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

Security Council
Seventy-sixth year

Identical letters dated 17 December 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 light of recent developments, I must write again to draw the international community's attention to the countless crimes being perpetrated by Israel, the occupying Power, in Occupied Palestine. Despite a false perception of calm, the situation is actually one in which every single violation, violence and tensions are intensifying by the day as Israel continues to be emboldened by the lack of accountability and presses on with its colonization of our land and systematic repression and dispossession of our people.

As cautioned most recently in our letter dated 8 December 2021 ([A/ES-10/884-S/2021/1021](#)), Israeli occupying forces are carrying out a shoot-to-kill policy, resulting in the murder of Palestinians, including children, in cold-blood, including in blatant extrajudicial killings. Regrettably, despite our repeated warnings and appeals, more lives are being taken and more families are being devastated despite the Security Council's full knowledge of such alarming trends.

Just two days after that letter, yet another young Palestinian man was shot and killed by Israeli occupying forces in the town of Beita, near Nablus, after Israeli occupying forces fired live ammunition at Palestinian residents protesting Israel's illegal attempts to pillage and colonize Palestinian land, specifically targeting the town's mountaintop of Jabal Sbeih. Jamil Abu Ayyash, age 31, was shot in the back of the head with live ammunition, making him the ninth Palestinian to have been shot and killed in cold blood by the Israeli occupying forces in Beita alone since May.

After conducting a thorough investigation of Jamil's killing and other killings and injuries that have preceded in Beita, the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights has concluded that: "These crimes reflect the excessive use of force in circumstances where there was no imminent threat to the soldiers' lives and prove Israeli lenient shooting standards against the Palestinian civilians." It is clear that, in using such lethal force, the objective of the Israeli occupying forces has always been to ensure a bloody outcome after the weekly protests, aimed at making legitimate demonstrations



of resistance against this illegal occupation so costly and painful for Palestinian families, halting demonstrations and then seizing the land, as it has done in so many other instances.

The Israeli occupying forces also continue to terrorize the Palestinian civilian population with violent, daily military raids and home invasions. On 13 December, an Israeli occupying forces raid resulted in the killing of yet another Palestinian man in Nablus. Jamil al-Kayyal, age 31, was also shot directly in the head by Israeli occupying forces as a convoy of military vehicles fired live ammunition during a pre-dawn raid, making him the second Palestinian shot and deliberately executed by a bullet to the head by depraved Israeli occupying forces in less than week.

As stressed by the Israeli non-governmental organization (NGO) B'tselem: “The fact that Israeli security forces have time and again killed Palestinians who posed no danger reveals a chilling disparity between the official prohibition on such conduct and reality, including the current atmosphere in Israel, in which shooting to kill is acceptable at any time and under any circumstance, even when the danger has passed. The explicit support of the authorities and the tacit consent of the legal system’s top officials – including the Attorney General and the Military Advocate General – have created a normative situation in which soldiers and police officers routinely play judge and executioner.”

At this time, hundreds of vulnerable Palestinian families in occupied East Jerusalem also remain in immediate danger of having their homes demolished in a week’s time as Israel intensifies its ethnic cleansing campaign in the city. Using the pretext that Palestinians lack occupation-issued building permits, which are virtually impossible to obtain,¹ Israeli occupying forces are carrying out orders to forcibly remove Palestinians from their homes and land and replace them with Jewish settlers. Such cruel and illegal behaviour has been most clearly exposed in the forcible displacement campaign against Palestinian families in Sheikh Jarrah earlier this year and is a campaign being carried out all over occupied East Jerusalem, including the neighbourhoods of Silwan, particularly Al-Bustan section, Al-Tur and elsewhere.

Israel’s systematic policy of forced displacement through home demolitions and pressure and intimidation, forcing families to demolish their own homes, also persist unabated in this time of pandemic. Home demolitions are drastically increasing throughout Occupied Palestine, with more than 130 Palestinian homes in Jerusalem demolished in 2021 alone. As documented by the Norwegian Refugee Council, since the establishment of the new Israeli government in June, 472 structures have been destroyed, including 90 donor-funded structures, affecting more than 10,000 Palestinians throughout the occupied West Bank, especially in East Jerusalem, as Israel feverishly schemes to cut off the city from the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

In Silwan, hundreds of Palestinian homes are threatened with a massive demolition campaign to make way for yet another illegal settlement and a “religious theme park” for Jewish settlers to be named “King David Park.” In Al-Tur, Israeli occupying forces are mobilizing to demolish a five-story building where at least 70 people live, including 27 children.

And, in Sheikh Jarrah, the legal struggles, agony and daily intimidation and harassment of families targeted for expulsion from their homes also continue. This includes the Salem family, which consists of 11 people, who have lived in a house in western Sheikh Jarrah for over 70 years and who received a notice of eviction last

¹ According to the Israeli NGO Breaking the Silence, Israel has rejected nearly 99 per cent of Palestinian building permit applications over the years, making it impossible for Palestinians to build and develop their communities in their own land.

week demanding they vacate their home, and if they do not leave themselves, they will be forcibly removed on 29 December 2021 or at a later date to be determined by the illegal settlers seeking to expel them, with no recourse for the Salem family in Israeli courts, which have proven to be part and parcel of this illegal occupation, and no protection from international law.

The time to act on Israel's flagrant ethnic cleansing and demographic engineering campaigns is long overdue. We appeal to the international community to act now to stop the forced displacement of more than 1,500 Palestinians who will be displaced if these plans are implemented, most of whom are women and children. They are mothers, fathers, daughters, sons, grandmothers and grandfathers; they are rightfully in their homes and their land, the land of their ancestors.

It is time to uphold international law to protect civilians and protect their rights to the safety and sanctity of their homes from a ruthless occupier that is violating all of its legal obligations, including to ensure their safety and well-being, and has been the source of their torment, hardship and loss for over a half century as it seeks to rid the land of the Palestinian people. This colonization and apartheid regime has to end.

Here, on the fifth anniversary of its adoption, we recall again Security Council resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#), in which the Council, inter alia, condemned "all measures aimed at altering the demographic composition, character and status of the Palestinian Territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem, including, inter alia, the construction and expansion of settlements, transfer of Israeli settlers, confiscation of land, demolition of homes and displacement of Palestinian civilians, in violation of international humanitarian law and relevant resolutions".

In this regard, we must again remind the international community that, as of now, approximately 700,000 Israeli settlers have been illegally transferred to nearly 300 illegal settlements and outposts established in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, in violation of the clear prohibitions under the Fourth Geneva Convention, the Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 and the Rome Statute. And, this state-sponsored policy of colonization has emboldened a dangerous culture of impunity in which settler violence has become yet another tool of the occupation to impose an ever more coercive environment aimed making living conditions unbearable to drive Palestinians from their land and facilitate Israel's illegal control over it.

Supported by the government and military, Israeli settlers are escalating their violent, racist attacks and incitement against Palestinians. The institutionalized nature of such attacks, combined with a lack of accountability, has made the settlers even more extreme as they are confident that their impunity will not be challenged or punished.

Case in point, after an alarming spike in settler attacks against Palestinians, the Israeli Prime Minister called settler violence an "insignificant phenomenon". This assertion is patently false and completely detached from reality as Israeli settlers are responsible for the murder, displacement and suffering of countless of Palestinians and damage and destruction to hundreds of properties and crops, including thousands of olive trees that have sustained Palestinian livelihoods for centuries in their land. Nevertheless, Israeli officials, including the Prime Minister, who also serves as Israel's so-called "Minister of Settlement Affairs", continue to propagate these falsehoods, further emboldening the most extreme elements of Israeli society and fuelling the violence.

As we mark five years since the adoption of Security Council resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#), we lament the worsening reality of colonial occupation and oppression that the resolution was intended to bring a halt to and to instead open a horizon for a just

and peaceful solution. It is past time for the international community to act, collectively and concretely, to implement resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#), including by upholding the specific obligations of States under the resolution, including distinction in accordance with paragraph 5 thereof. It is past time to implement the over 800 General Assembly resolutions and 80 Security Council resolutions that have called for an end to this injustice, for realization by the Palestinian people of their inalienable rights, including to return and to self-determination and for the establishment of the two-State solution on the pre-1967 borders.

It is unacceptable that, after so many years, so much international legislation and a solid international consensus, no tangible measures have been taken to end, reverse or even deter Israel's illegal actions, allowing it to entrench its illegal occupation, suffocate two million Palestinians in Gaza under an illegal blockade, sabotage the two-State solution with relentless colonization and de facto annexation measures, and consolidate an inhumane apartheid regime over the Palestinian people. Continued appeasement of Israel will not bring an end to this injustice.

Regardless of who leads the occupation, the reality of apartheid and colonial occupation in Palestine persists, as we are seeing with this "new government", in the absence of international action and accountability for the crimes and violations being committed. There have been 11 Israeli Prime Ministers since the occupation began in 1967, and the establishment of colonial settlements across the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, has not stopped for a single minute. If the international community, particularly the Security Council, continues the paralysis of the past, then our principles and commitments to upholding the resolutions and Charter of the United Nations will mean nothing and the reckoning for all of us will be dire if we allow the rule of law to be dismantled and the Council's authority be so severely undermined.

We reiterate: what Israel, the occupying Power, fails to see is that, in spite of the inaction of the international system, it is rapidly losing any shred of credibility in the eyes of the peoples of conscience of the world, who see this blatant oppression and persecution of the Palestinian people before their eyes and for whom resolving this grave injustice remains a matter of urgency and priority.

The Palestinian people look to the Members of the Security Council to uphold their solemn mandates and responsibilities and to have the moral courage to act to break the cycle of inaction, uphold the rule of law and implement United Nations resolutions. Security Council resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#) continues to provide that path forward, and we urge immediate action for the implementation of all its provisions.

In this regard, there is an urgent need for international and regional diplomatic efforts to overcome the stalemate, to reverse the negative trends on the ground, including in particular by bringing a halt to all illegal settlement activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, a halt to Israel's human rights abuses against the Palestinian people, and a halt to all acts of violence, terror, provocation and incitement, and to act collectively to create a credible horizon for a peace under international auspices. The role of the Security Council in particular in this regard is paramount and it is incumbent upon it to mobilize the Quartet, which it has mandated to promote a just and lasting solution. We appeal for action to be taken without delay to bring hope to the millions of people suffering from this tragic and grave injustice that another year will not be lost and that justice and peace are indeed possible.

This letter is in follow-up to our 737 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 8 December 2021 ([A/ES-10/884-S/2021/1021](#)) 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 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
