



DIVISION FOR PALESTINIAN RIGHTS

May 2013
Volume XXXVI, Bulletin No. 5

Bulletin

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

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*The Bulletin can be found in the United Nations Information System
on the Question of Palestine (UNISPAL) on the Internet at:
<http://unispal.un.org>*

I. SECRETARY-GENERAL MEETS WITH ISRAEL'S JUSTICE MINISTER

On 2 May 2013 in New York, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon met Minister of Justice of Israel Tzipi Livni. The following is the text of the readout on the meeting:

The Secretary-General met today with the Justice Minister and Chief Negotiator in the Israeli-Palestinian peace talks, Tzipi Livni, of the State of Israel. They discussed the current state of play of the Middle East peace process as well as regional developments, in particular in Syria.

The Secretary-General strongly encouraged efforts towards the resumption of credible negotiations to achieve the two-State solution, expressing hope that renewed US engagement would lead to a substantial initiative soon.

He welcomed the positive engagement of the Arab League Peace Initiative follow up committee. He stressed the importance of creating an environment conducive to a resumption of talks, and encouraged Israel to take positive steps in this regard. He reiterated that the announcement of the E-1 settlement should be rescinded. While reiterating his concern over the situation of Palestinian prisoners, he expressed appreciation for the announcement by the Government of Israel of the upcoming release of several hunger striking prisoners.

II. SECRETARY-GENERAL SUBMITS REPORT ON ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL REPERCUSSIONS OF THE ISRAELI OCCUPATION

On 8 May 2013, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon submitted a report titled "Economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan" to be considered at the Sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly. The report that had been requested by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 2012/23 was prepared by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia. The summary of the report is reproduced below (A/68/77 - E/2013/13):

Summary

In its resolution 2012/23, the Economic and Social Council requested the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its sixty-seventh session, through the Council, a report on the implementation of that resolution. The Assembly, in its resolution 67/229, also requested the Secretary-General to submit a report to it at its sixty-eighth session. The present report, which has been prepared by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, is submitted in compliance with the resolutions of the Assembly and the Council.

In the forty-sixth year of its occupation of Palestinian territory, Israel continued in its practices and policies that violate the occupying Power's obligations under international law. These discriminatory policies, which "amount to de facto segregation", adversely affect the living conditions of the Palestinian population, with a dire impact on various Palestinian social and economic sectors, as well as on the Palestinian natural resources and environment.

Excessive and disproportionate use of force by Israeli security forces continued. The ill-treatment of Palestinian child

detainees appears to be widespread, systematic and institutionalized. Israel's frequent use of administrative detention amounts to a policy of widespread and systematic arbitrary detention. Israeli authorities and settlers commit transgressions against Palestinians and their property with impunity.

Since 1967, Israel has revoked the residency status of more than 260,000 Palestinians from the Occupied Palestinian Territory, while Israeli policies and practices, including home demolitions, lead to the forced displacement of Palestinians. Settler violence also is aimed mainly to force Palestinians to move from their lands.

The scale of Israel's settlement project in the occupied territories, as well as the construction of the West Bank wall, are not only illegal but also appear to confirm Israel's intention to retain control over large parts of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, thus violating a core principle of the Charter of the United Nations, which prohibits the acquisition of territory by the use or threat of force.

Palestinians living in the Occupied Palestinian Territory face daily obstacles and humiliation to travel both inside and outside

the territory, while the Gaza blockade amounts to collective punishment, also illegal under international law.

The continued Israeli occupation of the Syrian Golan similarly includes policies and practices that discriminate against its Syrian citizens and encourage illegal Israeli settlement therein.

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia would like to acknowledge its appreciation for the substantive contributions and inputs of the Department for Political Affairs, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the International Labour Organization, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the World Health Organization, the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the United Nations Population Fund and the League of Arab States.

III. UNCTAD ISSUES REPORT ON THE PALESTINIAN ECONOMY IN EAST JERUSALEM

On 8 May 2013, UN Conference on Trade and Development issued a report entitled "The Palestinian Economy in East Jerusalem: Enduring annexation, isolation and disintegration". The executive summary of the report is reproduced below:

Executive Summary

With the onset of occupation in 1967, Israeli authorities began to pursue a policy of physical, political and economic segregation of East Jerusalem from the rest

of the occupied Palestinian territory (OPT), which continues apace today. Segregation strategies gained momentum during the last decade through measures that have altered the physical and demographic realities of the city and its predominantly Palestinian and

Arab landscape. These include the city's annexation and the expansion of Jewish settlements in and around East Jerusalem, as well as the construction of the separation barrier, which has effectively redefined the borders away from the pre-1967 armistice line.

The separation barrier, among other obstacles to movement, hinders movement into and out of East Jerusalem, cuts it off from the remainder of the West Bank, its natural hinterland, and hinders access to its markets and health services by Palestinian Jerusalemites now living on the other side of the barrier nominally under Palestinian Authority jurisdiction. Land expropriation by Israel and restrictions on Palestinian building activities have increased recently. Palestinians are only permitted to build on a limited part of the land area of East Jerusalem and face obstacles in obtaining building permits issued by Israeli municipal authorities.

The purpose of this report is twofold. The first aim is to seek a better understanding of the economy of East Jerusalem and the policy factors affecting the dynamics of its evolution since occupation in 1967. The second aim is to augment the qualitative analysis by highlighting some quantitative indicators on the economic impact of Israeli annexation of East Jerusalem and the city's growing isolation, while identifying possible future policy orientations and areas for intervention.

The economy of East Jerusalem is not only affected by Israeli impediments affecting OPT generally. Many of the obstacles to the city's development are specific to the status of East Jerusalem as an occupied territory subsequently unilaterally annexed to Israel. Palestinian Jerusalemites are considered "permanent residents" under

Israeli law, but only as long as they maintain their physical presence. The differential legal status of Palestinian Jerusalemites compared to Palestinians under Palestinian Authority jurisdiction and compared to Israeli settlers in East Jerusalem implies a host of further impediments, especially with regard to housing, employment, taxation and representation. Access to education and health is restricted, which affects the quality of the most important Palestinian resource, human capital. Another key impediment to reviving the economy of East Jerusalem is the lack of access to finance due to occupation-related complications. Palestinian Jerusalemites receive a disproportionately small share of municipal services.

The weight of the economy of East Jerusalem has been steadily diminishing relative to that of the rest of OPT since the signing of the 1993 Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements, known as the Oslo Accords, and related Israeli-Palestinian agreements. This decline, in large part, has been the result of an array of Israeli policies that have hindered development of the East Jerusalem economy as an integral part of the larger Palestinian economy and labour market. The deterioration in socioeconomic conditions has had a significant impact on Palestinian Jerusalemites in their standards of living, housing, health care and education. Israeli policies have entailed a partial and distorted "integration" of the East Jerusalem Palestinian economy into Israel and its regulatory framework. Meanwhile East Jerusalem has been gradually detached from the rest of the Palestinian economy despite the city's historic position as the commercial, transport, tourism, cultural and spiritual centre for Palestinians throughout the occupied territory.

In 2010 more than half of the East Jerusalem labour force worked in services, commerce, hotels and restaurants, while the construction and agricultural sectors accounted for less than one quarter of total employment. Unemployment rates reached record highs in the aftermath of the second intifada, which declined since but remained high nonetheless, along with systematically higher poverty rates among Palestinian Jerusalemites as compared to Israelis residing in the city. This attests to the systematic exclusion of Palestinian East Jerusalem from the State to which it was unilaterally annexed, while it simultaneously became separated from the rest of the occupied West Bank.

Consequently, the East Jerusalem economy finds itself in a world quite apart from the two economies, Palestinian and Israeli, to which it is linked. It is at once integrated into neither, yet structurally dependent on the West Bank economy to sustain its production and trade of goods and services and for employment, and forcibly dependent on Israeli markets to whose regulations and systems it must conform and which serve as a source of employment and trade and as the principal channel for tourism to the city.

These paradoxical relations have served to effectively leave the East Jerusalem economy to fend for itself in a developmental limbo, severed from Palestinian Authority jurisdiction and subordinated to the Jewish population imperatives and settlement strategies of Israeli municipal and State authorities. Just as the economic growth pattern and overall direction of the Gaza Strip in recent years has veered in a distinct and separate

direction from that of the West Bank, so has East Jerusalem's economic trajectory diverged from that of the rest of the West Bank. These disturbing trends risk rendering redundant the notion enshrined in United Nations resolutions and the Oslo Accords, namely that the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, constitute a single territorial and legal entity. This in turn has critical implications for development prospects and eventual policy interventions in the East Jerusalem economy.

Several actions can help mitigate the effects of segregation policies, but the real prerequisites for sustainable development entail ending the Israeli settlement and occupation of East Jerusalem in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions. This would confer significant benefits to the Palestinian economy in general, and to that of East Jerusalem in particular, especially its tourism and services sectors. Potentially effective short-term interventions include enhanced coordination and planning among international organizations, semi-governmental and non-governmental bodies operating in East Jerusalem, and the provision of targeted support to specific sectors such as tourism, housing and services. A critical measure for economic revival in East Jerusalem, however, is devising alternative domestic sources and self-sustained mechanisms for financing investment, housing and productive activities, which could have important outcomes for the economic, social and political cohesion of Palestinian Jerusalemites notwithstanding continued occupation.

IV. UN SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR ON THE SITUATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE OPT CALLS FOR A HALT TO THE CONSTRUCTION OF A SETTLEMENT HIGHWAY IN EAST JERUSALEM

The United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in the OPT, Richard Falk, on 13 May 2013 called on the Government of Israel to stop the construction of a settlement high-way in the Beit Safafa community of East Jerusalem. The following is the text of the press release issued on the occasion:

United Nations Special Rapporteur Richard Falk today called for an immediate halt to the construction of a settlement highway in Beit Safafa (East Jerusalem), also known as the “Begin Highway.” Mr. Falk urged the Israeli Government, in particular the Ministry of Transport, to order a stop to the construction, which if completed, would cut through the community of Beit Safafa and ruin the livelihoods of the 9,300 Palestinian residents.

“The projected six-lane highway extending 1.5km will do irreparable damage to the community, cutting off local roads and blocking access to kindergartens, schools, health clinics, offices, and places of worship,” warned the independent expert designated by the UN Human Rights Council to monitor and report on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967.

“The residents of Beit Safafa, who were not consulted at any stage of the planning, will be placed in an absurd situation where places within their own community – previously accessible within ten minutes’ walk – would require travel by car on bypass roads and a bridge,” he said.

The Special Rapporteur noted that the highway purpose is to annex the Gush Etzion settlement bloc and pave the way for further expansion of Israel’s illegal settlements around East Jerusalem. “It will

consolidate the highway network from Gush Etzion settlement in the southern West Bank through West and East Jerusalem, leading to the Ma’ale Adumim settlement bloc and the E1 area,” he said.

Mr. Falk recalled the recent findings* of the International Fact Finding Mission on Israeli settlements, which recommended that private companies should no longer be able to profit from their involvement in the illegal Israeli settlement enterprise.

“Companies taking part in the construction of the illegal highway in Beit Safafa, under the auspices of the Moriah Jerusalem Development Company and their implementing partner, D.Y. Barazani Ltd., must be held responsible,” the independent expert stressed. “Earth moving equipment of Volvo, CAT, Hyundai and JCB has been seen at the construction sites.”

The Special Rapporteur noted that the road project, which began in September 2012, was challenged in the Jerusalem District Court last December, but the residents’ petition to stop construction was rejected. An appeal filed with the Israeli High Court against the District Court’s decision was also rejected in March 2013. An appeal hearing as to the petition has been scheduled in the High Court for 26 June 2013.

*Check the report by the International Fact Finding Mission: http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/RegularSession/Session22/A-HRC-22-63_en.pdf

V. UNRWA DIRECTOR OF HEALTH SUBMITS REPORT ON HEALTH CONDITIONS OF THE REFUGEES IN THE OPT

On 17 May 2013, at the WHO's Sixty-sixth World Health Assembly, the UNRWA Director of Health submitted the report on Health Conditions of, and Assistance to, Palestine Refugees in the OPT for 2012. The report's clauses "Health Status" and "Conclusions" are reproduced below:

Health Status

3. Through the support of UNRWA, governmental and other health-care providers, the health of Palestine refugee mothers and children has shown continued improvement since the Agency's establishment. Progress in achieving Millennium Development Goals 4 (Reduce child mortality) and 5 (Improve maternal health), for example, has been on track. The infant mortality rate among Palestine refugees is comparable to, if not better than, rates in other countries of the Near East. In 2012, 93.5 per cent of pregnant women in the Gaza Strip and 81.5 per cent of those in the West Bank had four or more antenatal care visits, and the percentage of deliveries attended by skilled health personnel remained very high at 99.9 per cent in the West Bank and 99.9 per cent in the Gaza Strip.

4. The main health concerns, however, continue to stem from non-communicable diseases or chronic lifestyle-related illnesses, which are exacerbated by the increase of behavioural risk factors like smoking, physical inactivity and unhealthy diet. As in neighbouring countries in the Near East, the epidemiological and health transition from communicable to non-communicable diseases has taken place in the occupied Palestinian territory. Consequently, the number of people with non-communicable diseases, such as diabetes and/or hypertension, under care in UNRWA's health services has been steadily increasing in recent years.

5. Furthermore, the combination of conflict and insecurity, political instability and increasing poverty (particularly in the Gaza Strip) continues to have a negative impact on the health of Palestine refugees. The severe restrictions on the movement of people and goods within the West Bank, and between the Gaza Strip, the West Bank and areas abroad, remain a major obstacle to socioeconomic development and provision of health care. Eight days of conflict in November 2012 further compounded the plight of the inhabitants of the Gaza Strip, the majority of whom (more than 80 per cent) were already in need of humanitarian assistance and relief. During the eight-day conflict that commenced on 14 November 2012, 165 Palestinians were killed by Israeli action, including 99 believed to be civilians, 33 of whom were children. UNRWA's own rapid assessment indicated that over 450 homes were totally destroyed and approximately 8,000 were partially destroyed, displacing over 15,000 people. The provision of health care was also affected: three hospitals, four Ministry of Health primary care clinics and five UNRWA clinics were damaged during the operations. This conflict also significantly increased the need for psychosocial support for Gazan children, adolescents, and families, with North Gaza and the "Middle Area" reporting the highest incidence of psychosocial symptoms and other mental disorders among both adults and children during and after the conflict.

6. The stress of occupation, the inability of men to provide for their families, and the

consequent reversal of gender roles have also contributed to an increase in domestic violence. Tackling psychological and behavioural disorders, as well as domestic violence, has therefore emerged as a health priority for UNRWA in the occupied Palestinian territory.

Conclusions

22. The plight of Palestine refugees continues in face of health disparities, conflict, violence, occupation, political instability, poverty and economic hardships that are having a negative impact on their right to achieve the highest attainable standard of health. UNRWA aims to mitigate the effects of these socioeconomic disparities on health through the provision of the best possible comprehensive primary health care services.

23. Internal health care reform efforts are striving to improve efficiency and continuity of care. UNRWA's service delivery model has shifted from a disease-focused approach to a person- and family-centred one. The health reforms are also supported concurrently with the modernization and strengthening of the Agency's health informatics and information technology infrastructure to realize anticipated efficiencies.

24. However these efforts alone are not enough. It is imperative and vital for the international community to increase its support to UNRWA so that the Agency, in collaboration with hosts and international stakeholders, can pursue necessary health reforms and continue protecting and improving the health status of the Palestine refugees.

VI. CHIEF PALESTINIAN NEGOTIATOR ERAKAT BRIEFS CEIRPP MEETING

On 20 May 2013, the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People held its 352nd meeting where Palestinian Chief Negotiator Saeb Erakat briefed meeting participants on the developments in the Middle East peace process. Excerpts of the press release on the meeting are reproduced below (GA/PAL/1269):

Palestinians were "exerting every possible effort" to ensure the success of current efforts to re-start peace negotiations with Israel, their lead negotiator told the Palestinian Rights Committee today.

Calling on Member States to make their positions on the issue clear, Saeb Erakat underlined how important it was that Secretary of State John Kerry of the United States succeed in bringing about a resumption of talks. "No one would benefit more from his success and no one would lose more from his failure" than the Palestinians, Mr. Erakat said, adding that failure would mean falling deeper into the "evil apartheid that exists in the West Bank and Jerusalem".

He said there were two reasons why the Palestinians had not pursued the rights acquired since gaining their new status at the United Nations. One was that it had taken a long time to prepare letters of accession to various agencies and conventions, though that process was now complete, and the other was that Mr. Kerry and the entire international community needed a chance to obtain the desired result.

Describing the current situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, he said 16,000 new settlement units had been built between 2009 and 2012, which worked out to an average of 11 housing units per day. Population growth in the settlements was three times higher than natural growth in

Israel, and there had been an increase of 49,115 people in the last year. Following the decision to upgrade Palestine's status at the United Nations on 29 November 2012, 11,500 new units had been tendered and approved, he said. In the same period, settler violence, including the burning of trees, mosques and churches, had increased by 315 per cent, and settlers were now manning roadblocks in the West Bank. Describing the situation as "apartheid", he said it was worse than what had existed in South Africa and worsening "every hour".

Noting that that Palestinians commemorated the naqba (catastrophe) every May, he said it was the first time in history that a nation had been "interrupted". Palestine had seen 418 villages destroyed and 70 per cent of its population condemned to exile as refugees. The commemorations continued because Israel was granted impunity and acted as it wished. Registering his own right and that of all his compatriots to anger and bitterness, he said Palestinians were born for one purpose: to restore Palestine to geographical maps. That was the task of all 11 million Palestinians scattered across the world.

Palestinians recognized Israel's right to exist on 78 per cent of the land, with their own State on the remainder, he said. Additionally, if Israel accepted the 1967 borders, Palestinian negotiators were open to making minor modifications to the borders. Such ideas had been "entertained" in negotiations when Palestinians had turned over every stone possible in order to achieve peace. The global consensus favoured two States based on the 1967 borders, he said, recognizing that other States bordering Israel had a stake in the negotiations. There would be coordination every step of the way, based on their interests.

He went on to describe Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's strategy on Palestine as three-dimensional: the Israeli Prime Minister wanted a Palestinian Authority without authority; he wanted a cost-free occupation; and he wanted to push Gaza into Egypt's sphere of responsibility. That status quo was unsustainable and would have severe repercussions in 20 years time. That made it all the more essential that Mr. Kerry succeed, and he had a chance because he knew the Palestinians and Israelis "inside out". The "end game" must be two States based on the 1967 borders, he added.

Calling for a new definition of Arab-Western relations, he said they had not been defined since 1683, when Vienna had been besieged by the Ottomans. They must now be defined by "peace and democracy", and the current status quo could not remain. It was time to understand that the Middle East was facing a situation like Europe had faced in 1849. Chaos could ensue and sticking to "peace and democracy" was vital to prevent that.

Describing himself as "the most disadvantaged negotiator in the history of mankind", he pointed out that he had no army, navy, air force or economy, and that his people were fragmented. Nonetheless, Israel faced a stark choice: it could choose "live and let live", which called for two States based on the 1967 borders, or it could go for one State. He said that, while he could talk to Israeli negotiators about that option, the persistence of the current situation was not at all possible. The status quo would "not be maintained under any circumstances", and the apartheid existing today could not last, he emphasized, pointing out that the Palestinian population was growing faster than the Israeli one.

He acknowledged that Palestine faced a "deep problem" over reconciliation, with a

continuing “coup d’état” by Hamas in the Gaza Strip. While the group had been elected fairly, and no one had asked it to change its Charter as a political party, governing meant working as a Government, not as a party, and unfortunately Hamas had continued to define itself as a party, not as a Government. The ballot box offered the only route to reconciliation, he said, expressing hope that it would remain the method by which different sides resolved their differences.

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Mr. Erakat said he had no conditions for re-starting negotiations. A halt to settlement

activity was not a condition, but “a must”. Israel needed to make a choice: “settlements or peace”. Mr. Kerry was working on three tracks — political, economic and security — with all three closely interlinked as a package. However, Israel continued to claim it had no partner, he said, likening that complaint to “a broken record”. Palestine could have “Mother Teresa as President, Montesquieu as Speaker and Thomas Jefferson as Prime Minister” but Israel would still manage to relate them back to Bin Laden, he added.

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VII. SPECIAL COORDINATOR FOR THE MIDDLE EAST PEACE PROCESS BRIEFS SECURITY COUNCIL ON THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST, INCLUDING THE PALESTINIAN QUESTION

On 22 May 2013, the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Robert Serry, briefed the Security Council on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question. The following are excerpts from the briefing (S/PV.6969):

The Middle East continues to undergo a period of grave turmoil, with tragic human consequences and an uncertain outcome. We have seen regional tensions mounting dangerously as the brutal bloodshed in Syria continued while the fighting also crossed boundaries, and United Nations peacekeepers in the Golan area of separation found themselves increasingly in harm's way. Ending the conflict in Syria is a matter of great urgency and must be the top priority of the international community. At the same time, it would be mistaken and dangerous to assume that a resolution of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is less important. Now is not the time to relent in our commitments to advancing the prospects for the resumption of meaningful talks towards the realization of a two-State solution. Now is the time for concerted action in support of a substantive

initiative, lest we miss the slight opening that has been offered in recent months.

While diplomatic efforts to break the political deadlock and bring the parties back to the negotiating table have remained quiet, they are no less serious in determination.

The renewed United States effort and sustained personal engagement of the United States Secretary of State is cause for encouragement. Secretary Kerry is currently on his fourth trip to the region, underscoring his commitment. We have also noted the renewed interest of regional stakeholders, particularly the important visit to Washington, D.C., on 29 April of a delegation of Arab Ministers and leaders, including the Prime Minister of Qatar, Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim bin Jabr Al-Thani,

and Secretary General of the League of Arab States Nabil El Araby. Their visit reaffirmed the importance of the Arab Peace Initiative, first proposed in 2002, and, we hope, revived prospects that its promise of regional stability can become an important part of developing peace efforts. We note, in that regard, the positive comments about the visit by President Peres and Israeli Minister of Justice and chief negotiator Tzipi Livni. We encourage the Israeli Government to respond to that opening for a revitalized Arab Peace Initiative.

The Secretary-General has also remained in close contact with the parties on the issues. In recent conversations with the two leaders, he strongly encouraged the ongoing efforts towards the resumption of Israeli-Palestinian peace talks, and expressed his hope that they would soon lead to a substantial peace initiative with a defined political horizon. He further stressed the importance for the parties of creating the conditions conducive to a resumption of meaningful negotiations and avoid actions that would risk undermining such prospects.

The risk to both sides is clear. As we have said before, it is crucial that both sides reverse negative trends on the ground to restore confidence in each other and in the possibility of a solution. We take note that both parties are exercising some restraint and care not to upset the fragile situation on the ground in order to support the ongoing diplomatic effort. On the Israeli side, we have noted that there have been no new approvals or tenders issued for settlements in the West Bank or in East Jerusalem since March. However, there was a disconcerting exception, involving approximately 300 units preapproved in Beit El — a settlement deep inside the West Bank — based on a decision from last year. Settlements are illegal under international law, and Israel must abide by its commitments under the

road map to freeze all settlement activity and dismantle outposts erected after 2001. We are also concerned about reports that the Israeli Government intends to legalize four West Bank settlement outposts.

Palestinians have shown countenance in diplomatic forums, and Palestinian security forces have maintained their robust performance in maintaining law and order, including in dealing with tensions on the ground. Several moments of friction illustrate the importance of both sides continuing to work responsibly to defuse tensions and avoid escalation.

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The Secretary-General has reiterated the importance of respect for the religious freedom of all and for worshippers of all faiths to have access to their holy sites, while noting that religious and other leaders should also refrain from inflammatory statements. We also note the statement by President Peres on 8 May that Israel, as per its agreement with the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, will work to ensure the protection of the Muslim and Christian holy sites in the Old City and the safety of the worshippers. Those events once again underscore the importance of addressing the underlying issues regarding Jerusalem, which are still unresolved. It remains the view of the Secretary-General that Jerusalem — a final status issue — should emerge through negotiations as the capital of two States living side by side in peace and security, with arrangements for the holy sites that are acceptable to all.

On 15 May, Palestinians marked what they call “Al-Nakba Day” — to commemorate the 1948 events leading to their displacement — by holding large marches and festivals in urban centres across the West Bank and Gaza. In East Jerusalem,

dozens of Israeli right wing extremists entered the Haram Al-Sharif/Temple Mount and clashed with Palestinians, resulting in some injuries and arrests. Overall events were relatively contained, with clashes between Palestinian protesters and Israeli forces resulting in some 50 Palestinians and six Israeli security officers being lightly injured.

Clashes between Palestinians and settlers in the occupied West Bank intensified during the reporting period. In a deplorable event, one settler was stabbed to death by a Palestinian on 30 April at the Tapuach junction, in the northern West Bank. He was the first Israeli to be killed by Palestinians in the West Bank since September 2011. The killing triggered numerous incidents of settler violence against Palestinians and their property, primarily in the Nablus governorate. Overall during the reporting period, a total of 46 Palestinians, including 12 children and one woman, were injured by settlers, while 11 settlers were injured by Palestinians. Clashes between Palestinians and settlers also resulted in extensive material damage, including two vehicles and Palestinian orchards, with some 1,400 Palestinian trees vandalized.

Israeli security forces carried out a total of 368 search-and-arrest operations in the occupied West Bank, including in Area A, resulting in 439 Palestinians being injured and 454 Palestinians being arrested. Eighteen members of Israel security forces were also injured. The large majority of the casualties resulted from clashes during Palestinian demonstrations, including against the barrier, which deviates from the Green Line in contravention of the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice (see A/ES-10/273).

The reporting period also witnessed continued demolitions of Palestinian homes and property in Area C and East Jerusalem. In total, 57 structures were demolished, leading to the displacement of 75 Palestinians, including 41 children. The ongoing demolition of homes, livelihood-related structures and essential infrastructure is of serious humanitarian concern and should stop.

The United Nations continues to monitor with concern the condition of Palestinian prisoners. Despite the release of two hunger strikers, four other Palestinians restarted their hunger strikes. Five Jordanian prisoners in Israeli jails are also reportedly on hunger strike. On 14 May, Israel renewed the administrative detention of four Palestinian Legislative Council members for another six months. We reiterate our position that the use of administrative detention must be on an exceptional basis only. Those detained must be charged and face trial with judicial guarantees, or be released without delay. The most recent visit by families of Gaza prisoners took place on 20 May and included some 80 relatives, among them children.

Six months ago yesterday, the parties agreed to a ceasefire understanding in the Gaza Strip, which makes today a good opportunity to take stock and look ahead. The understanding brought about marked improvement during the first three months of its implementation. No rockets from Gaza landed in Israel, and there was some relaxation of remaining closures, notably the extension of the fishing limit from three to six nautical miles. However, three months of hopeful trends were followed by a reversal, as subsequent developments have threatened the improvements made. According to Israeli authorities, 33 rockets and five mortar shells landed in Israel from Gaza during the past three months. Eleven Palestinian

civilians were injured in the buffer zone over the same period.

On 30 April, for the first time since 21 November 2012, an Israeli air strike killed a Palestinian, who was a militant allegedly involved in firing rockets. Starting on 21 March, the fishing limit was scaled back to three nautical miles, leading to shooting in the vicinity and arrests of Palestinian fishermen trying to go beyond the limit. Since 27 February, Kerem Shalom, the only functioning crossing for goods from Israel into Gaza, has periodically been closed for 13 days in response to rockets, resulting in shortages of some basic food stuffs and cooking gas and in losses in export cash crops.

In our view, the ceasefire understanding reached in November 2012 continues to represent the best opportunity to start changing the negative dynamics in Gaza. All must exert maximal effort to preserve the ceasefire and its basic tenets, namely, adhering to full calm and lifting the remaining closure on Gaza. We continue to support Egyptian efforts in that regard. Following the worrisome developments to which I have referred, uneasy calm has returned. Yesterday's announcement by Israeli authorities that the fishing limit had been re-extended to six nautical miles is an encouraging step.

Among the many long-term challenges facing the people of Gaza, as identified by the United Nations in our 2012 report *Gaza 2020: a liveable place?*, the lack of safe drinking water and the decline of the aquifer are perhaps the most pressing. Desalination will be necessary to improve the situation. The United Nations, with funding from Japan, has installed a desalination plant with a capacity of 50 cubic metres per hour — the thirteenth desalination plant installed by the United Nations in Gaza. That example

illustrates how United Nations programming in Gaza continues apace and makes a difference.

The first phase of United Nations reconstruction projects totals approximately \$450 million worth of projects approved by the Government of Israel. The United Nations continues to work in concert with other members of the international community to scale up reconstruction efforts while also pursuing the policy changes that will be required if a sustainable Gazan economy is to be re-established. We also continue to call on Israel to permit the unrestricted entry of construction material into Gaza, particularly aggregate, iron bar and cement. Restrictions on trade should also be lifted, including transfers to and from the West Bank and imports from and exports to Israel and other countries.

In a separate development, we welcome the release today of the seven Egyptian servicemen captured in the Sinai, as well as the subsequent reopening of the Rafah crossing.

On 14 May, Fatah and Hamas delegations met in Cairo to make progress on the implementation of existing reconciliation agreements. The factions reportedly recommitted to consultations on the formation of a national consensus Government, headed by President Abbas, as laid down in previous agreements. Those consultations should start within a month and lead to a Government in the next three months, after which elections, including those for the Palestinian National Council, are to take place within another 90 days. On 16 May, President Abbas visited Cairo, where he met with President Morsi to discuss Palestinian reconciliation as well as the Middle East peace process.

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VIII. UNRWA CO-PUBLISHES REPORT ON BEDOUIN COMMUNITY RELOCATION

On 28 May 2013, UNRWA and the NGO Bimkom issued a joint report analyzing the consequences of the relocation of 150 Palestine refugee Bedouin families which started in 1997 in order to expand the Ma'ale Adumim settlement. The report highlights the deterioration of the social and economic conditions of the Bedouin refugees transferred to Al Jabal village. The executive summary of the report is reproduced below:

The Israeli Civil Administration is preparing plans for a centralized Bedouin Village in Area C of the West Bank. The village is one of a number of options being proposed by the Israeli authorities for the future of the West Bank's mobile pastoralist community; the Bedouin. The majority of the Bedouin in the West Bank today are Palestine refugees, originating from tribal territories in what is now the Negev Desert. The livestock-dependent Bedouin facing transfer¹ into centralized semi-urban settings today are perhaps the last sector of the Palestine refugee population to experience overnight transformation from a traditional rural society to one based on an urban wage-labour setting. The threat the Bedouin Palestine refugees face today mirrors – albeit on a significantly smaller scale – the plight of the vast majority of Palestine refugees over 60 years ago when they were forcibly exiled from hundreds of hamlets, villages and towns in pre-1948 Mandate Palestine and became residents of densely populated refugee camps.

While government resettlement programmes have introduced Bedouin townships across the region, to date only one such project has been carried out by the Occupying Power targeting the Bedouin Palestine refugee population in the West Bank. The *'Arab al Jahalin* village — the focus of this report — is comprised of 150

Bedouin Palestine refugee families who were transferred out of their rural kinship groups in the eastern Jerusalem periphery into a centralized location in three stages between 1997 and 2007. As the Israeli authorities advance planning for the second such Bedouin village in the West Bank, it is to the residents of *'Arab al Jahalin* village that the remaining rural Bedouin Palestine refugees today are turning for advice and lessons learned as they call for international protection to reject any such transfers and to be returned to their traditional tribal territories in the Negev.

While the Bedouin townships in the Negev and across the region have been subject to rigorous study from multiple angles, the West Bank village of *'Arab al Jahalin* — the only example of the centralization of the mobile pastoral Palestine refugees in the West Bank to date — has never been the focus of research. There is no body of literature available to inform stakeholders wishing to assess the impact of transfer and centralization into an urban setting on the Bedouin Palestine refugee population. Recognizing this gap in the literature, BIMKOM and UNRWA carried out a joint anthropological study of the *'Arab al Jahalin* village in order to demonstrate the day-to-day realities of the Bedouin Palestine refugee residents following their transfer. This joint report is intended to shed light on the situation of the transferred communities. While a number of conclusions are drawn from the field research, this report does not offer

¹ The focus of the paper is on the socio-economic/humanitarian impact of the proposed move in light of the known socio-economic/humanitarian repercussions following the 1997 transfer rather than the legal implications.

recommendations. Rather, it stands as a record of the current state of affairs for a pastoralist Palestine refugee population in rapid transition against their will from a rural to urban environment as a result of the policies and practices of the Israeli authorities.

This report is comprised of three main parts. Part I presents a background to the Bedouin Palestine refugee population living in the Jerusalem periphery today, including the process of the creation of the 'Arab al Jahalin village within the context of the occupation. Part II presents six case studies based on five months of field research, the methodology of which is laid out below. A detailed examination of the case studies reveals the varied ways in which the lives of different residents in the 'Arab al Jahalin village have been affected by the transfer. Part III presents the conclusions of the study. The two main conclusions that emerge from the case studies' analysis are that the centralization of rural communities against their will has resulted in a situation which 1) is socially non-viable and 2) is economically non-viable. The transfer of the rural Bedouin communities to the 'Arab al Jahalin village in three waves starting in 1997 has left them with no available social or sustainable economic assets with which to satisfactorily rebuild their lives in the new environment. Fifteen years after the transfers began, residents of the village are today still struggling to maintain the fundamental elements of their traditional social order and of their pastoral livelihoods. The report clearly demonstrates that financial

compensation secured through litigation has not ensured social, economic or cultural security for the Bedouin Palestine refugees in the 'Arab al Jahalin village. It shows that, under these circumstances and pending a durable solution to the refugee problem, the most viable option for residents of the village is to exercise dual residency practices, living partially in the village and partially maintaining the mobility of their traditional livelihood by returning to rural locations of Area C, a practice deemed illegal by the Israeli authorities. While the practice of dual residency enables families to better own the pace and direction of their lives following the transfer, it sustains their vulnerability by requiring Bedouin to return to areas where they are at threat of home demolition and eviction. In addition, the practice of dual residency splits family units, thereby entailing fundamental changes in family roles and daily practices.

Both in the 'Arab al Jahalin village and in the rural communities now at threat of transfer, this joint BIMKOM/UNRWA study concludes that sustainable rural development and secured access to natural resources from their current rural locations are the most viable solutions for Bedouin Palestine refugee communities in the Jerusalem periphery wishing to safeguard their social and cultural fabric and to enable a solid economic basis for progress and development. These are the essential conditions which would enable the Bedouin Palestine refugee communities to drive the process of modernization according to their desired timing, pace and direction.