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

Security Council
Seventy-fourth year

Identical letters dated 11 December 2019 from the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council

I write to draw the international community's attention once again to escalating illegal Israeli policies and practices in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, that are continuing to inflict hardship and suffering on the Palestinian civilian population and undermining peace prospects, making them more remote than ever.

In the period since my last letter, more Palestinian families have lost their lands and their homes to the occupation's unrelenting colonization and de facto annexation, especially in and around Occupied East Jerusalem; more civilians have been arrested, imprisoned and tortured; more innocents, including children and women and peaceful protesters, have been killed and maimed by occupying forces and extremist settlers; and more families have been devastated by the inhumane siege on Gaza and other measures of collective punishment imposed by the occupying Power. With that, the Palestinian people's hopes – that this illegal occupation will end and that their rights, including to self-determination and freedom, and a just peace, can soon be realized – have only further diminished.

Such rising despair is stoking already high tensions and exacerbating an already toxic, dangerous environment. We urge the international community to give this situation the urgent attention that it requires, commensurate with the political, legal and moral responsibilities and commitments to ensure a just and lasting solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

In this regard, as the Security Council prepares to consider its last quarterly report of 2019 on the implementation of resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#) and on the heels of the General Assembly's overwhelming adoption of its resolution on the peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, it is unquestionable that lack of implementation and lack of accountability for the ongoing grave violations by Israel, the occupying Power, have hastened the situation's steep deterioration. Emboldened by a lack of accountability and continuing appeasement, Israeli government officials



continue to pursue unlawful policies and destructive actions, even boasting of their intent to breach international law.

Last week, the Israeli Prime Minister threatened annexation once again, declaring on 5 December that Israel has the “full right” to annex the Jordan Valley in the occupied West Bank, if it so decides, blatantly dismissing the international prohibition on the acquisition of territory by force. Also, last week, the Israeli government announced plans to establish a new Israeli settlement in the heart of Al-Khalil (Hebron) in the Old City on Shuhada Street. There, the city’s central market and its thriving economic and social life had once existed, but Palestinians were forcibly driven out and banned from accessing it after a 1994 massacre of 29 Palestinians by an extremist Israeli settler, who shot and killed them during morning prayers at the Ibrahim Mosque in the city.

Such provocative and illegal plans cannot go unchallenged. They must be roundly condemned and Israel, the occupying Power, must be demanded to respect its legal obligations, including under the Fourth Geneva Convention and the relevant Security Council resolutions, and to halt all of its settlement activities and de facto annexation measures immediately and completely. This is imperative for de-escalating tensions, stemming the deterioration of the situation and salvaging peace prospects.

It is clear, as flaunted by Israeli ministers, that this latest colonization scheme aims at creating a contiguous block of settlements in the Old City that will double the Israeli settler population there. At least 700 Israeli settlers have already been illegally transferred to the city among more than 200,000 Palestinians residing there. This Palestinian population continues to live under the most oppressive and coercive conditions imposed by the Israeli occupying forces and the majority of those settlers, who are known to be religious extremists and fanatics.

In fact, after the 1994 massacre, most of the Palestinian families were subsequently expelled from their homes on Shuhada Street, and their shops were shuttered and welded shut by the occupying forces. Many of the empty homes were then seized by extremist settlers and some of the homes still occupied by Palestinians were later seized by force. While Israelis and internationals may freely access the area, the few Palestinian families that still live there must cross through military checkpoints to access their own homes and routinely endure harassment, intimidation and violence by extremist settlers. This situation has been thoroughly monitored and documented by the Temporary International Presence in Hebron, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and numerous human rights organizations, including Human Rights Watch and the Israeli organizations B’tselem and Breaking the Silence, among others.

Such provocative, illegal plans expose once again the glaring fact that, although the massacre was perpetrated by an Israeli settler, who continues to be glorified and revered by extremist settler groups, it was the Palestinian population that was punished and remains without redress and justice as the occupying Power continues to act with total impunity, shamelessly exploiting the international community’s ongoing failure to hold it accountable.

While recognizing the very clear and overwhelming rejection by the international community of such illegal policies and actions, as attested to most recently in the Security Council on 20 November with the near-unanimous reaffirmation of the relevant Security Council resolutions and the principles of the Charter of the United Nations as regards Israel’s illegal settlement activities and annexation threats, it is clear that such statements are not enough.

We reiterate the urgency of concrete action and measures to hold Israel accountable for its flagrant contempt of the Council and continuing violations against the Palestinian people and in their land. Such violations are causing profound human suffering and destroying the viability and possibility of actualizing the two-State solution on the pre-1967 borders, in accordance with United Nations resolutions, the Madrid principles and the Arab Peace Initiative, and contradict the long-standing international consensus on the parameters for just and lasting Israeli-Palestinian peace and security.

We call once again on the international community, and particularly the Security Council, to uphold the obligations in this regard. The Security Council must implement its resolutions without exception, including resolution 2334 (2016), in which it called, inter alia, for the immediate and complete cessation of all Israeli settlement activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, as well as the cessation of all acts of provocation, incitement, violence and terror against civilians. The Council cannot continue to neglect its Charter duties when it comes to the Palestine question. A future of peace, security and stability for the Palestinian and Israeli peoples and the Middle East region as a whole is dependent on this.

The present letter is in follow-up to our 677 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 12 November 2019 (A/ES-10/829-S/2019/876), constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, acts of State terrorism and systematic human rights violations being committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators must be brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) **Riyad Mansour**
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Permanent Observer
of the State of Palestine to the United Nations