



DIVISION FOR
PALESTINIAN RIGHTS

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on action by the United Nations system and
intergovernmental organizations
relevant to the question of Palestine

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I. OIC CONDEMNS INCURSION BY ISRAELI MINISTER INTO THE AL-AQSA MOSQUE COMPOUND

On 3 January, the General Secretariat of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation issued the following [statement](#).

The General Secretariat of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) strongly condemned the incursion by the extremist Israeli minister Ben-Gvir into the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound with the protection of the Israeli defence forces. This is part of attempts by Israel, the occupying power, to alter the existing historical and legal status of in the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque. The General Secretariat viewed this as a provocation against Muslims' sentiments and a flagrant violation of relevant international resolutions.

The OIC holds the Israeli defence forces fully responsible for the repercussions of the continued daily Israeli aggression against Al-Quds, including its people and holy sites. The OIC called on the international community to assume its responsibility towards stopping these Israeli violations, which can trigger religious conflict, extremism and instability in the region.

II. ASG KHIARI BRIEFS SECURITY COUNCIL, CALLS ON ALL PARTIES TO MAINTAIN STATUS QUO OF JERUSALEM'S HOLY SITES

On 5 January, Assistant Secretary-General Khaled Khiari gave the following [briefing](#) (S/PV.9236) to the Security Council on the Situation in the Middle East including the Palestinian question.

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I would like to note that Special Coordinator Wennesland will provide his regular, full briefing on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question, on 18 January. However, we are concerned about the events of this past week in Jerusalem and about the broader ongoing tensions and violence in the occupied West Bank.

On 3 January, Israel's new Minister of National Security, Itamar Ben-Gvir, conducted a visit, accompanied by a heavy security detail, to the holy sites in Jerusalem. The visit was the first to the site by an Israeli minister since 2017. While the visit was not accompanied or followed by violence, it is seen as particularly inflammatory given Mr. Ben-Gvir's past advocacy for changes to the status quo. The visit was sharply condemned by the Palestinian Authority, many others across the region and the international community as a provocation that risked sparking further bloodshed. Many also warned against any changes to the status quo at the holy sites. Following the visit, the Israeli Prime Minister's Office and other senior Israeli officials emphasized that the Government is committed to upholding the status quo and that the visit did not represent a deviation from it.

As we have seen numerous times in the past, the situation at Jerusalem's holy sites is deeply fragile, and any incident or tension there can spill over and cause violence throughout the occupied Palestinian territory, in Israel and elsewhere in the region. With that reality in

mind, I reiterate the Secretary-General's call for all parties to refrain from steps that could escalate tensions in and around the holy sites and for all to uphold the status quo, in line with the special role of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

Over the past several days, the United Nations has remained in close contact with relevant parties to de-escalate the situation, and those engagements will continue in the coming days and weeks. At this sensitive moment, all efforts to lower tensions should be encouraged, while provocations, inflammatory steps, unilateral actions and threats of violence must be categorically rejected. Leaders on all sides have a responsibility to lower the flames and create the conditions for calm. The United Nations remains ready to assist and support those efforts.

III. OIC ISSUES COMMUNIQUÉ AFTER EMERGENCY MEETING ON AL-AQSA MOSQUE

On 10 January, following an extraordinary open-ended meeting, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation's Executive Committee adopted the following [communiqué](#).

The Extraordinary Open-ended Meeting of the OIC Executive Committee, held on Tuesday, 10/1/2022, to examine the continued Israeli aggression against the blessed Aqsa Mosque, at the request of the State of Palestine and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, and in coordination with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Chair of the Islamic Summit and the Executive Committee, at the OIC headquarters, Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia,

Proceeding from the principles and objectives of the Charter of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, the historical, moral and legal responsibility of the Islamic Ummah and the duty of full solidarity with Palestine and its people;

Reaffirming all relevant Resolutions adopted by the Islamic Summit, Council of Foreign Ministers and OIC Extraordinary Meetings;

Reaffirming the centrality of the cause of Palestine, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif at its heart, for the entire Islamic Ummah, and reaffirming the Arab and Islamic identity of occupied Al-Quds, the capital of the State of Palestine, and rejecting any form of prejudice to it:

1. Condemns in the strongest terms the storming of the blessed Aqsa Mosque / Al-Haram Al-Qudsi-ASharif on 3/1/ 2023 by a minister in the Israeli colonial occupation cabinet, who is known for his extremism, and considers it as a serious provocation that hurt the feelings of Muslims all over the world and in a blatant violation of international law, relevant UN resolutions, existing historic and legal situation in Al-Quds and its sanctities and all relevant international norms;

2. Warns against the consequences of the continued assault on Al-Aqsa Mosque / Al-Haram Al-Qudsi Al-Sharif, including provocations, continued abuses, and daily serious attacks by the Israeli colonial occupation authorities, its government officials, its military occupation forces, and colonialists, in a gross violation of international law and unprecedented tampering with the current historic and legal situation, especially the

dangerous attempts by extremist Jewish colonialists to fuel the flames of religious conflict by imposing a temporal and spatial division of the Haram al-Sharif, which poses a threat to international peace and security;

3. Affirms that the primary responsibility for events in the Blessed Aqsa Mosque and Al Haram Al-Qudsi AShariff rests with the Israeli colonial occupation authorities, which provide protection to the colonizers and their leaders, including government officials, and their continued efforts to change the status quo therein, and holds them responsible for the consequences of their continued illegal policies and measures;

4. Demands the United Nations Security Council, in its capacity as the guarantor of international peace and security, to assume its responsibilities and act urgently to take the necessary measures, without selectivity or double standards, to deter and stop the dangerous Israeli escalation, along with all other illegal and provocative measures and policies that affect the occupied city of Al-Quds and the sanctity of the Blessed Aqsa Mosque / Al-Haram Al-Qudsi Al-Sharif.

5. Appreciates the positions of the states that rejected and condemned the provocative and aggressive Israeli incursions into the blessed Aqsa Mosque/ Al-Haram Al-Qudsi Al-Sharif, and calls on the international community, particularly the permanent members of the Security Council, to condemn these irresponsible and dangerous actions, and to take urgent action and practical steps to stop them and to put an end to the accelerating deterioration of the situation in Palestine in general due to the Israeli colonial occupation authorities' continued violation of the international law, Palestinians' human rights.

6. Calls for the imposition of sanctions on the extremist minister in the Israeli colonial occupation government who assaulted the sanctity of the blessed -Aqsa Mosque / Al-Haram Al-Qudsi Al-Sharif, and anyone who deliberately does so, makes threats, or performs provocative actions against it, incites against the Palestinian people, adopts a racist discourse against it, or calls for to violence and terror;

7. Reaffirms that Al-Haram Al-Sharif, with its entire area totalling 144 dunams, is an exclusive place of worship for Muslims, protected by international law and the historical and legal status, and that the Department of Al-Quds Waqfs and Affairs of the Blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque / Al-Quds Al-Sharif, affiliated to the Jordanian Ministry of Waqfs, Islamic Affairs and Holy Sanctuaries, is the competent authority to manage the affairs of the Blessed Aqsa Mosque / Al-Haram Al-Qudsi Al-Sharif, and Stresses the role of the historic Hashemite guardianship of the Islamic and Christian holy Sanctuaries in Al-Quds, in protecting sanctities, their identity, and the existing historical and legal status therein.

8. Reaffirms the central role of Al-Quds Committee under the leadership of His Majesty King Mohamed VI, of Morocco, in challenging the serious measures taken by the Israeli occupation authorities in Al-Quds Al-Shareef, and values the role of Bayt Mal Al-Quds Agency.

9. Affirms the sovereignty of the Palestinian people over Al-Quds Al-Sharif and all its holy places, its ancient town and its walls, and affirms that all measures taken or intended to be taken by the Israeli colonial occupation authorities, which seek to change the character

and legal status of the city or its demographic composition, are null and void and have no legal effect. That Israel is merely an occupying power with no sovereign rights whatsoever in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Al-Quds Al-Sharif and the Blessed Aqsa Mosque/Al Haram Al- Qudsi Aharif;

10. Reiterates, in this regard, its condemnation of the repeated attacks on Christian holy places and their properties, including the recent attack on the endowments of the Orthodox Church at Bab-Al-Khaleel and Silwan, and the desecration and destruction of Christian graves on Mount Zion in the eastern part of Al-Quds;

11. Calls on states and intergovernmental organizations to fully adhere to the legal and historical status quo of the city of Al-Quds, and demands all international parties, not to recognize any Israeli allegations aimed at altering the status of the Islamic and Christian holy places in Al-Quds Al-Sharif or seizing them, including using any false names that encourage extremists to commit more attacks on the holy places and to increase violence.

12. Stresses the responsibility of the states parties to the Geneva Conventions to hold Israel accountable for all its violations of international humanitarian law, whether by its government officials, military forces, or extremist colonialists;

13. Appeals to the clergy, authorities and religious institutions of the Divine Messages in all parts of the world to adopt a position calling for an end to these violations and to affirm that preserving the existing historical and legal status preserves the special religious and historical status of the city of Al-Quds;

14. Calls on OIC Member States to reflect these positions and all relevant OIC Resolutions in their stands and to make serious efforts to protect the occupied Holy City and its sanctities, specifically the blessed Aqsa Mosque / Haram al-Qudsi ASharif, and its people, and to defend it in the face of illegal attempts to change the demographic composition, identity, and legal and historical status current;

15. Condemns the imposition of collective sanctions by the Israeli colonial occupation authorities on the Palestinian people, their officials and Palestinian civil organizations, and underlines the need to counter these measures. Reiterates also its support for the Palestinian people in their just struggle, and calls on Member States to mobilize their capabilities in order to strengthen the capabilities of the State of Palestine at all levels in support of its legitimate struggle in confronting the Israeli colonial occupation and restoring usurped rights, and calls on them to seek to intensify efforts, coordinate positions in international forums, and highlight support for the Palestinian cause;

16. Requests the OIC Secretary-General to communicate with religious leaders and relevant international officials to convey the OIC message and position, and to request them to take a firm stance towards these dangerous developments;

17. Affirms its continued follow-up of all developments related to Al-Quds, specifically the sanctity of Al-Aqsa Mosque, and to take appropriate steps in this regard, as stipulated in the Resolutions of Islamic summits and the Council of Foreign Ministers.

IV. UN SECRETARY GENERAL MEETS WITH THE EXTENDED TROIKA OF THE ARAB GROUP

On 12 January, following a meeting with the Permanent Representatives of the extended Troika of the Arab Group, United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres made the following [comments](#) to the media.

Secretary-General: I was invited by the of the Troika of the Arab [Group] to have this meeting and I had the occasion to reaffirm that we must preserve the status quo of the Holy Sites in Jerusalem and that it is essential to preserve the two-State solution to avoid any initiative that might put at risk the two-state solution.

On the other hand, if it is clear that we condemn acts of terrorism, it is clear that we recognize the right of Israel to exist and to live in security, it is also necessary to say that the construction of settlements, the evictions, destruction of homes are creating an enormous anger and frustration not only of the Palestinian people but further afield. And on the other hand, that it is perfectly legitimate that the General Assembly of the United Nations seizes the opinion of courts in relation of matters of interest of the Member States of the General Assembly.

Question: Secretary-General do you believe that the current Israeli Government believes in a two-State solution?

Secretary-General: That is a question to be asked to the government itself. What I believe is that there is no plan B, that to reject the possibility of a two-state solution is something that would undermine forever the possibilities of peace in the Middle East.

V. 39 UN MEMBER STATES REJECT THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT'S PUNITIVE MEASURES FOLLOWING ICJ REQUEST

On 16 January 2023, Algeria (as Chair of Arab summit and member of Arab Troika), Argentina, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Chile, Cuba, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Mexico, Namibia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Pakistan (as Chair of OIC), Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, and Switzerland signed the following [statement](#).

As Member States of the United Nations, we reconfirm our unwavering support for the International Court of Justice and international law as the cornerstone of our international order, as well as our commitment to multilateralism.

In this regard, we express our deep concern regarding the Israeli government's decision to impose punitive measures against the Palestinian people, leadership and civil society following the request by the General Assembly of an advisory opinion by the International Court of Justice. Regardless of each country's position on the resolution, we reject punitive measures in response to a request for an advisory opinion by the International Court of

Justice, and more broadly in response to a General Assembly resolution, and call for their immediate reversal.

VI. UN SECURITY COUNCIL HOLDS OPEN DEBATE ON THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST

On 18 January, the Security Council held an open debate on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question. Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process Tor Wennesland delivered a [briefing](#) (S/PV.9246) excerpted below. Ambassador Cheikh Niang, Chair of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, also made a [statement](#) (S/PV.9246 Resumption 1). It is reproduced below:

Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Tor Wennesland

As a new year begins, a dangerous cycle of violence persists on the ground, amid increased political tension and a stalled peace process. The violent trends that dominated the last months of 2022 continue to take a devastating human toll. The violence must stop. Preventing more loss of life and reversing negative trends on the ground must be our collective priority. At the same time, we must not lose sight of the ultimate goal: to end the occupation, resolve the conflict and realize a two-State solution.

Since my previous briefing (see S/PV.9203), a new Israeli Government has been sworn in. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Prime Minister Netanyahu. I look forward to continuing to work closely with the Government of Israel.

Despite the complex challenges, I reiterate the United Nations commitment to supporting Israelis and Palestinians to achieve sustainable peace. The United Nations and its partners have been, and continue to be, engaged in efforts to improve the situation on the ground. I urge all sides to reduce tensions and take concrete steps towards establishing a political horizon in line with the priorities I outlined to the Security Council in November.

In total, between 8 December and 13 January, 14 Palestinians, including five children, were killed and 117 Palestinians, including three women and 18 children, were injured by Israeli security forces during demonstrations, clashes, search-and-arrest operations, attacks and alleged attacks against Israelis and other incidents. Israeli settlers or other civilians perpetrated 63 attacks against Palestinians, resulting in 28 injuries, including six children, and/or damage to Palestinian property.

According to Israeli sources, five Israeli civilians, including three women, and four Israeli security forces personnel were injured by Palestinians in attacks, clashes, the throwing of stones and Molotov cocktails and other incidents. In total, Palestinians perpetrated some 89 attacks against Israeli civilians, resulting in injuries and/or damage to Israeli property, 57 of which were stone-throwing incidents.

A high proportion of Palestinian casualties occurred during Israeli search-and-arrest operations, including in Area A of the occupied West Bank, many of which included armed exchanges. In total, such operations resulted in 10 Palestinian fatalities, including three

children, and 86 injuries, as well as injury to three members of the Israeli security forces during the reporting period.

Casualties remained concentrated in the northern West Bank, particularly in Jenin governorate. Those included three Palestinians killed on 8 December during a search-and-arrest operation that involved an exchange of fire between Palestinians and Israeli security forces; a 15-year-old girl who was killed during a search-and-arrest operation in the Jenin refugee camp on 11 December; two Palestinians, including a 17-year-old boy, killed in an exchange of fire with Israeli security forces in the context of a punitive demolition in Kafr Dan village on 2 January; and, finally, on 12 January, two Palestinians killed during a military operation in Qabatiya, in which armed exchanges were reported.

Violence continued to affect children, with five Palestinian children killed during the reporting period. On 8 December, Israeli security forces shot and killed a 16-year-old boy in the Aboud community, near Ramallah, as he and four others were apparently preparing to throw stones and paint at Israeli vehicles. On 3 January, a 15-year-old boy was killed by Israeli security forces in the Duheisha refugee camp in Bethlehem; Palestinians threw stones and Molotov cocktails towards Israeli security forces, and the boy was reportedly lighting a Molotov cocktail at the time he was shot. On 5 January, Israeli security forces shot and killed a 16-year-old Palestinian during an arrest operation in the Balata refugee camp in Nablus. The boy was apparently caught in an armed exchange between Israeli security forces and armed Palestinians.

Settler-related violence also continued during the reporting period. On 16 December, a 16-year-old Palestinian boy was assaulted and injured when a group of settlers — reportedly from the Yitzhar settlement — entered Madama village near Nablus and attacked Palestinian houses and vehicles with stones.

On 11 January, an 18-year-old Palestinian stabbed and injured an Israeli civilian near the settlement outpost of Havat Yehuda, in the South Hebron Hills. The Palestinian was subsequently shot and killed by an armed Israeli.

On 13 January, a group of Israeli settlers attacked a group of Palestinians and foreign nationals who were hiking near Jericho, according to eyewitness accounts and video footage from the incident. Two women were reportedly injured.

I reiterate that perpetrators of all acts of violence must be held accountable and swiftly brought to justice. Security forces must exercise maximum restraint and use lethal force only when strictly unavoidable in order to protect life. I am particularly appalled that children continue to be the victims of violence. Children must never be the targets of violence or put in harm's way.

Turning to settlement-related developments, on 2 January, the Israeli Government informed the High Court of Justice that it intends to legalize, under Israeli law, the outpost of Homesh by repealing part of the 2005 disengagement law. Built on private Palestinian land, the outpost consists of a religious school and was previously a settlement that was demolished under the 2005 law. On the same day, the Court issued a decision giving the State 90 days to explain why the outpost should not be evacuated and the Palestinian rights

holders not allowed to exercise their rights. I reiterate that all settlements are illegal under international law and remain a substantial obstacle to peace.

Demolitions and seizures of Palestinian-owned property remain a serious concern. During the reporting period, Israeli authorities demolished, seized or forced owners to demolish 126 Palestinian-owned structures in Area C and seven in occupied East Jerusalem, displacing 127 Palestinians, including 60 children. The demolitions were carried out due to the lack of Israeli-issued building permits, which are nearly impossible for Palestinians to obtain.

We have also seen several additional concerning developments in Jerusalem. On 27 December, Israeli settlers accompanied by Israeli security forces forcibly took control of a parcel of agricultural land that a Palestinian family has leased from the Greek Orthodox Church since 1931 in the Silwan area of occupied East Jerusalem. Israeli forces arrested at least five Palestinians protesting the takeover. The settlers maintain that they purchased the land from the Greek Orthodox Church, in a deal the Church rejected as fraudulent.

On 1 January, in a despicable act, some 30 gravestones were desecrated at the protestant cemetery on Mount Zion in Jerusalem. Jerusalem's Anglican Archbishop called it a "clear hate crime", while Israel's Foreign Ministry called the attack "an affront to religion." On 6 January, two Israelis, aged 14 and 18, were arrested for the act, and, according to a statement issued by Israeli police following an investigation, a formal indictment is expected.

As outlined during our 5 January Council briefing (see S/PV.9236), on 3 January, Israel's new Minister for National Security conducted a visit to the Holy Sites in Jerusalem. The visit was condemned by the Palestinian Authority and Jordanian officials, among others, who said it was a provocation and violation of the status quo. Following the visit, senior Israeli officials, including the Prime Minister's Office, reaffirmed that the Government is committed to upholding the status quo and stated that the visit did not represent a deviation from it. I reiterate the Secretary-General's call for all parties to refrain from steps that could escalate tensions in and around the Holy Sites, and for all to uphold the status quo, in line with the special role of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

On 30 December 2022, the General Assembly adopted a resolution entitled "Israeli practices affecting the human rights of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem" (General Assembly resolution 77/247), which includes a request to the International Court of Justice for an advisory opinion relating to the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory. In response, on 6 January, the Israeli security cabinet approved a series of measures against the Palestinian Authority, including the transfer of approximately \$39 million in withheld tax revenues that Israel collects on behalf of the Palestinian Authority (PA) to the families of Israelis killed in Palestinian attacks. On 8 January, the Israeli Finance Minister instructed the tax authorities to implement the withholding of Palestinian tax funds to pay for those damages. I am seriously concerned about the impact of such measures on the PA's financial situation.

Also on 8 January, Israel's National Security Minister issued a directive to the Israeli police to increase the enforcement of the removal of Palestinian flags from public spaces in Israel and occupied East Jerusalem.

On 16 January, a statement was issued with 39 Member States as signatories, reconfirming support for the International Court of Justice, international law and multilateralism and noting deep concern regarding the Israeli Government's decision to impose punitive measures following the request by the General Assembly to the International Court of Justice for an advisory opinion.

Turning to the Gaza Strip, the United Nations continued to deliver vital humanitarian and development assistance. I also continue to engage in diplomatic efforts to further ease restrictions on the movement of people and goods into and out of Gaza. Despite those efforts, the socioeconomic situation remains a grave concern, with access restrictions continuing to impact the delivery of assistance. Currently, approximately 300 staff of the United Nations and implementing partners have either been denied or not yet received a response to their permit applications. The reporting period witnessed an increase of nearly 500 economic needs permits — to more than 16,000 — while the number of trader and businessmen permits remained largely consistent.

On 30 December, Israel resumed the exit of fish from Gaza to the West Bank. I welcome the resolution of the issue and the lifting of the exit ban, which had been in place since 7 November. While continued progress in those areas is vital, humanitarian or economic support alone will resolve neither the situation in Gaza nor the broader conflict. Political solutions are required. There are no quick fixes. The ultimate goal remains to fully lift the closures in line with resolution 1860 (2009) and reunite Gaza and the occupied West Bank under a single, legitimate Palestinian national authority, as an integral part of a two-State solution.

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On 9 and 10 January, senior officials from Bahrain, Egypt, Israel, Morocco, the United Arab Emirates and the United States gathered in Abu Dhabi for the inaugural meeting of the Negev Forum working groups. During the gathering, the Negev Forum regional cooperation framework was released, in which participants affirmed, inter alia, that the new regional relationships can be harnessed to create momentum in Israeli-Palestinian relations towards a negotiated resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Israelis and Palestinians remain today on a collision course amid escalating political and inflammatory rhetoric as well as heightened violence in the West Bank, both with potentially grave consequences. Courageous political leadership is urgently required to generate the momentum necessary to transform the current dynamic. It is imperative that both sides refrain from provocations and unilateral steps — including at the Holy Sites in Jerusalem — that undermine stability and the ability to achieve a negotiated peace.

I reiterate my call from November for immediate concrete steps towards reversing negative trends on the ground, strengthening the Palestinian Authority and improving access and movement for Palestinians, while ensuring the necessary space for Palestinian economic activity.

Absent a concerted and collective effort by all, with strong support from the international community, spoilers and extremists will continue to pour more fuel on the fire and we will move still further from a peaceful resolution of the conflict.

The United Nations remains committed to supporting an end to the occupation and establishing a two-State solution, with an independent and sovereign Palestinian State based on the 1967 lines, with Jerusalem as the capital of both States, in line with United Nations resolutions, and international law and bilateral agreements.

Ambassador Cheikh Niang, Chair of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

On behalf of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, I would like to congratulate Japan for its able presidency of the Security Council this month.

The Committee would also like to congratulate Ecuador, Malta, Mozambique and Switzerland — in addition to Japan — upon assuming their membership in the Council.

Allow me also to thank Mr. Tor Wennesland, the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, for his efforts and commitment to bringing about a just and lasting solution, based on international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions, which would fulfil the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and finally see Israelis and Palestinians living side by side in peace and security.

The Committee expresses its deep concern and dismay at the recent provocations at the holy sites in Jerusalem, the first such incursion by an Israeli Minister since 2017. On 3 January, Israel's Minister of National Security, accompanied by a heavy security presence and without having coordinated with the Jordanian Waqf, entered the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound in occupied East Jerusalem. Such violations of the historical and legal status quo and repeated provocative actions at this sensitive holy site have sparked outrage among Palestinians, the Muslim community and the international community.

We commend Japan for convening the Security Council emergency meeting on 5 January to discuss this worrisome situation (see [S/PV.9236](#)). The long history of this conflict reveals that the cost of such violations of the historical status quo, breaches of international law, and unilateral measures and provocations is very high and is the primary cause of the rising levels of violence and instability. Such illegal actions have repeatedly undermined efforts to find a just and peaceful solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and are subverting the viability of the two-State solution.

The Committee stands firmly for preserving the historical status quo at the holy sites in Jerusalem. Any unilateral actions that undercut the historical status quo are unacceptable, as are any violations of Israel's obligations under international humanitarian law, particularly the Fourth Geneva Convention, which prohibits an occupying Power from altering the character, status and demography of an occupied territory.

The Committee also remains concerned at the high levels of violence we continue to witness throughout the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, including clashes, protests, attacks, settler-related violence and Israeli security operations, which continue to cause civilian casualties, including among children. The Special Coordinator reported that in 2022 more than 150 Palestinian children and more than 20 Israelis were killed in the West Bank and Israel — the highest number of fatalities in years. The violence, provocations, incitement and spreading of inflammatory rhetoric must stop and all perpetrators must be held accountable.

Despite the Security Council's repeated affirmations that settlements constitute a flagrant violation of the relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions and international law and despite repeated calls for their cessation, Israel's settlement expansion in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, continues unabated. Those illegal actions, which systematically erode the possibility of establishing a contiguous, independent, viable and sovereign Palestinian State, must cease immediately and there must be accountability.

In February 2023, the Committee will finalize its independent legal study on the legality of the Israeli occupation of the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, which was commissioned in 2021. The study addresses whether Israel's de facto and de jure annexation measures, its continued settlement activities and its protracted occupation of Palestinian territory — the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip — render the occupation illegal under international law and the implications of that action. The study is timely, following the General Assembly's adoption of resolution 77/247 and the request to the International Court of Justice for an advisory opinion. The Committee supports the General Assembly decision and urges the Secretary-General to take the necessary follow-up action.

The Committee is also deeply concerned about Israel's punitive actions against the Palestinian people, leadership and civil society in retaliation for the adoption by the General Assembly of a resolution requesting that the International Court of Justice render an advisory opinion. We reject punitive measures in response to a peaceful, multilateral request for an advisory opinion or in retaliation for any General Assembly resolution and call for the immediate reversal of those deplorable actions.

Equally troubling are the continued demolitions and seizures of Palestinian homes and structures in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem. The Committee calls on Israel, as the occupying Power, to stop such practices in line with its obligations under international humanitarian law and international human rights law. In that regard, we also consider that the proposed dangerous judicial reforms by the Israeli Government are further undermining the possibility of legal recourse for Palestinians on violations of their rights, including the right to land and property.

The Committee also remains increasingly concerned by the political and security dynamics and rising tensions. In the Gaza Strip, the situation remains fragile, and the risk of escalation persists, despite the commendable efforts by the United Nations and regional and international partners, including Egypt and the State of Qatar, to alleviate the

deprivation and suffering caused by the Israeli blockade, now nearing its sixteenth year. We recognize that the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East remains indispensable and a key stabilizing element in the lives of thousands of Palestinians, and we call once again for its sufficient and predictable funding.

The deepening occupation and the increased violence, as well as the absence of a political horizon, have empowered extremists and are eroding hopes among Palestinians and Israelis alike that a just resolution of the conflict is achievable. The situation is unsustainable and needs immediate corrective action. Our responsibilities obligate us, under the Charter of the United Nations and the relevant resolutions, including those of the Council, to respond. The Committee welcomes the Special Coordinator's call for Israelis and Palestinians, along with the States of the region and the broader international community, to take concrete steps to change the negative trajectory on the ground, as called for in resolution 2334 (2016).

The Committee stands ready to help garner the support needed to advance the peace process towards ending the Israeli occupation that began in 1967. It appreciates Member States' messages of solidarity at the annual commemoration of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People on 29 November and their unwavering support for the four General Assembly resolutions on the question of Palestine. The Committee commits to implementing the renewed General Assembly mandate and will commemorate the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Nakba with a high-level event to be held on 15 May 2023. We call on the Security Council and all Member States to join the commemoration and our efforts to promote the realization of a just solution to that historic injustice.

VII. UNRWA ISSUES EMERGENCY APPEALS FOR US\$ 345 MILLION AND US\$ 437 MILLION IN 2023

On 19 January, the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East issued emergency appeals for 2023 for the [Occupied Palestinian Territory](#) and [Syria, Lebanon and Jordan](#). The executive summaries are excerpted below, and a related factsheet is available [here](#).

Occupied Palestinian Territory

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Under the oPt Emergency Appeal 2023 (EA) UNRWA has set out a strategy for a needs-based response to deliver humanitarian assistance to Palestine refugees in accordance with its mandate and the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence.³

In 2023, UNRWA is seeking US\$ 345 million to provide lifesaving support as well as other emergency interventions to prevent Palestine refugees from falling into deeper poverty, reduce their suffering and strengthen their resilience to help them cope with ongoing crises. EA requirements reflect the humanitarian needs of Palestine refugees in Gaza and the West Bank and have been adjusted to the changing context. The Agency will continue to prioritise the provision of food assistance to 1.2 million refugees in Gaza who depend on the Agency's assistance to stabilize their food security and cover essential needs. Cash-for-work (CfW) opportunities and mental health and psychosocial support (MHPPS) will also remain core interventions under this EA. Support for the rehabilitation of shelters affected by the May 2021 hostilities in Gaza has been progressively phased out in 2022. However, in 2023, UNRWA will provide shelter support to a smaller number of families affected in the August 2022 hostilities.

In the West Bank, UNRWA has focused its emergency programming to respond to the rise in security and protection challenges. To this end, more emphasis will be placed on ensuring that access to basic services, such as health and education, is maintained, even in times of crisis. Health trauma support will be strengthened for vulnerable communities, UNRWA installations will be upgraded to ensure there are safe evacuation routes, and staff capacity to respond to crises will be strengthened. To mitigate the socio-economic vulnerabilities brought on by the protracted occupation, the Agency will also continue to provide food assistance to vulnerable Bedouin and herder communities, the majority of whom are refugees, in Area C, in partnership with the World Food Programme (WFP). Cash-based assistance programming will continue to target shock-affected and abject poor refugees.

Across the oPt, the Agency has reviewed its COVID-19 interventions to adapt to the evolving context, maintaining infection control measures as well as the necessary readiness to respond to any new spike in the virus. In both fields, the emergency preparedness

³ United Nations General Assembly Resolution (A/RES/46/182), 19 December 1991. <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/RESOLUTION/GEN/NR0/582/70/img/NR058270.pdf?OpenElement>

components of the EA have been strengthened to ensure that the appropriate infrastructure and staffing are in place to respond to the evolving situation.

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Syria, Lebanon and Jordan

...

Through this 2023 Emergency Appeal (EA) for Syria, Lebanon and Jordan, UNRWA has set out a needs-based response to the humanitarian situation of Palestine refugees, in accordance with the Agency's mandate and the guiding principles of humanitarian assistance – humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence. UNRWA is seeking US\$ 437 million in 2023 to provide life-saving support and other essential interventions to reduce the suffering of Palestine refugees and strengthen their resilience to cope with ongoing crises. The Agency's 2023 emergency requirements for Syria, Lebanon and Jordan are almost US\$ 72 million higher than in 2022. This reflects a spike in humanitarian needs, in particular in Lebanon where high poverty levels and deteriorating socioeconomic conditions now affect all Palestine refugees. In Syria, UNRWA has revised its planned cash and food budgets to accommodate rising inflation and commodity costs. Across Syria, Lebanon and Jordan, COVID-19 interventions have been reviewed and adapted to the evolving context, maintaining the necessary readiness to prevent and effectively respond to new outbreaks and emerging emergency risks such as cholera.

...

UNRWA is launching this appeal as it begins implementing a new Strategic Plan, covering the years 2023–2028, to meet the human development, humanitarian and protection needs of Palestine refugees. The priorities and interventions in this appeal are aligned with the Agency's strategic direction over the coming years and will contribute to the objectives described in the Strategic Plan.

VIII. UNRWA PRESENTS STRATEGIC PLAN FOR 2023-2028

On 23 January, the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East published its [strategic plan](#) for 2023-2028. On 24 January, Commissioner-General Philippe Lazzarini presented the highlights of the plan to the diplomatic community in Geneva. The executive summary of the strategic plan is reproduced below.

...

7. In consultation with Palestine refugee communities, host authorities and international partners, UNRWA has identified seven objectives for the period 2023-28.

8. First, the Agency will ensure that Palestine refugees are protected through the realization of their rights under international law. This will be achieved through a number of complementary approaches, namely: providing services in a safe and dignified manner; meeting the protection needs of vulnerable and at-risk Palestine refugees through

preventative and remedial action; and engaging duty bearers to respect, protect and fulfil the rights of Palestine refugees. In addition, UNRWA will make its programmes more gender sensitive so that the services it provides are equitable, ensuring that all Palestine refugees – women, men, girls and boys – can fulfil their needs and enjoy their rights.

9. Second, the Agency will continue to provide Palestine refugees with universal, non-discriminatory access to quality primary health services and targeted access to secondary and tertiary care. UNRWA will address maternal health needs through pre-conception, antenatal and post-natal care and family planning services. The Agency will also remain focussed on the provision of vaccination, growth monitoring and nutrition and high-quality child healthcare services. Further, surveillance and cost-effective health promotion, prevention and response interventions will: (i) address the growing burden of non-communicable diseases (NCD); (ii) promote mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS); and (iii) manage communicable diseases and infection control. In addition, access to quality health care will be improved through maintaining the supply of essential medicines, ensuring appropriate staffing levels in all health centres and providing hospitalization services for those most in need.

10. Third, UNRWA will continue to offer quality, inclusive and equitable education to Palestine refugees, strengthening student learning and wellbeing. The COVID-19 pandemic caused major disruption to school systems around the world, including at UNRWA. Monitoring of student performance in Agency schools points to significant learning losses in all fields; tackling this is one of the major challenges facing the UNRWA education system in the coming years. The Agency will also ensure that its systems and structures are resilient in the face of potential shocks and crises, guided by its approach to Education in Emergencies (EiE)¹

11. Learning outcomes and critical thinking skills will be enhanced through technology, including media and information literacy (MIL) for teachers and students. UNRWA will further embed a culture of peace through the continued implementation of human rights, conflict resolution and tolerance (HRCRT) programming and school parliaments. Throughout, student wellbeing will be promoted through the continued provision of psychosocial support (PSS) and efforts to address violence in schools. The Agency will also seek additional resources to reduce the number of schools operating on a double-shift basis, absorb pupil increases and improve school infrastructure. This will help improve quality, equity and inclusion, creating an environment which is conducive to learning and accessible to all, including students with disabilities.

12. Fourth, the Agency will strengthen the livelihood capacities of Palestine refugees to pursue income generation and work opportunities. UNRWA will improve the relevance of its technical and vocational education and training (TVET) to labour market needs and develop more market-relevant curricula. Microfinance loan products will promote livelihood opportunities while Palestine refugees involved in camp improvement interventions will benefit from skills development in negotiation, communications, project planning and conflict resolution. UNRWA will also improve income generation and work opportunities through the creation of jobs linked to Agency construction and shelter

¹ [What We Do | UNRWA – education in emergencies](#).

rehabilitation works. Advocacy with host authorities and other economic actors will be stepped up to promote Palestine refugee access to employment and their right to work.

13. Fifth, UNRWA will alleviate poverty amongst the most vulnerable Palestine refugees, especially in fields of 6 strategic plan 2023-28 operation affected by humanitarian crises. The Agency will complete several reform tracks initiated during the Medium Term Strategy (MTS) 2016-22, including: (i) the identification and refinement of vulnerability criteria used to target cash assistance; (ii) better alignment between UNRWA emergency and social safety net programme (SSNP) interventions; (iii) exploring opportunities to align Agency assistance with the social protection programmes of host authorities and other UN entities; (iv) better alignment of UNRWA cash assistance to household expenditure needs; and (v) alignment of all cash and food beneficiary distribution lists with the Agency registration system, and the introduction of a compliance framework and a beneficiary eligibility review process. In addition, UNRWA will expand access to TVET for the most vulnerable, especially those enrolled in the SSNP, helping them gain skills to generate an income, become self-reliant and break the cycle of poverty.

14. Sixth, the Agency will ensure that Palestine refugees are able to meet their basic human needs of shelter, water and sanitation. Shelter assistance will target the most vulnerable to ensure that all are able to live in conditions that meet minimum acceptable safety and health standards. UNRWA will also prioritize interventions addressing water supply and distribution networks and sewage and water drainage systems in camps that suffer from inadequate infrastructure. Working in partnership with Palestine refugees, the Agency will continue to integrate protection and environmental sustainability measures across the design, construction and maintenance of facilities and camp improvement works.

15. UNRWA will implement its mandate in an effective and responsible manner. This will involve working towards a predictable, sustainable and diversified funding base, effectively managing security risks and strengthening enterprise risk management. In addition, human resources and procurement systems, structures and processes will be reinforced, a renewed focus will be placed on staff wellbeing, alternative dispute resolution will be promoted through the Office of the Ombudsman and the Secretary-General's system-wide Strategy on Gender Parity will be advanced. Independent audit, evaluation and investigation functions will enhance accountability, integrity, transparency and learning. Accountability to affected populations (AAP) will form a cornerstone of quality service provision to ensure the meaningful participation of Palestine refugees at different stages of the programme management cycle. UNRWA will also continue to take robust action against breaches of UN standards of conduct, values and humanitarian principles.

16. Key thematic imperatives are reflected across multiple objectives in this Strategic Plan. The Agency is committed to ensuring that its systems, structures, processes and programmes are gender-sensitive and meet the needs of persons with disabilities. Throughout the strategic period, UNRWA will also marshal the strength of its programmes to advance environmental sustainability, establishing approaches and mechanisms to identify, internalize and mainstream environmental best practice in and through Agency service delivery. Finally, the Agency will pay particular attention to the specific and growing needs of youth and adolescents across its programmes.

17. Collaborating across a reinvigorated UN system and beyond for stronger collective results, the Strategic Plan 2023-28 supports transformative change aimed at the achievement of the SDGs. The plan contributes to the achievement of all 17 goals, but directly contributes to: Goal 1 (no poverty); Goal 2 (zero hunger); Goal 3 (good health and wellbeing); Goal 4 (quality education); Goal 5 (gender equality); Goal 6 (clean water and sanitation); Goal 7 (affordable and clean energy); Goal 8 (decent work and economic growth); Goal 10 (reduced inequalities); Goal 11 (sustainable cities and communities); Goal 13 (climate action); Goal 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions); and Goal 17 (partnerships for the goals).

18. To complement this Strategic Plan, UNRWA has issued a Capital Investment Plan² that sets out a series of one-time investments needed to restore depleted assets and modernize programmes and operations, in particular in the areas of digitalization, environmental sustainability and fundraising and public outreach. A Resource Mobilization and Outreach Strategy, currently being finalized, will mobilize the necessary support to deliver on the objectives and priorities in this Strategic Plan.

IX. UN AGENCIES AND THE EU HELP LAUNCH THE FIRST NETWORK OF PALESTINIAN POLICEWOMEN

On 24 January, the Sawasya II joint programme—which brings together UNDP, UN Women and UNICEF in Palestine—and the European Union Coordinating Office for Palestinian Police Support issued the following [press release](#).

Female police officers are instrumental to the Palestinian police institution to strengthen the effectiveness of its daily activities in Palestine, and to ensure women's access to justice. Currently, Palestinian female officers represent 5.54 per cent of the Police force, according to PCP data - 2021. As the representation is still low, a gender strategy for the Palestinian Civil Police-PCP was developed in 2016 to support and increase the presence of women in policing including in decision-making positions and as frontliners.

Ramallah, 24 January 2023| The Palestinian Civil Police has launched today the first Palestinian Policewomen's Network (PCPWN) to further empower Palestinian women within the policing services.

The Palestinian Policewomen Network (PCPWN) was officially launched by the Police Major General Yousef Al Helou with support from the Sawasya II Programme, through UN Women in Palestine and EUPOL COPPS in the presence of the Palestinian Minister of Women's Affairs Dr. Amal Hamad, and UN Women Special Representative Ms. Maryse Guimond, as well as the Head of Mission of the EUPOL COPPS Ms. Nataliya Apostolova.

The network concept was developed at the two-day Women police officers' conference that took place in May 2022. Since then, Sawasya and EUPOL COPPS jointly invested efforts with the PCP to establish the network including developing network bylaws that regulate the membership and government of the network formation and plan activities.

² UNRWA Capital Investment Plan. UNRWA. (2022). <https://www.unrwa.org/resources/strategy-policy/unrwa-capital-investment-plan>

The network will serve as a platform to support gender equality and support the empowerment of women within the Palestinian Police. It will provide policewomen with the opportunity to enhance cooperation, coordination an enabling working environment and capacities, and reflect on and share their experiences.

On this occasion and during the opening ceremony, the Minister of Women's Affairs, Dr. Amal Hamad expressed her enthusiasm at launching the Palestinian Policewomen Network as an addition, a platform, and a great opportunity through which policewomen exercise their pioneering and distinguished roles, stating "the Palestinian police represents the security and safety. It is the pulse of the Palestinian street. It also represents the rule of law, and justice that we all aspire to."

While Minister Hamad thanked the police efforts, led by Major General Youssef Al-Helou, adding "We appreciate the distinguished role played by the General Directorate of the Family Protection Police under the directives of the Major General and the police, as we seek together to build a state of justice and dignity in which all of us, especially women, feel their full rights and in a way that contributes to increasing the percentage of women working in the security institution, including the police, to more than 7.4% in the coming year. We look forward that the Policewomen will be in decision-making positions."

On his behalf, Major General Al Helou commended the great investments by all parties that resulted in key strategic achievements for the police stating, "the network will be a catalyst for an active engagement of Palestinian policewomen in similar international and regional networks, thereby, positively impacting the policing services to the Palestinian public, and enhancing women's access to justice, as well as communities' safety and security."

On her behalf, the UN Women Special Representative Ms. Maryse Guimond said "We congratulate the police on their achievements and initiatives that aim at enhancing gender equality, The representation of female police officers is critical to ensure fully responsive services to the communities ".

Ms. Guimond outlined the advantages of the establishment of the police network by saying: "The network is a dynamic and vibrant body that will play an active role inside the Palestinian Civil Police and in similar networks. Working together is key to reaching common goals and interests. We look forward to witness more increase in female's enrolment in the policing services, better work environment for women in this sector and more women in decision- making positions".

The Women network will work towards a new chapter in the PCP to align with the goals of the gender strategy developed to increase the presence of women in policing, empower women in the Palestinian community, and strengthen the public's trust in the police services.

X. UN OCHA ISSUES OPT HUMANITARIAN PLAN FOR 2023

On 25 January, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs issued a humanitarian needs overview and humanitarian response plan for the Occupied Palestinian Territory for 2023. Excerpts from the [summary](#) are reproduced below; a related working document can be found [here](#).

The occupied Palestinian territory (OPT) is one of the most complex and challenging environments in which the United Nations operates. The OPT remains a protracted political crisis characterized by 55 years of Israeli military occupation. This crisis is exacerbated by a lack of adherence to international humanitarian and human rights law, internal Palestinian divisions and the recurrent escalation of hostilities between Israel and Palestinian armed groups. The results are chronic protection concerns and humanitarian needs which will continue in the absence of a sustainable political solution and opportunities for further development. The crisis has been further exacerbated by the compounded impact of the increased cost of commodities due to the war in Ukraine, slow recovery from the 2021 May escalation of hostilities, and increasing violence in the West Bank.

The Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) estimates that in 2023, approximately 2.1 million Palestinians across the OPT will require some form of humanitarian assistance. The humanitarian conditions created by OPT's multi-dimensional crisis continues to impact all parts of the territory and affect every aspect of Palestinian life. Palestinians are in their fifth decade of grappling with the safety, security, financial and emotional consequences of occupation and political turmoil. Despite its responsibilities as the occupying power and party to the Geneva Conventions, the Government of Israel continues to implement policies in the OPT in violation of the Conventions which exacerbate the humanitarian needs and protection risks of the Palestinian people and threaten the humanitarian community's ability to respond effectively.

Deepening Needs

While the overall number of people in need has stayed relatively constant, 25 per cent of households in the West Bank were identified as in 'catastrophic', 'extreme', or 'severe' conditions, up from 21 per cent in 2022.

In Gaza, the situation is more pronounced, with 29 per cent of households categorized as in 'catastrophic' or 'extreme' conditions, compared to 10 per cent in 2022.

Lack of livelihoods opportunities driving aid dependency and increasing vulnerability

Although most households are able to meet their basic needs, they do so through heavy reliance on aid and negative coping mechanisms due to barriers to or lack of livelihoods opportunities. 31 per cent of Palestinians in the West Bank and 81 per cent of those in Gaza have reported challenges in meeting their basic needs, with food, health, and utilities being the top three challenges. Similarly, 8 per cent of households in the West Bank and 73 per cent of Gazan households reported receiving humanitarian assistance in the 6 months prior to the 2022 MSNA data collection.

Chronic shelter, infrastructure and energy deficits

Recurrent escalation of hostilities in Gaza, the most recent one in early August 2022, caused fatalities, injuries, mental health needs, destruction of homes and structures, and has aggravated Gaza's chronic shelter, infrastructure and energy deficits. The restrictive and discriminatory planning regime applied by Israel in Area C and in East Jerusalem, continues to prevent Palestinians from addressing basic housing, livelihood and basic service needs. The high level of demolitions and seizures of Palestinian structures on the grounds of a lack of Israeli-required building permits continues to represent one element of a coercive environment that leaves many Palestinians throughout the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, with no option but to leave their homes and communities. Imposition of physical and administrative measures including constraints on the delivery of materials needed, and limitations on the implementation of projects that involve building, expanding or rehabilitating infrastructure in the Gaza Strip, Area C, the H2 area of Hebron and East Jerusalem continue to restrict humanitarian programmes.

Physical and Mental Wellbeing

Consistently high levels of the presence of Israeli Forces, including search-and-arrest operations during both the day and night, arrests, detentions, and ill-treatment of children continues. A steep rise in conflict-related violence, including settler attacks, has further eroded public safety and security, increasing fear among the population with an already high baseline of severity, particularly among children. Access to mental health and psychosocial services remains limited, as does access to critical health services, particularly in Gaza.

Gender-based violence (GBV)

GBV has also been on the rise in the OPT with an estimated 1.9 million people across the gender spectrum vulnerable to and/or experiencing GBV, 80 per cent of whom are women, and 65 per cent in Gaza.

Violence against women, particularly by intimate partners, remains at an alarmingly high rate. Palestinian women face multiple layers of discrimination due to a weak, fragile, and inactive legal system. According to the 2019 Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistic (PCBS) survey on violence, which was updated in July 2022, 59 per cent of (married or previously married) women between the ages of 15 and 64 experienced violence by their husband in the 12 months preceding the survey – 70 per cent in Gaza and 52 per cent in the West Bank.

Restriction on movement of goods and people

Restrictions on the movement of people and goods into and out of Gaza imposed by Israel, citing security concerns, hampers the implementation of infrastructure projects and delays economic recovery.

XI. UN SPECIAL COORDINATOR ON ISRAELI ARREST OPERATION IN JENIN

On 26 January, UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process Tor Wennesland issued the following [statement](#).

I am deeply alarmed and saddened by the continuing cycle of violence in the occupied West Bank. The deaths today of nine Palestinians, including militants and one woman, during an Israeli arrest operation in Jenin is another stark example.

Since the beginning of this year, we are continuing to witness high levels of violence and other negative trends that characterized 2022. It is crucial to reduce tensions immediately and prevent more loss of life.

I urge, and remain actively engaged with, Israeli and Palestinian authorities to de-escalate tensions, restore calm, and avoid further conflict.

XII. UN SECRETARY-GENERAL CONDEMNS TERROR ATTACK AT SYNAGOGUE IN JERUSALEM

On 27 January, the Spokesperson for United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres issued the following [statement](#).

The Secretary-General strongly condemns today's terrorist attack by a Palestinian perpetrator outside a synagogue in Jerusalem, which claimed the lives of at least seven Israelis and injured several others.

The Secretary-General extends his heartfelt condolences to the families of the victims and wishes a prompt recovery to those injured.

It is particularly abhorrent that the attack occurred at a place of worship and on the very day we commemorated International Holocaust Remembrance Day. There is never any excuse for acts of terrorism. They must be clearly condemned and rejected by all.

The Secretary-General is deeply worried about the current escalation of violence in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory. This is the moment to exercise utmost restraint.

XIII. UN SPECIAL RAPPORTEURS CONDEMN ATTACKS AGAINST THE JENIN REFUGEE CAMP, URGE ACCOUNTABILITY

On 27 January, Francesca Albanese, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian Territory occupied since 1967, Morris Tidball-Binz, Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, and Fionnuala D. Ní Aoláin, Special Rapporteur on counter-terrorism and human rights, issued a statement reflected in the following [press release](#).

UN experts today condemned renewed Israeli attacks against the Jenin Refugee Camp in the occupied West Bank on Thursday that killed at least nine Palestinians, and urged the international community to react without delay to stop the violence and ensure accountability.

“We deplore the Israeli army’s latest violent attack against the Jenin Refugee Camp, and the killing and wounding of Palestinians on Thursday. It shows a dangerous trajectory of violence in the occupied West Bank, continuing the alarming upward trend from 2022,” the experts said.

“None of this violence would occur if Israel were to end its illegal, half-century old occupation immediately and unconditionally as required by international law,” they said.

On the morning of 26 January, Israeli forces conducted a raid in the Jenin Refugee Camp in the north of the occupied West Bank. They fired live ammunition, killing at least nine Palestinians, including one elderly woman and two children. Over 20 people were reportedly injured and four of them remain in critical condition.

While circumstances of the raid and the number of persons killed and injured are still being verified, UN experts noted that this was the highest number of people killed in a single operation in the West Bank since 2005. So far this year, 28 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli forces and two more by settlers in the occupied West Bank. This brings the death toll to more than one Palestinian a day, the experts said.

“The international community cannot and should not tolerate what appears to reflect Israel’s deliberate policy and practice of using lethal force without regard for limits set by international law,” they said.

The UN experts [expressed](#) dismay that 2022 had already been the deadliest year for the occupied West Bank, with 152 Palestinians killed by Israeli forces. Impunity continues to prevail.

Jenin Refugee Camp, often portrayed by Israel as the hotbed of Palestinian resistance, has been subject to frequent incursions and raids by Israeli forces, resulting in arbitrary arrests, killings and collective punishment of many among its 14,000 residents. During the second intifada, Israeli forces killed at least 52 Palestinians, destroyed more than 400 homes and damaged hundreds more, rendering more than a quarter of the population homeless. The experts noted that none of this violence has been accounted for.

“We recall once again that Israel, as long as it remains the occupying Power, has an obligation to ensure the protection, security and welfare of the Palestinian people living under its occupation,” the experts said.

“What we see is the contrary. Dehumanisation, demonisation and collective punishment of Palestinians, the latter of which is specifically prohibited under international humanitarian law and constitutes a war crime,” they said.

“We urge the international community to react without delay and take action as recommended by international law including the UN Charter,” the UN experts said. “This remains the only possible course of action to end the relentless violence, abuses and impunity, and to start to pave the way to a better future for Palestinians and Israelis.”

XIV. EU HIGH REPRESENTATIVE EXPRESSES CONCERN OVER HEIGHTENED TENSIONS IN ISRAEL AND THE OPT

On 28 January, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Josep Borrell issued the following two statements on events in [Jenin](#) and in [Jerusalem](#).

Jenin

On Thursday in Jenin, at least nine Palestinians were killed and more than 20 were injured during an operation by the Israeli Defence Forces. This brings the number of Palestinians killed in the West Bank to 30 since the start of this year. Last year, more than 150 people were killed by Israeli forces in the West Bank, including 30 children, the highest number since the end of the second intifada in 2005.

The European Union fully recognizes Israel’s legitimate security concerns, as evidenced by the latest terrorist attacks, but it has to be stressed that lethal force must only be used as a last resort when it is strictly unavoidable in order to protect life.

The EU is very concerned by the heightened tensions in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory. We call on both parties to do everything possible to de-escalate the situation and to restart security coordination, which is vital to prevent further acts of violence.

Jerusalem

The European Union is horrified by yesterday’s appalling terror attack in a Jerusalem synagogue, that killed at least seven people and left many injured, as they attended Shabbat service, and by this morning’s attack in East Jerusalem, which left two victims injured, one seriously. The EU strongly condemns these acts of insane violence and hate.

These terrible events demonstrate once again how urgent it is to reverse this spiral of violence and engage in meaningful efforts to restart peace negotiations. We call on all parties not to react to provocations.

XV. UNICEF CALLS FOR PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AMID INCREASED VIOLENCE IN PALESTINE AND ISRAEL

On 29 January, the United Nations Children's Fund issued the following [statement](#).

“UNICEF is alarmed by the latest escalation of violence that has left many children dead and injured in the State of Palestine and Israel. All children are entitled to special protection under international human rights law, and all their rights including the right to life and protection must be upheld at all times.

“Children continue to pay the highest price of violence. Since the start of 2023, 7 Palestinian children and one Israeli child have been killed. Many more were injured or have been affected by the spiral of violence.

“As the situation remains very volatile, UNICEF fears that an increasing number of children will suffer.

“UNICEF appeals to all parties to de-escalate, exercise the utmost restraint and refrain from using violence, especially against children, in accordance with international law.

“Violence is never a solution, and all forms of violence against children are unacceptable. This must end.”

XVI. DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS VISIT WEST BANK COMMUNITY THREATENED WITH DEMOLITION

On 30 January, the Office of the European Union Representative (West Bank and Gaza Strip, UNRWA) issued the following [press release](#).

Representatives of Belgium, Brazil, Denmark, the EU, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Mexico, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland the UK and like-minded missions today visited the Palestinian community of Khan Al Ahmar to express their concern at the threat of demolition facing the village. Finland is also supportive of the below statement.

Today, 30 January, like-minded Heads of Mission and other representatives of diplomatic missions joined a visit organized by Israeli NGO B'Tselem to the Palestinian Bedouin village of Khan Al Ahmar. The community, in Area C of the West Bank, has been at risk of demolition by the Israeli authorities for several years.

Legal avenues to prevent the demolition of the village have been exhausted and we understand that the Israeli Government is due to submit its plans on 1 February in response to a court petition demanding its demolition.

Khan Al Ahmar is home to 38 Palestinian families and is also the location of a donor-funded school which serves five communities in the local area. The demolition of the village and the subsequent eviction of its residents could amount to forcible transfer in violation of Article 49 of Geneva Convention IV.

The international community has for many years worked to discourage the Israeli authorities from taking forward the proposed demolitions. Today's visit was an opportunity to restate our concerns. Evictions and demolitions cause unnecessary suffering. We urge Israel to cease such actions.
