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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 6 June 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 Universal Declaration of Human Rights affirms, in its article 1, that “all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights”. However, the Palestinian people continue to be deprived of their freedom, dignity and rights by Israel, a colonial occupying Power and apartheid State that proves every day its total contempt for Palestinian life.

Confronted by such inhumanity, and on this sombre anniversary of 55 years since the onset of Israel’s military occupation of the remainder of historic Palestine in 1967, we must respond that Palestinian lives matter and that the rights, humanity, dignity and worth of every Palestinian child, woman and man must be recognized and protected.

In this regard, I regret to inform you that, in the week since my last letter dated 31 May 2022, Israeli occupying forces have killed yet more Palestinian civilians, including children and a woman, destroying yet more families and deepening the enmity that the occupying Power has deliberately and dangerously instigated between the two peoples for decades. Since the start of 2022, Israeli occupying forces have killed more than 65 Palestinian civilians in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, among them 13 children and 5 women.

On 1 June, Israeli occupying forces killed another Palestinian woman, Ghufran Warasneh, age 31, who is also the second Palestinian journalist killed by Israel in the three weeks since the assassination of Shireen Abu Akleh in the Jenin refugee camp on 11 May. Ghufran was killed at the entrance to the Arroub refugee camp on the morning of her first day at work at a local radio station, Dream Radio in Al-Khalil (Hebron), when Israeli soldiers shot her in the chest from at least 2 metres away. Ghufran was the eldest child in her family and helped to support her parents and younger siblings, who are now mourning her loss.

In contradiction to eyewitness reports and absent any credible evidence, the Israeli occupying forces falsely claim that she was “carrying a knife” to justify her



murder. Such lies have become the standard refrain of the Israeli occupying forces to defend their soldiers who kill unarmed, defenceless Palestinian women, children and men without hesitation. Such lies are offensive to human logic and must be rejected and condemned.

Why would a young woman, eager to start a new job and support her family, risk her life in such a way? She would not. But the fact is that every Palestinian life is at risk every single day under this cruel and illegal occupation that tramples on the right to life of our people, systematically killing, injuring and maiming them with impunity. She was killed because she was Palestinian, by the soldiers of an occupying army that are secure not only in the body armour and tons of lethal weaponry provided to them by Israel's supporters, but also in the knowledge that they would not be held accountable for killing a Palestinian.

Such violations continue to be perpetrated in broad daylight by soldiers and extremist settlers, including against Palestinian journalists to prevent their documentation and reporting of Israel's crimes against the Palestinian people. It is a fact that Palestinian journalists are routinely harassed, intimidated and beaten, their cameras and mobile phones confiscated and their equipment destroyed by the Israeli occupying forces. Journalists are also routinely detained, with at least 15 currently imprisoned by Israel, including 1 in administrative detention.

Hours after Ghufraan's murder, Israeli occupying forces killed a young Palestinian man, Bilal Qabha, age 24, in the village of Ya'bad near Jenin. Bilal was known to his community as a calm, quiet person, dedicated to his family and focused on his work, which helped him to support his elderly parents, who are now bereft without him. Israeli occupying forces had stormed the village with approximately 30 military vehicles to carry out the punitive destruction of the home of the Hamarsheh family and, in addition to murdering Bilal, seriously wounded six other Palestinians. Also on 1 June, a 41-year-old Palestinian man, Yasser al-Masri, died of wounds he sustained in an Israeli air strike on Gaza last year, ending a year of painful suffering and loss for his family.

On 2 June, in a violent dawn raid on the Dheisheh refugee camp in Bethlehem, Israeli occupying forces shot and killed a Palestinian man, Ayman Muheisen, age 29, in front of his home. Ayman was the father of three children and is mourned by his family and friends, who remember him as a friendly, helpful and caring man.

Resorting yet again to empty pretexts to justify these murders, the Israeli occupying forces have used the excuse that Palestinians in Ya'bad and Dheisheh were throwing stones, burning tyres and throwing Molotov cocktails. In this regard, we must recall that Israel is not sovereign in any part of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. Israel is the occupying Power in its fifty-fifth year of imposing a belligerent occupation on our people in breach of every applicable tenet of international law. It has no right whatsoever to continue to impose its control by force on the Palestinian people, who have a legitimate right to resist this illegal, colonial occupation.

Also on 2 June, Israeli occupying forces murdered a 16-year-old Palestinian boy, Odeh Mohammed Odeh, in the village of Al-Midyah, west of Ramallah, making him the fourth Palestinian to be shot and killed by Israeli soldiers in the span of two days. Odeh was shot in the back with live ammunition, as he clearly ran away from the occupying soldiers, the bullet piercing his heart and exiting through his chest.

These killings were preceded by the murders by Israeli occupying forces of a 15-year-old boy, Ghaith Mohammed Rafiq Ziad Yamin, on 25 May in Nablus; a 16-year-old boy, Amjad Walid Hussein Fayed, on 21 May in Jenin; and a 14-year-old boy, Zaid Mohammed Said Ghunaim, on 27 May in Khidr near Bethlehem. All of

these Palestinian boys – targeted precisely because they are Palestinian – were shot with live fire, even as they ran from Israeli soldiers, who were too bloodthirsty to spare their lives.

As reported by Defense for Children International – Palestine, one of the civil society organizations criminalized by Israel in an attempt to silence the exposure of its war crimes in Occupied Palestine, the Israeli occupying forces have killed 6 Palestinian children in the past month and 14 children since the start of year, repeatedly using live ammunition to shoot-to-kill children who do not pose a direct threat to life or serious injury. These killings amount to flagrant and grave breaches of international law, including humanitarian and human rights law; they are acts of terror and they constitute war crimes.

Here, we echo the words of Mr. Ayed Abu Eqtaish, Accountability Programme Director at Defense for Children International – Palestine: “Israeli forces’ impunity is on full display as Palestinian children continue to be targets ... They will continue to be unlawfully killed with impunity without actual justice and accountability ... Every time a Palestinian child is killed by Israeli forces, I wonder: will this be the child that finally forces the international community to stop being complicit in Israeli violations of international law?”

We ask this very same question to the international community, to the members of the Security Council, who are witnessing the blatant oppression and persecution of a people, daily, continually, cruelly across decades. As we mark 55 years since Israel’s occupation, is it not time to say “enough”? Is it not time to act with the might of international law and moral conscience to bring an end to this immoral, illegal situation?

We call on the international community to act now, responsibly and collectively, to bring an end to this appalling colonial occupation and apartheid regime and to help the Palestinian people to realize their inalienable human rights, including to self-determination and return, the pillars of any future just, secure and lasting peace. It is time to stand against impunity and ensure accountability towards upholding the inherent dignity and equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family that the international community, in adopting the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, long ago recognized as “the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world”.

The present letter is in follow-up to our 755 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 31 May 2022 (A/ES-10/902-S/2022/442) 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