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

## **Identical letters dated 8 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**

The plight of the Palestinian people is worsening as Israel escalates its illegal policies and practices against the civilian population under its occupation, in tandem with the rising lawlessness it has cultivated among its occupying forces, including among the settlers it has illegally implanted in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem.

Just days ago, on 4 December 2021, yet another young Palestinian man lost his life to the extreme brutality of this occupation. Mohammad Shawkat Salima, age 25, was shot and killed in broad daylight in occupied East Jerusalem in an undeniable act of extrajudicial execution that was captured on video footage. Although already shot, wounded and disabled on the ground, Israeli occupying soldiers repeatedly shot at Mohammad, killing him in cold blood. Medics were also denied access to the scene to provide him with first aid before he was pronounced dead.

On 6 December, another Palestinian teenager, Mohammed Nidal Younes, age 15, was shot and killed at an Israeli military checkpoint in Tulkarm. The young boy was executed in the same manner as every other Palestinian killed under Israel's shoot-to-kill policy. This year, Israel has already killed 16 Palestinian children in the occupied West Bank, and 67 children in Gaza during its aggression in May. Palestinian children, like all children, have the right to live a safe, secure and peaceful childhood. Israel's routine killing of Palestinian children should remind the international community, particularly the Security Council, that children are protected under the Fourth Geneva Convention and other provisions of international law, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child, to which Israel is a signatory.

As we have cautioned repeatedly, this shoot-to-kill policy is a systematic practice of the occupying Power, amounting to war crimes against the occupied population. In this regard, in a statement on the incident, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territory stated that "Extrajudicial killings such as this are the consequence of the regular resort



to lethal force by well-armed and well-protected Israeli security personnel against Palestinians, and the almost total lack of accountability for killings and injuries of Palestinians by Israeli forces”.

We reiterate our calls for accountability for this extrajudicial execution and all other acts by the Israeli occupation forces and Israeli settlers causing loss of life and injury to Palestinian civilians. We stress the importance of the International Criminal Court investigation on Palestine towards holding the perpetrators of such war crimes responsible and deterring further crimes against our people.

We underscore that such attacks are the outcome of decades of dehumanization of Palestinians by Israel, the occupying Power, which has fostered within Israeli occupying forces, as well as Israeli settlers, a blatant and violent disregard for Palestinian lives. Blinded by an insatiable expansionist, colonial drive, Israel permits Israeli occupation forces and extremist settlers to rampage with impunity across the Occupied Palestinian Territory, all towards one objective: maintaining control of the land and domination of the Palestinian people in that land.

As the Israeli human rights group B’Tselem has pointed out: “Israel benefits from the repercussions, as settler violence has gradually dispossessed Palestinians of more and more areas in the West Bank, paving the way for a state takeover of land and resources.” This is the engine for what B’Tselem has rightly identified as Israel’s aim of “geographically and demographically engineering space” to ensure its control and “Jewish supremacy” in all of the land.

Supported and emboldened by the government, Israeli occupation forces and Israeli settlers are intensifying their lethal racist attacks and incitement against Palestinians in ongoing attempts to drive them off their land, entrench the occupation and de facto annex the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. United Nations officials and experts, independent human rights and humanitarian organizations, jurists and scholars worldwide have repeatedly warned of this reality and called for urgent action to halt the impunity and creeping annexation policies that have made apartheid a reality for the millions of Palestinians living under the longest belligerent colonial occupation in modern history.

While some in the international community believe that the new Israeli government will yield “positive” results, the reality on the ground proves otherwise, as the new President, Prime Minister and all other levels of the government continue to pursue the same illegal policies and measures aimed at maintaining and expanding Israel’s control of Occupied Palestine and the Palestinian people.

Reflecting the approach of the new Israeli government, on 28 November, Israeli occupying forces surrounded Al-Khalil (Hebron) as part of a provocative visit by the Israeli President to the Ibrahimi mosque, where he participated in a Hanukkah ceremony accompanied by leaders of extremist settler groups that have long been aided by the government in their violent, illegal, colonial pursuits in our land. Accompanied by a heavy military presence, Israeli settlers stormed the Ibrahimi mosque to carry out the settler-organized ceremony, in which the Israeli President participated.

This incident yet again underscores the direct sponsorship and symbiotic relationship between the government and extremist elements, which have worked hand-in-glove across decades and every Israeli government incarnation to colonize the Palestinian land, with now 700,000 Israeli settlers illegally transferred to nearly 300 illegal settlements and outposts in Occupied Palestine, including East Jerusalem, despite the absolute prohibitions under the Fourth Geneva Convention, the Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts and the Rome Statute.

In this connection, we must recall the heinous massacre perpetrated by an Israeli settler terrorist at the Ibrahimi mosque in 1994, who murdered 29 Palestinians in the early hours of dawn prayers, among them children and elderly, and wounded dozens of others. Israel not only continues to ignore and violate Security Council resolution 904 (1994), which was adopted in the aftermath of that massacre, but, ever since, it has acted to forcibly divide and transform the Mosque under a policy of segregation in which settler extremists have full access to the Mosque under the presence of Israeli occupation forces, while access by Palestinians to their holy site, as witnessed not only in Al-Khalil, but elsewhere in Occupied Palestine, including Jerusalem, Nablus and Bethlehem, is restricted.

Moreover, it is necessary to recall that in 2019, Israel expelled the Temporary International Presence in Hebron in an attempt to conceal the exposure of its human rights violations and to whitewash the colonial, apartheid reality in Al-Khalil. With Israel's latest malicious smear campaign against Palestinian civil society organizations, it is no coincidence that the Israeli President is seizing this opportunity to legitimize the sterilization and settler takeover of the city as the presence and role of civil society organizations, non-governmental organizations, and human rights defenders are severely diminished due to the coordinated attacks, harassment and intimidation by the Israeli government and settler organizations.

With the new President and Prime Minister copying their predecessor's playbook of relentless settler sponsorship and settlement expansion, how can anyone justify the myths and misconceptions that are detached from the colonial apartheid reality that prevails?

As stated by Israeli non-governmental organization Breaking the Silence, "If there were ever a place where the word apartheid is relevant to the Israeli case, Hebron would be it. That's where Israel's President Herzog has chosen to celebrate the first night of Hanukkah ... . By celebrating Hanukkah with Hebron's settlers, Herzog is using his position as the top official representative of the State of Israel to legitimize all of that."

Here, we echo the call made by the Palestinian Foreign Ministry: "The Israeli government bears full and direct responsibility for this event. The ceremony is a defiant move aimed at embracing the settlement enterprise and a blatant violation of international law and the international effort to curb unilateral measures." The international community must demand that Israel cease its illegal policies and practices forthwith and respect its legal obligations and, in the face of continued non-compliance, must enact serious enforcement measures.

As proven with the passage of time, if there is no accountability, we will only continue to witness the perpetration of such illegal actions. The cycle of international condemnations never backed by serious action has unfortunately permitted – and even green-lighted – Israel to run roughshod over all norms, rules and rights. We urge the international community to break this cycle and act now to uphold the rule of law and implement United Nations resolutions, including Security Council resolution 2334 (2016), which, inter alia, condemned "all measures aimed at altering the demographic composition, character and status of the Palestinian Territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem ...", called for cessation of all such illegal policies and measures, and underlined that the Security Council "will not recognize any changes to the 4 June 1967 lines, including with regard to Jerusalem".

It is a matter of urgency to stop the destructive colonization of the Palestinian land and the oppression of the Palestinian people, who continue to suffer gravely from the oppressive, violent and racist policies propelling this illegal colonial occupation. It is time to seek accountability as a priority to protect civilian lives, to ensure justice and to salvage the prospects for peace.

In this regard, it is undeniable that both inaction and the lack of accountability have become among the root causes of the longest-standing item on the United Nations agenda, as more than 800 General Assembly resolutions and 80 Security Council resolutions remain unimplemented. Achieving peace and justice, including by ensuring the realization of the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, requires that the international community act without delay to reign in Israel's reigning impunity and to implement those resolutions, which constitute the key to a just, lasting and peaceful solution.

The present letter is in follow-up to our 736 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 5 November 2021 ([A/ES-10/883-S/2021/928](#)), 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) Riyadh **Mansour**  
Minister  
Permanent Observer