Construction plans were temporarily halted but have reportedly resumed, according to Israeli media.¹²⁹ The project is being built on a large portion of agricultural land belonging to Syrians from various surrounding villages, particularly affecting members of the Druze community,¹³⁰ who rely on the land as their primary source of income. The construction may also have potentially detrimental impacts on the population's health and environment,¹³¹ including soil fertility and noise pollution.¹³² These potential environmental impacts, along with the loss of land near the turbines, could threaten the community's health and livelihoods by further limiting the Syrian population's access to agricultural land and water.¹³³ It could also restrict the villages' ability to expand, forcing residents into densely populated areas.¹³⁴ Farmers in particular could face the dual challenge of losing land to cultivate while already struggling to compete with subsidized settlement agriculture.¹³⁵ The project could thereby affect a wide range of human rights, including the rights to adequate food, work and health, and the right to adequate housing,¹³⁶ potentially leading to displacing the Syrian population from areas to which they have traditionally been tied. The General Assembly "condemn[ed]...any activities involving the confiscation of land, the disruption of the livelihood of protected persons, the forced transfer of civilians and the annexation of land, whether *de facto* or through national legislation".¹³⁷

VI. Conclusions and recommendations

74. The establishment and continuing expansion of Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the occupied Syrian Golan amount to the transfer by Israel of parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies, which is prohibited under international humanitarian law, as confirmed by the International Court of Justice.¹³⁸ It may also amount to a war crime.¹³⁹

75. The International Court of Justice further concluded recently that "[t]he expansion of Israel's settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem is based on the confiscation or requisitioning of large areas of land" and that "these land policies are not in conformity with articles 46, 52 and 55 of the Hague Regulations". In particular, settlement of land title, as practiced in East

¹²⁸ [A/HRC/55/72](#), para. 49.

¹²⁹ Times of Israel staff, "Work on Golan wind turbines that sparked unrest expected to resume next week", *The Times of Israel*, 25 August 2023; Troy O. Fritzhand, "Golan wind turbine construction to resume despite pushback", *The Jerusalem Post*, 27 August 2023; and Mark Weiss, "Why do Israel's Druze oppose wind turbines being built in the Golan?", *The Jerusalem Post*, 3 October 2023.

¹³⁰ [A/HRC/55/72](#), para. 48; and Wesham Sharaf, "How Israel greenwashes its colonization of the Golan Heights", *Middle East Eye*, 23 June 2023.

¹³¹ [A/76/336](#), para. 58.

¹³² Aaron Southlea and Nazeh Brik, "Windfall: the exploitation of wind energy in the occupied Syrian Golan", Arab Human Rights Centre in Golan Heights, January 2019.

¹³³ [A/HRC/55/72](#), para. 48.

¹³⁴ [A/HRC/55/71](#), para. 12 (b).

¹³⁵ [A/79/187-E/2024/68](#), para. 127.

¹³⁶ [A/78/554](#), para. 77.

¹³⁷ General Assembly resolution [78/78](#).

¹³⁸ *Legal Consequences Arising from the Policies and Practices of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, Advisory Opinion of 19 July 2024*, paras. 119 and 155; and [A/76/336](#), para. 59.

¹³⁹ Fourth Geneva Convention, art. 49 (6); and Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, art.8(2)(b)(viii).

Jerusalem, constitutes an irreversible act of sovereignty and is illegal under international law in the context of occupation.¹⁴⁰ Such confiscation or requisitioning increases the risk of forcible transfer.

76. The Court also held the following:

Israel's policies and practices, including the maintenance and expansion of settlements, the construction of associated infrastructure, including the wall, the exploitation of natural resources, the proclamation of Jerusalem as Israel's capital, the comprehensive application of Israeli domestic law in East Jerusalem and its extensive application in the West Bank, entrench Israel's control of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, notably of East Jerusalem and of Area C of the West Bank [and] amount to annexation of large parts of the Occupied Palestinian Territory.¹⁴¹

The transfer of wide administrative powers relating to settlements and land administration from the military authorities to Israeli civilians, erasing the distinct administration of the occupied territory, further facilitates the process of annexation, in violation of international law, including the Charter of the United Nations.

77. The Secretary-General reiterates his strong condemnation of the horrific attacks by Hamas and other Palestinian armed groups in Israel on 7 October 2023 and the continued holding of hostages in Gaza. The scope of death and destruction in Gaza as a result of the war that ensued has been unprecedented and horrifying. He unequivocally condemns the widespread killing and maiming of civilians in Gaza, including women and children. He reiterates his call for an immediate ceasefire and the immediate and unconditional release of all the hostages.

78. The increase in settler violence, especially after 7 October 2023, with the participation and support of Israeli security forces and continuing widespread impunity, highlights the unwillingness of the Israeli authorities to uphold the obligations of Israel under the law of occupation, including the obligation to respect family honour and rights, the lives of persons and private property in occupied territory.¹⁴² Settler violence adversely affects the enjoyment of the rights of Palestinian people, including the rights to security of person, freedom of movement, privacy, family life, an adequate standard of living, work and education. It is a manifestly important factor in the coercive environment that forces many Palestinians to leave their homes.

79. Systematic demolition of Palestinian homes, on the basis of discriminatory laws and policies, is ongoing and results in forced evictions. Forced evictions resulting from demolitions in the Occupied Palestinian Territory are a key factor in the creation of a coercive environment. They have a negative impact on a wide range of human rights, with an exacerbated impact on women and girls, and increase the risk of forcible transfer.

80. There was an almost total failure to ensure accountability for apparent unlawful killing of Palestinians, including in instances that raise concerns of extrajudicial executions and wilful killing. This is indicative of the climate of

¹⁴⁰ *Legal Consequences Arising from the Policies and Practices of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, Advisory Opinion of 19 July 2024*, paras. 120 and 122.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, para. 173

¹⁴² Hague Regulations, art. 46.

impunity that prevails with respect to excessive force against Palestinians by Israeli security forces, including in the contexts of settlement.

81. The Secretary-General recalls Security Council resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#), in which the Council reaffirmed that the Israeli settlement policy in the Occupied Palestinian Territory is a major obstacle to achieving a two-State solution and a just, lasting and comprehensive peace. He also notes that the International Court of Justice has held in this regard that the State of Israel is under an obligation to cease immediately all new settlement activities and to evacuate all settlers from the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

82. The Secretary-General recalls Security Council resolution [497 \(1981\)](#), whereby the Council decided that the decision by Israel to impose its laws, jurisdiction and administration in the occupied Syrian Golan Heights was null and void and without international legal effect, and also recalls General Assembly resolutions reaffirming that the Israeli settlements in the occupied Syrian Golan are illegal.¹⁴³

83. The Secretary-General calls on Israel to:

(a) Immediately and completely cease and reverse all settlement activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, in compliance with international law and relevant United Nations resolutions, such as Security Council resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#);

(b) Immediately halt demolitions and forced evictions of the Palestinian population and cease any activity that would further contribute to a coercive environment and/or otherwise contribute to forcible transfer;

(c) In line with its obligations as the occupying Power, issue clear and unambiguous orders to Israeli security forces to ensure the protection of the Palestinian population against settler violence and hold to account members of the Israeli security forces who fail to comply with such orders;

(d) Ensure that all incidents of violence by settlers and Israeli security forces against Palestinians, including gender-based violence, and damage to their homes and property are promptly, effectively, thoroughly and transparently investigated; that perpetrators are prosecuted and, if convicted, punished with appropriate sanctions; and that victims are provided with effective remedies, including adequate compensation, access to justice, support and protection services, in accordance with international standards;

(e) Immediately cease and reverse all settlement development and related activities in the occupied Syrian Golan and end discriminatory land, housing and development policies, in compliance with relevant United Nations resolutions.

84. The Secretary-General further recommends that all States take all measures necessary and consistent with international law to effectively ensure respect for applicable international law.

¹⁴³ General Assembly resolution [78/78](#).