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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 9 June 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

Predictably, absent any measures of accountability, Israeli occupying forces and mobs of extremists have continued and intensified their violent and racist attacks and incitement against the Palestinian people, further aggravating tensions and portending the further deterioration of the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem.

The month of June has begun with a series of grave Israeli violations of international law, with May being an unforgettable month stained with the blood of innocent children, women and men. Despite the “ceasefire” that came into effect on 21 May, Israeli violations over the past weeks indicate that Israel could not care less about international law and respecting the human rights of the Palestinian people under its subjugation. In fact, in just the five days since my last letter to you, the occupying Power has taken further draconian measures to entrench its 54-year colonial occupation and annexation schemes, in particular in occupied East Jerusalem, turning the City into the focal point of Israel’s illegal colonization schemes.

Israeli occupation forces continue to regularly and violently attack Palestinian activists in Sheikh Jarrah and Silwan who take part in peaceful sit-ins in protest of Israeli attempts to forcibly expel thousands of Palestinians from their homes in occupied East Jerusalem, only to be replaced by Jewish settlers. Since 1 June, Israeli occupation forces have stormed Sheikh Jarrah on a daily basis, assaulting and arresting Palestinian civilians and journalists, along with the imposition of discriminatory measures, such as providing protection to armed settlers and establishing settler-only streets.

In the latest move to repress awareness and activism on the illegal forced displacement campaign in Sheikh Jarrah, Israeli occupation forces have launched coordinated campaigns targeting residents, activists and international journalists. As of today, access via all entrances to Sheikh Jarrah is restricted due to the intensive



deployment of Israeli occupation forces in and around the neighbourhood. According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat, between 30 April and 22 May, more than 110 residents of Sheikh Jarrah were injured by sponge-tipped bullets, physical assault, stun grenades and gas inhalation. On 5 June, Israeli occupation forces arrested two activists whose family faces forced displacement from their home in Sheikh Jarrah. Muna and Muhammad al-Kurd, twin sister and brother aged 23, were only 9 years old when Israeli settlers, protected by the Israeli occupation forces, stole half of their home and continue to harass them physically, mentally and legally, seeking to forcibly displace them completely.

The following day, Israel intensified its crackdown by attacking a group of journalists and destroying media equipment. In a video widely shared on news networks and social media, Israeli occupation forces beat and arrested journalist Givara Budeiri, who was documenting Israeli crimes in Sheikh Jarrah. This blatant crackdown is part of Israel's campaign to silence journalists from exposing the reality and brutality of Israeli colonialism and apartheid in Palestine. According to the non-governmental organization Reporters Without Borders, Israel arrested 13 Palestinian journalists in May without any charge or trial. Whether it is the bombing of media offices or the crackdown on a free press, Israel's systematic targeting of journalism stands in clear violation of international humanitarian law.

While Israel uses its occupation forces to oppress and attack Palestinians throughout the occupied West Bank, it also continues to deploy its secret police in arrest campaigns targeting Palestinian citizens of Israel. The wave of mass arrests and raids is intended, in the words of the Israeli police, to "settle the score" with Palestinians who protested against Israel's aggression on Gaza, ethnic cleansing in occupied East Jerusalem and attacks on Al-Aqsa Mosque. What happens once arrested? Israeli non-governmental organization Adalah documented testimonies from victims, attorneys and paramedics based on a "torture room" in Nazareth's police station: "Police officers led the detainees to a room located on the left side of the entrance corridor to the station, forcing them to sit on the floor handcuffed, to lower their heads towards the floor, and began to beat them on all parts of their bodies, using kicks and clubs, slamming their heads against walls or doors, and more. Officers wounded the detainees, terrorized them, and whomever dared to lift his head upwards risked more beatings by officers. According to affidavits, the floor of the room was covered in blood from the beatings."

Palestinians in Israeli prisons also continue to be subjected to inhumane treatment that is widely documented, including physical and psychological torture. On 8 June, three Palestinian prisoners were severely injured after being shot with rubber-coated metal bullets during a raid by Israeli prison guards, who inflicted severe wounds on defenceless prisoners. Over 4,000 Palestinians, among them women and children, continue to be held in deplorable conditions and subjected to grave human rights violations. Not only does Israel's infamous use of torture violate the Fourth Geneva Convention, but it is also in violation of the provisions of the United Nations Convention against Torture to which Israel is a State party. As the occupying Power, Israel must respect its obligations in prohibiting the torture and inhumane treatment of Palestinian prisoners in line with international law, including the Fourth Geneva Convention.

Undeterred by the international community's condemnation of illegal settlements and outposts, Israel also persists with measures for the imminent integration of illegal settlements in preparation for full-fledged annexation. On 7 June, while under the protection of Israeli occupation forces, Israeli settlers razed 400 square metres of Palestinian land near the Ibrahimi Mosque in the Old City of Al-Khalil (Hebron). Also, this week, Israeli settlers established an illegal outpost on Palestinian land in Khirbat Zannouta, south of Al-Khalil. The illegal outpost was

deliberately established near the so-called “Shim’a” settlement in order to expand its lands through the continued expropriation of Palestinian land and the facilitation of the establishment of settler-only roads, bypasses, tunnels and other essential infrastructure, cutting off Palestinian areas and further privileging the Israeli settlers illegally transferred to our land.

Regrettably, this is the two-tier reality for millions of Palestinians. Just this week, Israel began constructing a settler-only road on stolen Palestinian land near Hizma, north of Jerusalem. Hizma, surrounded by four Israeli settlements, is completely cut off from East Jerusalem due to the segregation and annexation wall. Once completed, this settler-only road will serve as a faster route for the four illegal settlements surrounding Hizma, connecting them to nearby settlements illegally established in and around occupied East Jerusalem, which Israel aims to completely sever from the rest of the occupied West Bank, seizing the City and its environs in breach of the absolute prohibition on the acquisition of territory by force.

The international community must explicitly demand once again that Israel immediately cease all of its illegal settlement activities in all manifestations in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. Settlement activities constitute a flagrant violation of international law amounting to grave breaches, i.e., war crimes. Israel must abide by its legal obligations, including under the Fourth Geneva Convention, as reaffirmed in Security Council resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#), or suffer the consequences of its rogue behaviour.

Israel’s systematic policy of forced displacement through home demolitions and the destruction of property also persists unabated. On 5 June, Israeli occupation forces issued demolition orders against six Palestinian shops in Umm al-Rihan, near Jenin. On 7 June, a Palestinian family in the Jabal al-Mukabbir neighbourhood of East Jerusalem was forced to self-demolish their home to avoid the heavy demolition fees punitively imposed by the occupation. Also on 7 June, Israeli occupation forces demolished 10 agricultural and livestock structures in Al-Moarajat, near Jericho. On 8 June, Israeli occupation forces destroyed an irrigation pond and agricultural fields in the Jordan Valley. On the same day, Israeli occupation forces demolished livestock barns in Al-Tuwana and Al-Rakeez, near Al-Khalil, further impairing the living conditions of Palestinian farmers, forcing them out of their lands due to harsh restrictions on their well-being and limiting their access to resources.

Fifty-four years on since the start of Israel’s belligerent occupation, the situation has deteriorated to the worst levels in decades with the deepening of the protection and human rights crisis being endured by the Palestinian people under this illegal occupation. The trauma of the incessant violence of this occupation on Palestinian lives, whether in the West Bank, including occupied East Jerusalem, or in Gaza, is unimaginable. As stressed by the United Nations Humanitarian Coordinator, Lynn Hastings: “One message I heard repeatedly is that people in Gaza are traumatized more than ever; girls, boys, women and men. The intensity of the strikes were without pause; too many homes lost and loved ones gone. Many people told me they feel helpless – and no longer have hope. Parents say they cannot reassure their children that this won’t happen again. How can they after so many wars?”

How can any parents in Occupied Palestine assure their children of their safety, their well-being, their very presence in their homes and land after so many years of this illegal occupation, which continues to destroy, kill and terrorize them without consequence?

Decades of inaction have gravely harmed the authority of international law, and the credibility of the Security Council in particular, as the longest military occupation in modern history is permitted to continue running roughshod over all norms, rules and rights with impunity. Fifty-four years ago, the Council adopted resolution

[242 \(1967\)](#), which called on Israel to withdraw its military from the territories that it had occupied in June 1967. Some 54 years and 88 Security Council resolutions later, the Israeli occupation of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, is more prevalent and aggressive than ever. Decades-old assumptions within the Security Council that have promoted the notion that Israel's military occupation is supposedly "temporary" have proven to be detached from reality. To avoid the same detachment, the growing wave of assertions that the crime of apartheid is being committed must be remedied through international action and accountability. Apartheid was not okay in South Africa, is not okay in Palestine and will not be okay anywhere.

This has long been Israel's logic: international law does not apply to Israel. We must therefore ask the Council: is Israel held to the same laws and standards as every State? If so, why have not any of the 800 General Assembly resolutions and more than 80 Security Council resolutions been implemented?

Of course, Israel can have its own opinion but not its own facts. The facts are that grave crimes are being committed while inaction continues to undermine international law and embolden impunity. The integrity of the Security Council is at stake, since continued inaction and repetitive mantras have proven to be ineffective in ending this historic injustice. Silence will not create change. As warned by the Special Rapporteur, Michael Lynk: "Nothing could more effectively refute this judgment than for the international community to act on the overwhelming evidence before it, and insist that Israel either fully annul its annexations and relinquish its occupation, or be prepared to bear the full consequences of accountability for its mocking of international law."

The present letter is in follow-up to our 723 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 4 June 2021 ([A/ES-10/869-S/2021/529](#)) 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) Riyadh **Mansour**
Minister
Permanent Observer