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

Security Council
Seventy-seventh year

Identical letters dated 14 February 2022 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 situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, is rapidly destabilizing as Israel, the occupying Power, is intensifying its human rights violations and crimes against the Palestinian people. Despite repeated warnings and appeals by Governments, parliaments, United Nations officials and civil society across the world to bring an end to this injustice, Israel carries on with impunity, clearly emboldened and enabled by a lack of accountability that seemingly exempts Israel from the rule of law.

The start of this year has begun much as the entirety of 2021, marked by systematic violations of international law, including colonization of our territory and human rights abuses against our people at the hands of Israeli occupying forces and extremist settlers. Palestinians continue to be dispossessed of their land and homes, to be killed and injured, to be arrested and imprisoned every single day, including children, and to suffer recurrent trauma and loss, exacerbating humanitarian needs and tensions, risking the ignition of yet another deadly cycle of violence.

The situation is becoming extremely volatile, in particular in the Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood of occupied East Jerusalem, which is under siege and attacks by Israeli occupying forces and extremist settlers and politicians. Israeli occupying forces have closed the western entrance to the neighbourhood with iron mounds and have expelled Palestinian, Israeli and international activists from the vicinity of the home of the Salem family, which is threatened with imminent expulsion in yet another State-sanctioned settler takeover.

Extremist Knesset member Itamar Ben Gvir, a Kahanist known for his racist, hateful anti-Arab views, persists with his incitement against Palestinian families in Sheikh Jarrah and the Palestinian presence itself in the city. Allied with extremist settler groups, he again established a so-called “parliamentary office” in the front yard of the Salem home, making threatening declarations against the family. Protesters against this latest provocation were met with the violence, with at least 13 arrested



and dozens injured, including Fatma Salem, the 75-year-old matriarch of the family, by assaults on the family, solidarity activists and journalists, and tensions continue to dangerously rise as yet another family simply trying to live in peace in their home are threatened every day with being driven out by extremists backed by a colonial occupation that for decades has sought to drive our people off their land, home by home, family by family: in other words, ethnic cleansing.

We once again urge the international community to act to address this crisis situation. Urgent action is needed to save Palestinian families from further dispossession and forced displacement by this illegal occupation. This must start now with accountability measures for Israel's blatant schemes to drive Palestinians from their homes and land, in grave breach of international law.

Without action, we fear only more suffering for the Palestinian civilian population as this illegal, colonial apartheid occupation becomes more and more emboldened and aggressive. Recent developments should ring alarm bells, including the assassination of three Palestinian men in Nablus on 8 February in a flagrant act of extrajudicial killing. Adham Mabrouka, Ashraf Mubaslat and Mohammed Dakhil were ambushed and killed by Israeli soldiers in broad daylight, in yet another documented case exposing Israel's disregard for human life and the rule of law. Israeli occupying forces fired more than 80 bullets at the three men as they sat in a car, killing them instantly in a horrific crime that many Israeli officials openly praised. Thousands of mourners took part in the funeral for the three victims in Nablus, with a public strike taking place across Occupied Palestine in a collective message of unity and solidarity with the bereaved families and against the terror and violence of this immoral, illegal occupation.

Today, the occupation's cruelty revealed itself once again as Israeli occupying forces shot and killed a Palestinian teenager in Silat al-Harithiya, near Jenin. Mohammed Akram Abu Salah, age 17, was shot in the head when Israeli occupying forces surrounded and closed off the village in order to demolish yet another Palestinian home. After killing Mohammad and injuring 20 other residents, Israeli occupying forces prevented medics from reaching the victims, and went as far as attacking ambulances and medical workers who were desperately trying to reach Mohammed to try to save him, depriving him of medical treatment, in grave breach of international human rights and humanitarian law, including articles 16 and 17 of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War (Fourth Geneva Convention) on the protection of medical services and civilians.

This shoot-to-kill policy amounts to war crimes for which there must be accountability. As stressed by the Palestinian Foreign Ministry: "the silence of the international community to Israeli violations and crimes provides a cover to these criminal acts and encourages the Israeli occupier to continue in its open warfare against the Palestinians". In addition to the execution of these men, in the past two weeks, more than 215 Palestinians, including 28 children, have been injured by the Israeli occupying forces in protests against Israel's settlements and encroachment on their land in the areas of Kafr Qaddum, Beita and Beit Dajan in the occupied West Bank, and more than 126 Palestinians, among them children, were arrested, with the numbers rising by the day.

Such violent, inhumane and cruel policies constitute key instruments of the occupation's oppression. We reiterate our calls for accountability for Israel's crimes against the Palestinian people and stress the importance, inter alia, of the International Criminal Court investigation on Palestine towards holding the perpetrators of these war crimes responsible and deterring further crimes against our people.

Accountability must also address Israel's colonization of Palestinian land, in flagrant breach of international law and countless United Nations resolutions. In just

the span of the past two weeks, Israeli occupying authorities, forging ahead with illegal settlement schemes and in the service of extremist settlers, have demolished, confiscated or forced the self-demolition of 53 homes and structures, including 30 market stalls in Jenin, displacing Palestinian families and affecting the livelihoods of at least 400 people. According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, in 2021, 905 Palestinian homes and structures, as well as 140 structures funded by the European Union, were demolished or seized, and the majority of civilians forcibly displaced were children and women.

It must be clarified that the “structures” include schools, clinics, shops, roads, agricultural and animal sheds, water and sanitation networks, and other vital civilian infrastructure, the destruction of which disproportionately infringes on livelihoods, access to education, health care and water and countless other human rights, including the right to family life and to property. In addition, such illegal measures breach the prohibitions on pillage and collective punishment under international humanitarian law, particularly article 33 of the Fourth Geneva Convention, and the calls by the Security Council for a cessation of all such measures.

Are children’s schools threatening the Israeli occupation’s so-called “legitimate security concerns”? Are livestock attacking the so-called “only democracy in the Middle East”? Are the Palestinian people not entitled to the same security rights and the right to live in freedom and dignity? From homes to kindergartens to water wells, Israel’s decades-long dispossession and displacement of the Palestinian people shows how far and how low this colonial occupation and apartheid regime is willing to go to illegally alter the demography, character and status of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, particularly in and around Jerusalem, in grave breach of the law and in contempt of the Security Council, including resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#) and with zero regard for human rights and the human suffering that it is systematically and painfully causing, traumatizing generation after generation.

This abhorrent reality is the reason that preeminent international human rights organizations, including Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, along with leading Israeli human rights organizations, have now reached the same conclusion long ago determined by Palestinian human rights organizations and warned of by the Palestinian leadership: Israel is imposing an apartheid regime on the Palestinian people, blatantly discriminating against them and grossly violating their human rights precisely because of who they are – Palestinian Arabs and not Israeli Jews.

Indeed, after in-depth investigation, Amnesty concluded that Israel is imposing a system of domination and oppression against the Palestinian people wherever they may be, aimed at maximizing the theft of Palestinian land while minimizing the native Palestinian presence. It has determined, inter alia, that “the patterns of proscribed acts perpetrated by Israel form part of a systematic as well as widespread attack directed against the Palestinian population, and that the inhuman or inhumane acts committed within the context of this attack have been committed with the intention to maintain this system and amount to the crime against humanity of apartheid under both the Apartheid Convention and the Rome Statute”.

Again, these findings corroborate the prior conclusions of Palestinian and Israeli organizations and have been endorsed by numerous other human rights and humanitarian organizations, in addition to several Governments and parliamentarians, United Nations special rapporteurs, legal scholars and global citizenry who have long been witness to this abhorrent reality.

The libellous accusations of antisemitism against Amnesty International and any others who speak truth to power – among them Palestinian civil society organizations that Israel has outrageously branded as “terrorists”, threatening their vital work and the safety of their personnel – are shameful and dangerous and must be rejected. The

international community must be honest and clear: this is not about antisemitism; but rather about practices that if committed by any other State would be deemed illegal and inhumane.

Their conclusions – just like the resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly – are based on the facts, on strict analysis of the reams of evidence in accordance with international law. The reality on the ground reaffirms the appalling facts every single day: human rights abuses, persecution, war crimes and crimes against humanity are being systematically perpetrated against the Palestinian people, women and men, children and the elderly, refugees and prisoners; none are being spared this inhumanity.

The facts are indisputable: apartheid is one of the main instruments by which Israel continues to impose its illegal colonial occupation and oppress Palestinians wherever they may be. Apartheid is practised by Israel every single day, as manifested in dozens of laws, including the shocking 2018 “Jewish nation state law” and countless military orders specifically designed and implemented to repress Palestinians, whether Muslim or Christian, and privilege Jews in every sphere of life.

This inhumane and unlawful reality must be reckoned with. Colonization is illegal, apartheid is illegal, and yet both are being used by Israel to prolong its occupation of the Palestinian land and deprive the Palestinian people, including our refugees, of their inalienable human rights, including to self-determination. This illegal situation must be brought to an end.

The recent reports in this regard are a clarion call to the international community, including the Security Council, to act forthwith to uphold the law and protect the Palestinian civilian population that is at the heart of this prolonged and tragic conflict and has been left defenceless to this persecution and colonization for too long. It is time to translate international law and United Nations resolutions into the accountability that is urgently needed through the necessary practical means and measures, as underscored in the Security Council’s very own resolutions, including Security Council resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#).

This month, we reflect on a historic day for the international community – 11 February – the date on which Nelson Mandela was freed from prison after a 27-year imprisonment for his extraordinary struggle against apartheid and oppression, marking the end of a dark chapter in history. Nelson Mandela’s legacy is more relevant today than ever and serves as a reminder of the imperative and urgency of standing against such grave injustice wherever it may exist. We urge the international community, including the Security Council, to find the will and moral courage to break the cycle of inaction and to mobilize to end the injustice that the Palestinian people have for too long endured. We reiterate our abiding appeal for tangible, collective action to uphold international law and protect human rights and to make justice and peace the prevailing reality.

This letter is in follow-up to our 742 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 21 January 2022 ([A/ES-10/889–S/2022/45](#)) 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**
Minister
Permanent Observer
