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

Identical letters dated 19 July 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

I am compelled to urgently draw the international community's attention to the grave and incessant violations being perpetrated by Israel, the occupying Power, and its extremist settlers that are exacerbating the already-volatile situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and threatening to ignite a dangerous religious conflict.

Although we have repeatedly warned of intensifying violations, the occupying Power and its mobs of fanatical settlers persist in their lawlessness and provocations, emboldened in their audacity and impunity by the absence of any accountability, as the international community remains either passive or, worse, rewards Israel, despite the systematic pattern and egregious nature of the crimes being perpetrated.

On Sunday, 18 July, that permissiveness led Israeli government and military officials to deem it appropriate to allow more than 1,600 Israeli settlers to enter the Aqsa Mosque/Haram Al-Sharif en masse and perform religious rituals there in direct and gross violation of the historic and legal status quo at the holy site. Dozens of Israeli occupying soldiers accompanying the fanatical group of settlers, which included Knesset members from the Prime Minister's party, acted with brute force against the Palestinian worshippers who were present in the compound and sought to uphold the sanctity of the site against this aggression. The occupation's violent and provocative actions have again heightened tensions on the eve of Eid al-Adha, the "Feast of the Sacrifice", which marks the end of the holy hajj and is one of Islam's most significant holy days, inflaming the sensitivities of Muslims the world over.

We recall here that Israel has absolutely no sovereignty rights whatsoever in occupied East Jerusalem, including over the Old City, which houses the Aqsa Mosque/Haram Al-Sharif. It remains the occupying Power and is fully bound by international law, including humanitarian law. This has been repeatedly reaffirmed by the Security Council, the General Assembly, the Human Rights Council and the International Court of Justice. It is established fact and unquestionable.



The occupying Power has no right whatsoever to alter the demography, character, status, history or identity of the City, including at the holy sites. Moreover, it is bound by the historic and legal status quo in place for decades upon decades and prohibited, inter alia, from implementing any spatial or temporal changes at the Aqsa Mosque/Haram Al-Sharif, which remains under the custodianship of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and the administration of the Islamic Waqf as a place of Muslim worship.

Such repeated provocations and violations expose the ill intentions of the occupying Power, as it continually attempts to implement changes at the holy site, allowing more and more Jewish settlers to enter the compound and to act in violation of the status quo, trying to impose its sovereignty and gradually create a new reality. It is of urgency that all such violations, provocations and incitement cease forthwith and that the historic and legal status quo at the Aqsa Mosque/Haram Al-Sharif be fully respected in word and deed.

We urge the international community, including the Security Council, to convey clear and firm messages to Israel, the occupying Power, that it must respect international law, including the relevant Security Council resolutions, and that it will be held responsible for its breaches of the law. A message must be sent that accountability will be pursued and that the international community will no longer tolerate the entrenchment of this illegal occupation and its violations of the Palestinian people's human rights, its colonization and annexation of their land and its violation of the sanctity and historic and legal status quo of the holy sites in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem.

We urge the Security Council to unite in upholding its own resolutions, including resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#), which was crystal clear in its demands for a halt to all such provocations, incitement and violence and a halt to all illegal Israeli settlement activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. We recall in particular, pursuant to resolutions [476 \(1980\)](#) and [478 \(1980\)](#), by which the Council deplored Israel's annexation of East Jerusalem and declared it to be null and void, that the Council underscored in resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#) that it would not recognize any changes to the 4 June 1967 lines, including with regard to Jerusalem, other than those agreed by the parties through negotiations.

We urge all States to abide by the Council's authoritative rulings and to uphold their obligations in this regard, including in accordance with paragraph 5 of resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#), and not to recognize as legitimate this illegal situation and not to render any aid or assistance to Israel, the occupying Power, in the maintenance of this illegal situation. Moreover, we urge all States to abide by their obligations as High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention, including in accordance with articles 146 and 147 and the imposition of penal sanctions for the commission of grave breaches of the Convention.

We urge the international community to act with responsibility and urgency to uphold international law and to prevent the further deterioration and destabilization of this explosive situation. We reiterate that, beyond lamenting this unjust situation, serious, practical and collective action is needed to uphold international law and implement the relevant United Nations resolutions in order to bring a halt to Israel's impunity and stabilize the situation on the ground. This is imperative for protecting civilian lives and ensuring the sanctity of the holy sites in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. Such action is equally urgent to salvage the prospects for a just and peaceful solution that will finally bring an end to this injustice that the Palestinian people have suffered for far too long and ensure the realization of their inalienable rights, including to self-determination and independence.

This letter is in follow-up to our 726 letters regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which constitutes the territory of the State of Palestine. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 9 July 2021 (A/ES-10/873-S/2021/639) 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
