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

Identical letters dated 3 January 2024 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 start of the new year in Occupied Palestine has been marred by Israel's genocidal aggression on the Palestinian people, especially in the Gaza Strip, where the toll of death, destruction and human misery is mounting, as the occupying Power continues besieging, attacking and collectively punishing the civilian population in grave breach of all international legal and moral norms.

Every single day, Israel proves that violence is the only language it speaks. Whether through mass slaughter of Palestinians in Gaza, cold-blooded murder of Palestinians in the West Bank or targeted assassinations, as perpetrated in Beirut yesterday against a Hamas leader, Saleh Al-Arouri, a brazen extrajudicial killing and breach of Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity, Israel's primary mode of engagement is violence and terror, its method of choice to oppress and persecute Palestinians, whether before 7 October or after.

Violence is how Israel has imposed its occupation and subjugated the Palestinian people for decades, and when Palestinians resist this violent, abhorrent occupation, they are met with even more brutal Israeli violence. It is a fact: this violent, racist, colonial occupation is the root cause of the current catastrophic crisis, of the apartheid reality that prevails, of the colonization and ethnic cleansing of Palestine, and now of the genocide being perpetrated against the Palestinian people.

In just a 24-hour period, from 1 to 2 January 2024, Israeli occupying forces killed 207 Palestinians and wounded 338 others in attacks in central and south Gaza, where the majority of the population has been forcibly displaced to by Israel's aggression. The casualty toll in Gaza now stands at 22,313 Palestinian men, women and children killed and more than 57,000 injured.

The death toll comprises at least 9,100 children and 6,500 women killed in deliberate, indiscriminate bombings by Israel of residential neighbourhoods, refugee camps, hospitals, mosques, churches, and schools and facilities of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA)



sheltering displaced families, where 315 Palestinians have been killed and more than 1,148 injured by Israeli bombs and missiles. More than 7,000 Palestinians, mostly women and children, remain unaccounted for, presumed dead under the rubble as recovery has been made impossible by Israel's incessant targeting of civilian areas.

Israel's attacks also continue gravely impacting the humanitarian community, with another strike yesterday on a hospital, Al-Amal Hospital of the Palestine Red Crescent Society in Khan Younis, where civilians, including a newborn baby, were killed. To date, 142 Palestinian staff members of UNRWA, 326 doctors and other health-care workers, and over 100 Palestinian journalists and media workers have been killed in Israeli strikes.

There are also reports of kidnappings of Palestinian babies and children by Israeli soldiers, in addition to the abduction of thousands of Palestinians, mostly males, young and old, detained by Israeli occupying forces and taken to unknown locations. On Christmas day, videos circulated showing Israeli soldiers corralling and detaining hundreds of Palestinians inside Yarmouk football stadium in Gaza City, among them children, elderly men and persons with disabilities, forced to strip to their underwear and subjected to degrading conditions and ill-treatment, including beatings.

Attacks by Israeli occupying forces and terrorist settlers continue also in the West Bank, including military raids on 27 December in all major cities – in Ramallah, Jenin, Jericho, East Jerusalem, Nablus, Tulkarem and Al-Khalil. At least 324 Palestinians, 83 of them children, have been killed in attacks across the West Bank and over 3,800 injured, raising the casualty toll there to 524 Palestinians killed by Israeli soldiers and settlers in 2023, the deadliest year there since the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs began its documentation in 2005.

Since 7 October, thousands more Palestinians have been taken captive by Israel in the West Bank, with over 4,700 detained, among them 40 journalists, and ill-treatment, torture and medical negligence have led to the death of seven Palestinians in Israeli prisons in this period alone. Israel also continues to impose severe movement restrictions across the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, closing almost all entrances to Palestinian villages and towns, besieging the entire population.

2024 must be the year that brings an end to this illegal occupation and historic injustice against the Palestinian people.

The international community must reject Israel's false, offensive pretexts for the prolongation of this immoral, inhumane situation. Addressing its symptoms and consequences, not least the human devastation and humanitarian catastrophe today in Gaza, while ignoring the source of all the violence and turmoil – Israel's violation of the rights of an entire nation of people and their total deprivation under its colonial occupation and apartheid regime – will never bring solutions.

Thus, we reiterate our appeal to the Security Council and the international community for immediate action to: (a) secure a ceasefire in Gaza as a matter of utmost urgency to save human lives; (b) provide desperately needed humanitarian assistance to Palestinian civilians in Gaza, who are suffering displacement, hunger and risk of famine, disease and want on a massive scale; and (c) halt Israel's forced displacement of Palestinian civilians and attempts at their mass expulsion, including attempts to force the population's migration, i.e. mass deportation, from Gaza.

Israel's genocidal aggression and incitement against the Palestinian people must be stopped. How much more carnage can the international community accept, how many more children, women and men will be slaughtered, how many more maimed and disabled, how many more orphans and widows, how many more mass graves in Gaza, before the international community acts?

Israel's collective punishment and use of starvation as a weapon of war must be stopped. How much more despair and how many malnourished children and deaths from starvation is the international community willing to tolerate before it acts?

Israel's destruction of homes, hospitals, schools, United Nations shelters, mosques, churches and critical civilian infrastructure must be stopped. How long will the international community watch Israel's systematic human rights violations and deliberate denial of access to adequate shelters, water and sanitation, and health-care and emergency medical services before it acts?

Israel's forced displacement of Palestinians and the sinister schemes and calls by far-right Israeli officials to forcibly transfer or coerce "voluntary migration" of the population from Gaza to clear the way for Israeli colonization must be stopped. With over 1.9 million people – 85 per cent of the population – already displaced, when will the international community act?

These are war crimes, crimes against humanity and acts of genocide that must be stopped and for which there must be accountability to the fullest extent of the law.

In this year, 2024, as we tragically approach 76 years of Nakba, 57 years of occupation, 17 years of blockade and now 88 days of a blatant genocidal siege and war on the Palestinian people, it is long past time for the international community to act, collectively and urgently, to put a stop to Israel's grotesque impunity and to protect the Palestinian people and assist them in attaining justice and realizing their rights.

It requires serious efforts to uphold international law, including humanitarian and human rights law, through effective measures of accountability, including at the International Criminal Court and International Court of Justice, including in the context of the current advisory opinion proceedings and as South Africa has rightly and responsibly done in initiating a case against Israel for its breaches of the Genocide Convention, and through lawful countermeasures and sanctions. There must be consequences for war crimes and crimes against humanity; there must be deterrence.

It requires all States to demand and ensure respect for compulsory obligations under international law, including action by the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention to enforce the Convention in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and to end the treatment of Israel as a State above the law.

It requires serious efforts to implement the most recent United Nations resolutions concerning the crisis in Gaza, namely Security Council resolutions [2712 \(2023\)](#) and [2720 \(2023\)](#) and General Assembly resolutions [ES-10/21](#) and [ES-10/22](#). Serious efforts are needed to ensure an immediate humanitarian ceasefire, protection of the civilian population and acceleration and expansion of humanitarian aid to Palestinian civilians in Gaza, who are depleted, suffering and desperate after nearly three months of Israeli aggression, torment and deprivation of food, water, medicines, shelter and fuel for basic living needs. Humanitarian assistance is urgently needed to save lives and stave off despair.

Moreover, it requires immediate action to stop Israel's plot to make conditions of life impossible in Gaza and to forcibly displace Palestinians and send them anywhere else in the world, rather than allowing them to return to their homes in Gaza or to their original homes and ancestral lands from which they were ethnically cleansed in the 1948 Nakba. No State should collude or be complicit with such an illegal and immoral scheme, constituting war crimes and crimes against humanity, for which all must be held accountable.

And it requires serious efforts to implement all other relevant United Nations resolutions, including Security Council resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#) and all that preceded

and followed, aimed at achieving a just solution to the Palestine question, in conformity with international law and long-standing international consensus, that brings an end to the Israeli occupation that began in 1967 and fulfils the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including their rights to life, to self-determination and freedom and to return.

We implore all States and the Security Council, the General Assembly, the Secretary-General and all components of the United Nations system to pursue these objectives as a matter of urgency and priority in this new year. Israel, the occupying Power, cannot be allowed to carry on with these atrocities against the Palestinian people, threatening their existence and threatening regional and international peace and security, with impunity. The time to act is now.

The present letter is in follow-up to our 821 letters on 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 26 December 2023 ([A/ES-10/977-S/2023/1041](#)), 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 against our 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
