



DIVISION FOR PALESTINIAN RIGHTS

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

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<http://unispal.un.org>***

I. CO-CHAIRS OF THE TWENTY-THIRD GCC-EU JOINT COUNCIL ISSUE STATEMENT

The following note was addressed to the United Nations Secretary-General on 2 July 2013 by the Permanent Mission of Bahrain to the UN. The note transmitted the Statement of the Co-Chairs of the twenty-third Gulf Cooperation Council-European Union Joint Council and Ministerial Meeting that was held in Manama on 30 June 2013. Excerpts of the statement are reproduced below (A/67/925):

Manama, 30 June 2013

1. The 23rd session of the Joint Council and Ministerial Meeting of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf (GCC) and the European Union was held in Manama, capital of the Kingdom of Bahrain, on 30 June 2013. The GCC delegation was led by Shaikh Khalid Bin Ahmed Bin Mohamed Al-Khalifa, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Bahrain, and the European Union delegation was led by Catherine Ashton, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission. Abdullatif bin Rashid al-Zayani, GCC Secretary-General, also participated in the meeting.

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11. The Ministers reaffirmed the position of both sides that a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East region was fundamental to international peace and security, in accordance with United Nations resolutions and the Arab peace initiative, leading to the establishment of an independent and sovereign Palestinian State on the land occupied since 1967. The Ministers also welcomed the current efforts of the Secretary of State of the United States of America, John Kerry, to give fresh momentum to the Middle East peace process.

The Ministers affirmed their position regarding non-recognition of any changes to the pre-1967 borders, other than those agreed by both parties, including the city of Jerusalem. They stressed their common position that Israeli settlements in any place in the occupied Palestinian territories were illegal under international law and constituted an obstacle to peace. In this regard, they requested Israel to put an immediate stop to all settlement activities in East Jerusalem and in the rest of the West Bank, including natural growth, and to dismantle all existing settlements. The Ministers also agreed on the need to continue to provide political and financial support for Palestinian State-building efforts.

...

Final communiqué adopted by the Supreme Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council at its thirty-third session

**Sakhir, Kingdom of Bahrain, Monday 11
and Tuesday 12 Safar A.H. 1434 (24 and
25 December A.D. 2012)**

At the invitation of King Hamad bin Issa Al Khalifa of Bahrain, the Supreme Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) held its thirty-third session in Sakhir, Bahrain, on Monday 11 and Tuesday 12 Safar A.H. 1434 (24 and 25 December A.D. 2012).

...

The Council commended the visit of the Amir of Qatar to the Gaza Strip in October 2012. It praised his efforts to break the siege on the Strip, provide humanitarian relief and launch a number of economic and development projects. The Council hoped that the visit would mark the start of new endeavours to unify the Palestinian people and ensure that their legitimate objectives were achieved.

...

II. Political matters

The situation in the Palestinian territories and developments in the Arab-Israeli conflict

The Supreme Council reviewed the latest developments in the Palestinian issue and emphasized that the achievement of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace depended on Israel's complete withdrawal from the Arab territories occupied in 1967, namely Palestine, the occupied Syrian Golan and the land that it continued to occupy in the south of Lebanon, and on the establishment of an independent Palestinian State with East Jerusalem as its capital. Those were the same principles embodied in the Arab Peace Initiative and the authoritative international resolutions.

The Council congratulated the Palestinian people and its leaders on Palestine's attainment of non-member observer State status in the United Nations. It expressed the hope that that achievement would mark a significant step towards the establishment of a Palestinian State with East Jerusalem as its capital.

The Council once more called for Palestinian factions to unite, end their divisions, set aside their differences and put interests of the Palestinian people first.

It condemned the settlement policies adopted by Israel in order to alter the geographic and demographic nature of the Palestinian territories. Those policies constituted an ethical and humanitarian crime and a serious violation of international law and had no legal effect in favour of Israel.

The Supreme Council welcomed the ceasefire agreement in Gaza that had been brokered by the Arab Republic of Egypt. It affirmed the importance of ongoing efforts to strengthen that agreement and avoid any recurrence of hostile actions by Israel. The Council held Israel legally responsible for that aggression and called upon the international community to ensure the provision and delivery of urgent humanitarian assistance to the Gaza Strip.

In that connection, the Council commended the efforts by GCC member States to provide humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian people, especially in the Gaza Strip, and the humanitarian assistance provided by the Bahrain Royal Charter Organization, under the guidance of Sheikh Nasr bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Chair of the Board of Trustees, with a view to alleviating the suffering of the Palestinians living under siege in Gaza.

...

II. IMF ISSUES STATEMENT AT THE CONCLUSION OF WEST BANK AND GAZA MISSION

The following is the statement issued on 3 July 2013 at the conclusion of an IMF mission to the West Bank and the Gaza Strip (IMF Press Release No. 13/244):

A team from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) led by Christoph Duenwald visited East Jerusalem and Ramallah during June 24-July 2, 2013, to assess recent economic developments in the West Bank and Gaza, and the financial situation of the Palestinian Authority. The mission met Prime Minister Rami Hamdallah, Deputy Prime Minister Muhammad Mustafa, Finance Minister Shukry Bishara, Governor Jihad Al Wazir, and other Palestinian officials. At the end of the mission, Mr. Duenwald, the mission chief for the West Bank and Gaza, issued the following statement:

“The Palestinian economy continues to be dominated by the public sector, and persistent Israeli controls and obstacles on internal movement, exports, and imports in the West Bank, as well as the virtual closure of Gaza, thwart the private sector. Under these conditions, GDP growth is expected to continue to slow in 2013, to 4½ per cent, with modest inflation of around 2½ per cent. Given weak growth, little progress is expected in reducing the unemployment rate, which currently stands at 24 per cent. Despite these circumstances, the banking system appears healthy.

“The finances of the Palestinian Authority (PA) remain fragile. The PA has taken measures to limit the growth of the wage bill, but overspending on energy subsidies, nonpayment of electricity bills, and shortfalls in revenues have more than offset savings. We project an overall deficit before grants of US\$1.7 billion in 2013. Even if donor commitments for 2013 are

fully met, a significant financing gap will remain. This gap would likely be covered by further arrears accumulation and domestic bank borrowing, which has already reached prudential limits.

“Aside from these near-term pressures, we remain concerned about the medium-term viability of the PA’s finances. The PA has typically operated a large fiscal deficit financed partly by donor aid. These deficits, for many years, exceeded available donor aid, causing the PA to resort to distortionary financing sources, such as arrears to the private sector, to cover its expenditures. At the same time, public spending is tilted towards wages, pensions and transfers, rather than much needed investment in education and public infrastructure, leaving in place impediments to private sector development.

“Reducing the deficit and redirecting the PA’s spending from consumption to investment is required to strengthen the economy’s productive capacity. Towards this end, a key measure should be a gradual reduction in the large wage bill by means of a hiring and wage freeze, as well as a rationalization of allowances for high income public sector workers, followed by comprehensive civil service and pension reform. Expanding the well targeted Cash Transfer Program would help cushion the impact for the most vulnerable. The authorities should continue to improve public financial management with a view to avoiding new arrears and strengthening cash management. On the revenue side, efforts

could focus on reducing tax exemptions and improving compliance.

“The PA needs the continued support of the international community and cooperation of Israel, guided by the common objective of a more vibrant and robust Palestinian economy. Indeed, there is no substitute for a

far-reaching relaxation of Israeli restrictions needed to unshackle the private sector and thereby boost growth and employment. At the same time, the donor community needs to support the transition to viable public finances with stepped up aid based on multiyear commitments.”

III. UN HUMANITARIAN COORDINATOR ISSUES STATEMENT ON THE DETERIORATING SITUATION IN THE GAZA STRIP

The following statement was issued on 3 July 2013 by the Office of the United Nations Humanitarian Coordinator on the situation in the Gaza Strip:

The United Nations Humanitarian Coordinator, Mr. James W. Rawley today urged the Government of Israel to lift the long-term restrictions, including the blockade of Gaza in place since 2007. Seeking to highlight the particular impact of these restrictions on livelihoods, Mr. Rawley led a visit of humanitarian agencies and international representatives to meet with Palestinian fishermen and farmers to learn first-hand how they are affected and what can be done to address the challenges they face.

“The cumulative impact of Israel’s restrictions, some of which have been in place for more than a decade, has devastated the livelihoods of families in Gaza, such as the farmers and fishermen we met today”, said Mr. Rawley. “These restrictions affect the poorest the most; they impede development of a sustainable economy and increase dependency on aid”, he said. Recent assessments indicate that 57 per cent of people in Gaza do not have money to buy sufficient food and 80 per cent of families receive some form of international aid. The economy is effectively kept alive through public expenditure, international aid and the illegal tunnel trade, in which thousands of

workers, some of them children, continue to risk their lives every day.

Long-term restrictions on access to as much as 35 per cent of Gaza’s agricultural land and currently more than two-thirds of its fishing areas have resulted in estimated annual economic losses of over \$76M. The continued ban on the transfer of produce and other goods from Gaza to its traditional markets in the West Bank and Israel has effectively prevented sustainable economic growth; less than one truckload of goods per day (on average) exited Gaza in the first half of 2013, compared to 38 during the first half of 2007 before the imposition of the closure. “While there has been some improvement in access to land and sea areas following the 21 November 2012 ceasefire agreement, only a full lifting of restrictions on access, as well as on exports and transfers of produce, will enable recovery of the fishing and agricultural sectors and the livelihoods of those who depend upon them”, Mr. Rawley said. Mr. Rawley also expressed concern that measures undertaken to enforce access restrictions on land and at sea continue to place Palestinian farmers, fishermen and other civilians at serious physical risk.

Noting that the UN has repeatedly condemned the indiscriminate firing of rockets by Palestinian armed groups towards Israel, Mr. Rawley said, "Israel has legitimate security concerns. Any response to such concerns, including limitations on the free movement of people and goods, must comply with international law; they

must be proportionate to a specific threat and must not be punitive in nature. Palestinians in the Gaza Strip have the capacity to develop their communities and to build a sustainable local economy. Only the full lifting of these long-term restrictions will enable them to do so".

IV. ECOSOC ADOPTS RESOLUTION ON THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL REPERCUSSIONS OF THE ISRAELI OCCUPATION.

At its fortieth plenary meeting held on 18 July 2013, the Economic and Social Council adopted resolution 2013/8 entitled "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". The following is the text of the resolution (E/RES/2013/8):

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

The Economic and Social Council,

Recalling General Assembly resolutions 67/120 of 18 December 2012 and 67/229 of 21 December 2012,

Recalling also its resolution 2012/23 of 26 July 2012,

Guided by the principles of the Charter of the United Nations affirming the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force and recalling relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolutions 242 (1967) of 22 November 1967, 252 (1968) of 21 May 1968, 338 (1973) of 22 October 1973, 465 (1980) of 1 March 1980 and 497 (1981) of 17 December 1981,

Recalling the resolutions of the tenth emergency special session of the General

Assembly, including resolutions ES-10/13 of 21 October 2003, ES-10/14 of 8 December 2003, ES-10/15 of 20 July 2004 and ES-10/17 of 15 December 2006,

Taking note of the report by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia on the 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, as transmitted by the Secretary-General,¹

Reaffirming the applicability of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949,² to the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and other Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967,

¹ A/68/77-E/2013/13

² United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 75, No. 973.

Recalling the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights³, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights³ and the Convention on the Rights of the Child,⁴ and affirming that these human rights instruments must be respected in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, as well as in the occupied Syrian Golan,

Taking note of General Assembly resolution 67/19 of 29 November 2012,

Stressing the importance of the revival and acceleration of serious and credible negotiations within the Middle East peace process on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 425 (1978) of 19 March 1978, 1397 (2002) of 12 March 2002, 1515 (2003) of 19 November 2003, 1544 (2004) of 19 May 2004 and 1850 (2008) of 16 December 2008, the principle of land for peace, the Arab Peace Initiative⁵ and the Quartet road map,⁶ as well as compliance with the agreements reached between the Government of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people,

Reaffirming the principle of the permanent sovereignty of peoples under foreign occupation over their natural resources, and expressing concern in that regard about the exploitation of natural resources by Israel, the occupying Power, and Israeli settlers in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan, particularly as a result of settlement activities, which are illegal under international law,

Convinced that the Israeli occupation has gravely impeded the efforts to achieve sustainable development and a sound economic environment in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan, and expressing grave concern about the consequent deterioration of economic and living conditions,

Commending the efforts of the Palestinian Government, despite the many constraints, to improve the economic and social situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, especially in the areas of governance, the rule of law and human rights, livelihoods and productive sectors, education and culture, health, social protection, infrastructure and water,

Gravely concerned about the accelerated construction of settlements and implementation of other related measures by Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, particularly in and around occupied East Jerusalem, as well as in the occupied Syrian Golan, in violation of international humanitarian law and relevant United Nations resolutions,

Expressing deep concern about the rising incidence of violence, harassment, provocation, vandalism and incitement by illegal armed Israeli settlers in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, against Palestinian civilians, including children, and their properties, including homes, historic and religious sites, and agricultural lands,

Gravely concerned by the serious repercussions on the economic and social conditions of the Palestinian people caused by the construction by Israel of the wall and its associated regime inside the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in and

³ See General Assembly resolution 2200 A (XXI), annex.

⁴ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1577, No. 27531.

⁵ A/56/1026-S/2002/932, annex II, resolution 14/221.

⁶ S/2003/529, annex.

around East Jerusalem, and the resulting violation of their economic and social rights, including the rights to work, to health, to education, to property, to an adequate standard of living and to freedom of access and movement,

Recalling, in that regard, the advisory opinion rendered on 9 July 2004 by the International Court of Justice on the legal consequences of the construction of a wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory⁷ and General Assembly resolution ES-10/15, and stressing the need to comply with the obligations mentioned therein,

Expressing grave concern at the extensive destruction by Israel, the occupying Power, of properties, including the increased demolition of homes, economic institutions, historical landmarks, agricultural lands and orchards, in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, in particular in connection with its construction of settlements and the wall and confiscation of land, contrary to international law, in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in and around East Jerusalem,

Expressing grave concern also over the continuing forced displacement of Palestinian civilians, including the Bedouin community, due to the continuing and intensifying policy of home demolitions, evictions and revocation of residency rights in and around occupied East Jerusalem, as well as measures to further isolate the city from its natural Palestinian environs, which have seriously exacerbated the already critical socioeconomic situation being faced by the Palestinian population,

Expressing grave concern further about ongoing Israeli military operations and policies of closures and severe restrictions on the movement of persons and goods via the imposition of crossing closures, checkpoints and a permit regime throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the consequent negative impact on the socioeconomic situation of the Palestinian people, in particular the Palestinian refugee population, which remains that of a humanitarian crisis,

Taking note of recent developments regarding the situation of access to the Gaza Strip, although grave hardships continue to prevail as a result of the prolonged Israeli closures and severe economic and movement restrictions that in effect amount to a blockade, calling in that regard for the full implementation of Security Council resolution 1860 (2009) of 8 January 2009 with a view to ensuring the full opening of the border crossings for the sustained and regular movement of persons and goods, including humanitarian aid, commercial flows and construction materials, and emphasizing the need for security for all civilian populations,

Deploring the heavy casualties among civilians, including hundreds of children and women, the internal displacement of thousands of civilians and widespread damage to homes, vital civilian infrastructure, hospitals, schools, food supply installations, economic, industrial and agricultural properties, and several United Nations facilities in the Gaza Strip, which have a grave impact on the provision of vital health and social services to Palestinian women and their families and on their socioeconomic living conditions caused by the military operations between

⁷ See A/ES-10/273 and Corr.1.

December 2008 and January 2009 and in November 2012,

Recalling, in that regard, the relevant United Nations reports, including those of the Economic and Social Council, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia and the Human Rights Council,

Expressing deep concern about the short- and long-term detrimental impact of such widespread destruction and the hampering of the reconstruction process by Israel, the occupying Power, on the socioeconomic and humanitarian conditions of the Palestinian civilian population in the Gaza Strip, and calling in that regard for the immediate acceleration of the reconstruction process in the Gaza Strip with the assistance of the donor countries, including the disbursement of funds pledged at the International Conference in Support of the Palestinian Economy for the Reconstruction of Gaza, held in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, on 2 March 2009,

Gravely concerned about various reports of the United Nations and specialized agencies regarding the substantial aid dependency caused by prolonged border closures, inordinate rates of unemployment, widespread poverty and severe humanitarian hardships, including food insecurity and rising health-related problems, including high levels of malnutrition, among the Palestinian people, especially children, in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem,

Expressing grave concern at the deaths and injuries caused to civilians, including children, women and peaceful demonstrators, and emphasizing that the Palestinian civilian population must be

protected in accordance with international humanitarian law,

Emphasizing the importance of the safety and well-being of all civilians, and calling for the cessation of all acts of violence, including all acts of terror, provocation, incitement and destruction, and all firing of rockets,

Expressing deep concern that thousands of Palestinians, including many children and women, continue to be held in Israeli prisons or detention centres under harsh conditions, including unhygienic conditions, solitary confinement, excessive use of administrative detention, lack of proper medical care and denial of family visits and of due process, that impair their well-being, and expressing deep concern also about any ill-treatment and harassment of Palestinian prisoners and all reports of torture, while taking note of the agreement reached in May 2012 on conditions of detention in Israeli prisons and calling for its full and immediate implementation,

Conscious of the urgent need for the reconstruction and development of the economic and social infrastructure of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, as well as the urgent need to address the humanitarian crisis facing the Palestinian people, including by ensuring the unimpeded provision of humanitarian assistance and the sustained and regular flow of persons and goods into and out of the Gaza Strip,

Recognizing the efforts by the Palestinian Government, with international support, to rebuild, reform and strengthen its damaged institutions and promote good governance, emphasizing the need to preserve the Palestinian national institutions and infrastructure and commending in that

regard the implementation of the 2009 plan of the Palestinian Authority, entitled “Palestine: Ending the Occupation, Establishing the State”, for building the institutions of an independent Palestinian State within a 24-month period and the significant achievements made, as confirmed by the positive assessments regarding readiness for statehood made by international institutions, including the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the United Nations, in their reports to the meeting on 13 April 2011 and subsequent meetings of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee for the Coordination of the International Assistance to Palestinians, and acknowledging the Palestinian National Development Plan 2011–2013 on governance, economy, social development and infrastructure,

Commending, in that regard, the important work being done by the United Nations, the specialized agencies and the donor community in support of the economic and social development of the Palestinian people in line with their national development and State-building plan, completed at the end of August 2011, as well as the assistance being provided in the humanitarian field,

Stressing the importance of national unity among the Palestinian people, and emphasizing the need for the respect and preservation of the territorial integrity and unity of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem,

Calling upon both parties to fulfil their obligations under the road map, in cooperation with the Quartet,

Aware that development and fostering healthy economic and social conditions are difficult under occupation and best

promoted in circumstances of peace and stability,

1. *Calls for* the full opening of the border crossings of the Gaza Strip, in line with Security Council resolution 1860 (2009), to ensure humanitarian access as well as the sustained and regular flow of persons and goods and the lifting of all movement restrictions imposed on the Palestinian people, including those restrictions arising from ongoing Israeli military operations and the multilayered closures system, and for other urgent measures to be taken to alleviate the serious humanitarian situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, which is critical in the Gaza Strip, and calls for compliance by Israel, the occupying Power, with all of its legal obligations under international humanitarian law and United Nations resolutions in that regard;

2. *Stresses* the need to preserve the territorial contiguity, unity and integrity of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and to guarantee the freedom of movement of persons and goods throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, as well as to and from the outside world;

3. *Also stresses* the need to preserve and develop Palestinian national institutions and infrastructure for the provision of vital public services to the Palestinian civilian population and to contribute to the promotion and protection of human rights, including economic and social rights;

4. *Demands* that Israel comply with the Protocol on Economic Relations between the Government of Israel and the

Palestine Liberation Organization, signed in Paris on 29 April 1994;⁸

5. *Calls upon* Israel to restore and replace civilian properties, vital infrastructure, agricultural lands and governmental institutions that have been damaged or destroyed as a result of its military operations in the Occupied Palestinian Territory;

6. *Reiterates the call* for the full implementation of the Agreement on Movement and Access of 15 November 2005, particularly the urgent and uninterrupted reopening of all crossings into the Gaza Strip, which is crucial to ensuring the passage of foodstuffs and essential supplies, including construction materials and adequate fuel supplies, as well as to ensuring the unhindered access of the United Nations and related agencies and regular commercial flows necessary for economic recovery to and within the Occupied Palestinian Territory, and emphasizes the need for security for all civilian populations;

7. *Calls upon* all parties to respect the rules of international humanitarian law and to refrain from violence against the civilian population, in accordance with the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949;²

8. *Reaffirms* the inalienable right of the Palestinian people and the Arab population of the occupied Syrian Golan to all their natural and economic resources, and calls upon Israel, the occupying Power, not to exploit, endanger or cause loss or depletion of those resources;

9. *Calls upon* Israel, the occupying Power, to cease its destruction of homes and properties, economic institutions and agricultural lands and orchards in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, as well as in the occupied Syrian Golan;

10. *Also calls upon* Israel, the occupying Power, to end immediately its exploitation of natural resources, including water and mining resources, and to cease the dumping of all kinds of waste materials in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan, which gravely threaten their natural resources, namely, the water, land and energy resources, and present a serious environmental hazard and health threat to the civilian populations, and also calls upon Israel, the occupying Power, to remove all obstacles that obstruct implementation of critical environmental projects, including the sewage treatment plants in the Gaza Strip;

11. *Reaffirms* that the construction and expansion of Israeli settlements and related infrastructure in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the occupied Syrian Golan, are illegal and constitute a major obstacle to economic and social development and to the achievement of peace, and calls for the full cessation of all settlement and settlement-related activity, including full cessation of all measures aimed at altering the demographic composition, legal status and character of the occupied territories, including, in particular, in and around Occupied East Jerusalem, in compliance with relevant Security Council resolutions and international law, including the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War;

⁸ See A/49/180-S/1994/727, annex, entitled "Agreement on the Gaza Strip and the Jericho Area", annex IV.

12. *Calls for* accountability for the illegal actions perpetrated by Israeli settlers in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, recalls in that regard Security Council resolution 904 (1994) of 18 March 1994, and stresses the need for its implementation;

13. *Reaffirms* that the ongoing construction by Israel of the wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in and around East Jerusalem, is contrary to international law and is isolating East Jerusalem, fragmenting the West Bank and seriously debilitating the economic and social development of the Palestinian people, and calls in that regard for full compliance with the legal obligations mentioned in the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice rendered on 9 July 2004⁷ and in General Assembly resolution ES-10/15 and subsequent relevant resolutions;

14. *Calls upon* Israel to comply with the provisions of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War and to facilitate visits of the Syrian citizens of the occupied Syrian Golan whose family members reside in their mother homeland, the Syrian Arab Republic, via the Qunaitra entrance;

15. *Emphasizes* the importance of the work of United Nations organizations and agencies in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General to the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority;

16. *Expresses appreciation* to the Member States, United Nations bodies and

intergovernmental, regional and non-governmental organizations that have provided and continue to provide economic and humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian people, which has helped to ameliorate their critical economic and social conditions, and urges the continued provision of assistance, in cooperation with official Palestinian institutions and consistent with the Palestinian National Development Plan;

17. *Reiterates* the importance of the revival and accelerated advancement of negotiations of the peace process on the basis of relevant United Nations resolutions, including Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 425 (1978), 1397 (2002), 1515 (2003), 1544 (2004) and 1850 (2008), the Madrid Conference, the principle of land for peace, the Arab Peace Initiative⁵ and the Quartet road map,⁶ as well as compliance with the agreements reached between the Government of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people, in order to pave the way for the realization of the two-State solution of Israel and Palestine living side by side in peace and security within recognized borders, based on the pre-1967 borders, and the achievement of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace settlement;

18. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session, through the Economic and Social Council, a report on the implementation of the present resolution and to continue to include in the report of the United Nations Special Coordinator an update on the living conditions of the Palestinian people, in collaboration with relevant United Nations agencies;

19. *Decides* to include the item entitled “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” in the agenda of its substantive session of 2014.

*40th plenary meeting
19 July 2013*

V. SECRETARY-GENERAL WELCOMES ANNOUNCEMENT ON REACHING AN AGREEMENT TO RESUME PEACE TALKS.

The following statement was issued on 19 July 2013 by the Spokesperson for UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon (SG/SM/15176):

The Secretary-General welcomes the announcement by United States Secretary of State [John] Kerry today in Amman, Jordan, that the basis has been established to resume talks between Israelis and Palestinians.

The Secretary-General commends Secretary Kerry’s efforts and the decision by the parties to return to the negotiating table. He is encouraged by this positive development and calls on both sides to show

leadership, courage, and responsibility to sustain this effort towards achieving the two-State vision.

The United Nations will support any endeavour towards meaningful negotiations and to the achievement of a comprehensive peace in the region.

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

On 23 July 2013, The Security Council considered the agenda item entitled: The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question. Under this item, the Council heard a briefing by United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process Robert Serry followed by debate by a number of States. Excerpts of Mr. Serry’s briefing are reproduced below (S/PV.7007):

As the Middle East continues to go through a deepening crisis, with an ever-deteriorating humanitarian catastrophe in Syria and significant political developments in Egypt, the Middle East peace process remains critical to the fate of the region. Progress in the peace process and a more constructive dynamic between the parties would have important, positive regional political implications. Conversely, continued

deadlock will further erode hope for an agreed two-State solution. In the effort to renew a serious dialogue between the parties, time is of the essence.

It is against that compelling background that the Secretary-General has welcomed United States Secretary of State Kerry’s intense diplomatic efforts in recent months and his announcement in Amman that a

basis had been established for resuming direct final status negotiations between the Israelis and Palestinians. We understand that the agreement is still being finalized, and that Palestinian and Israeli negotiators will join Mr. Kerry in Washington, D.C., in the near future to begin initial talks. We also note that some very tough choices will be required from both sides in the period ahead. Both leaders will have to win the support of their domestic constituencies for renewed negotiations. The meetings that President Abbas has held with the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Al-Fatah Central Committee serve as an indication thereof. The Secretary-General, encouraged by the positive developments towards negotiations, has called on both sides to show leadership, courage and responsibility in order to sustain this effort towards achieving a two-State solution.

While United States engagement is central, we are convinced of the need for a broader regional and international role in support of any political initiative, as well as continued efforts to ensure that the Palestinian Authority remains a viable interlocutor and partner. In that regard, we appreciate the ministerial meetings of the Arab League Committee with Secretary Kerry and President Abbas in Amman; the Committee made a significant difference with its statement of support. We particularly commend Jordan's important contribution to the current efforts. It is crucial to build on the opening offered by the Arab League ministerial committee's recent reaffirmation of the Arab Peace Initiative and the prospect of ending the Arab-Israeli conflict and achieving regional peace. We continue to hope that Israel will find a constructive way to respond to it.

As for the United Nations, the Council may rest assured that the Secretary-General and I on the ground will continue our engagement in support of the vital ongoing effort to revive meaningful negotiations. The Foreign Ministers of the European Union in their Council conclusions of 22 July also reaffirmed that they would give active and concrete support to help ensure that negotiations between the parties were successful. The envoys of the Quartet were recently briefed on the efforts under way and intend to meet soon to review the situation and assess how the wider international community can effectively support resumed negotiations.

The efforts to bridge the gaps between the parties are commendable, but more hard work lies ahead of us. As Secretary Kerry noted, it is important that tangible progress be made before the new General Assembly session in September. The United Nations has been clear that progress this year can be expected only if a credible political horizon for achieving a negotiated two-State solution emerges. Similarly, plans to shore up the Palestinian economy with a major boost to private-sector development are welcome, and indeed necessary, but must now be complemented by progress on the political track. In this near-to-last chance to preserve the viability of the two-State solution, we remain hopeful that renewed negotiations will be substantive and set a clear path towards that solution, namely, the end of conflict and lasting peace and security for both Israelis and Palestinians. Nobody but the parties themselves can make the hard choices required to achieve peace, but the international community and the region should cooperate in a concerted and committed manner to drive the peace process forward.

We should further stress that any negotiations must be accompanied by a renewed focus on visibly and tangibly improving the situation on the ground. Both parties must take every possible step to promote conditions conducive to the resumption of the political process and refrain from actions that undermine trust. In doing so, we must not forget the situation in Gaza, where practical steps to improve the humanitarian and security situation in the wake of transformations in Egypt can be an important enabler for peace and stability. We feel that this is also the time for bold steps to enhance the understanding on the ceasefire reached in November 2012 through Egyptian good offices.

Turning to events on the ground, the situation in the reporting period can be summarized as relatively quiet, but tense and volatile at the same time. The potential risk of increased instability and violence in the West Bank was illustrated on 11 July, when Israeli security forces reported seizing a rifle, ammunition and two pipe bombs during a raid in Nablus. Palestinian security forces continued working to maintain law and order in the West Bank, in coordination with Israeli security forces. On 12 July, a Palestinian explosive engineering unit safely disposed of an unexploded ordinance near Qalqiliya.

We are concerned about continued prisoner protests, including of a number of hunger strikes that have already lasted more than two months. On 14 July, Jordanian detainee Abdallah Barghouti was transferred from prison to an Israeli hospital in critical condition after 76 days of continuous hunger strike. We note that President Abbas has consistently called on Israel to address the legitimate concerns of Palestinian prisoners and, as a confidence-building step, to consider releasing prisoners, including those

convicted in times predating the Oslo agreement. With the parties having now agreed to resume negotiations, I have little doubt that a meaningful prisoners release would help to build confidence and improve the situation on the ground.

Israeli security forces conducted a total of 360 search-and-arrest operations in the occupied West Bank, including in Area A, resulting in one Palestinian being shot and killed on 2 July and 134 Palestinians injured, including 24 children and six women. Three members of Israeli security forces were also injured. Four hundred and nineteen Palestinians were arrested by Israeli security forces. This includes Hamas Palestinian Legislative Council member Mohammed Abu Tair on 2 July in Ramallah, after he had previously been deported from Jerusalem.

Against the background of a UNICEF report, issued in March, on the treatment of Palestinian children by the Israeli security forces, we are also troubled by the detention in Hebron on 9 July of a five-year old Palestinian boy for several hours in a stone-throwing incident. The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) are reportedly checking this incident and reviewing its policies regarding the detention of children.

Israeli security forces announced a crackdown on Israelis suspected of carrying out so-called price tag attacks, with a number of reported arrests, including of one suspect in connection to the desecration of the Latrun monastery in September 2012. Tensions continued on the ground as a result of settler attacks that injured 13 Palestinians and caused extensive damage to Palestinian property. Palestinian attacks on settlers also resulted in two injuries and some material damage.

Following last month's reported slowdown, demolitions of Palestinian property in Area C and in East Jerusalem increased again during the reporting period. A total of 83 structures were demolished, leading to the displacement of 129 Palestinians, including 45 children.

I regret to inform the Council that, despite earlier reports of Israeli restraint on settlement activity, the reporting period witnessed some renewed steps in settlement planning both in the West Bank and, to a lesser extent, in East Jerusalem. Steps towards the approval and advancement of settlements involve 70 housing units in Har Homa, between Bethlehem and Jerusalem, 84 units in Nokdim, in the southern West Bank, and 700 units in Modiin Illit. A report of the Israeli State Comptroller issued on 17 July noted that there was little to no criminal law enforcement in the settlements regarding violations of planning and construction law, and that administrative procedures for demolitions are rarely implemented.

Of note, on 19 July the European Commission, drawing from earlier Council conclusions, issued guidelines that stipulate that it would provide grants and maintain relations only with Israeli institutions within the 1967 line. The guidelines, to come into force on 1 January 2014, prescribe that any Israeli legal entity receiving funding from the European Union will have to state that it has no links to the West Bank, including in East Jerusalem, or the Golan Heights. Israeli officials have voiced their strong objection to these guidelines.

The position of the United Nations regarding settlements is unequivocal. They are contrary to international law and Israel's commitments under the road map. Continuing settlement activity would not be

conducive to creating a favourable environment for negotiations.

In a positive development, Israel is providing a considerable number of permits for Palestinian residents of the West Bank to visit Jerusalem and Israel during Ramadan, and applying more flexible regulations at checkpoints and points of passage during the holiday. Nevertheless, visits between 10 and 17 July of Israeli groups, including senior officials, to the Temple Mount/Haram Al-Sharif resulted in some clashes between Palestinians and the Israeli police accompanying these groups. We urge all parties to show extreme restraint and to keep the calm around this holy site.

In Gaza, the relative calm observed in June was largely maintained during the reporting period. A total of three rockets were fired from Gaza into Israel, without resulting in casualties or damage. There were also no reports of Israeli airstrikes into Gaza. Israeli forces conducted six limited incursions into Gaza and in some instances the Israeli navy forced Palestinian fishing boats ashore by shooting in their vicinity. No casualties were reported on either side.

The situation on the ground in Gaza has been affected by political developments in Egypt. For security reasons, the Rafah crossing was closed for nearly a week, and since 11 July it has been partially reopened to allow limited categories of people and those stranded on either side of the crossing to return home. Egypt also deployed two additional battalions in the Sinai to address security concerns. However, on 4 July two explosions were heard in the Israeli southern city of Eilat, without any casualty or damage, reportedly resulting from rockets fired from the Sinai. A Salafist group, Ansar Beit Al-Maqdis, took responsibility for the shooting. We strongly condemn any such shootings.

The Egyptian authorities also took robust measures against the tunnels into Gaza. As a result of these actions against illegal activity, 80 per cent of the tunnels are now no longer functioning, according to some estimates. Gaza is beginning to experience some serious shortages of fuel and basic building materials for which the tunnels had become the primary entry points due to severe restrictions on imports via the official crossings and the higher cost of fuel available from the West Bank and Israel.

While the only Israeli crossing for goods, Kerem Shalom, has remained open and is handling increased quantities of consumer goods, we are concerned that already difficult economic and humanitarian conditions in Gaza will further deteriorate if access into Gaza through legal crossings of such basic commodities as building materials is not liberalized. We are aware that the Palestinian Authority has approached the Israeli Government on the matter, requesting that remaining restrictions on the entry of building materials via Kerem Shalom be lifted.

We encourage all parties not to forget the precarious situation in Gaza and to take advantage of the improved context between the parties to further lift the remaining closures. We call on Israel to liberalize the entry of key construction materials into Gaza so that the private sector will be able to legally procure these materials to satisfy Gaza's infrastructural needs.

The opening of Gaza and the lifting of remaining closures are part of the November 2012 understanding on the ceasefire. The other part is adherence to full calm. We therefore call on the de facto authorities in Gaza to heed their commitments. Any violation of the ceasefire by rocket fire at this politically delicate juncture is not only unacceptable but also completely

irresponsible. We also call on Egypt to maintain the Rafah crossing open for people, with due consideration for Egypt's security requirements.

Let me briefly mention a few other developments. The United Nations Mine Action Service reported the removal over the past six months of most unexploded ordnance that had been dangerously stored in Gaza city, thereby greatly improving the protection of civilians there. Over 2,000 items of unexploded ordnance have been safely destroyed since January.

We continue to be concerned about death sentences in Gaza, outside of the Palestinian legal framework. Further to the four such sentences and two executions carried out during the last reporting period, a man was sentenced to death in Gaza on 14 July. We call on de facto authorities in Gaza to refrain from carrying out further executions.

...

Progress indeed necessitates serious political commitments if leaders on both sides are to achieve the vision of the two-State solution they have both agreed on. We do not underestimate the difficulty of developing a substantial initiative that should provide a credible horizon for achieving a two-State solution at long last. But we cannot emphasize enough that this is the moment for concerted action and continued support to the parties. The risks of forgoing the present opportunity should be clear for both sides. As the United Nations, we remain convinced that achieving the two-State solution, ending the occupation that started in 1967 and ending the conflict as envisaged by the relevant resolutions of the Council are in the best interests of both Israelis and Palestinians.

VII. QUARTET ISSUES STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF RESUMPTION OF ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN NEGOTIATIONS

The following statement was issued 30 July 2013 in New York by the Middle East Quartet (SG/2196):

The Quartet welcomes the announcement by United States Secretary of State John Kerry that direct talks between Israelis and Palestinians have resumed on 29 July, with senior negotiators from both sides meeting in Washington, D.C., to begin final status negotiations.

The Quartet commends both President [Mahmoud] Abbas and Prime Minister [Benjamin] Netanyahu for taking this courageous decision in the interest of their peoples, and is determined to lend its effective support to the efforts of the parties and their shared commitment to achieve a negotiated two-State solution within the agreed timeframe of nine months.

The Quartet, recalling its previous statements, calls on all parties to take every possible step to promote conditions conducive to the success of the negotiating process and to refrain from actions that undermine trust.

The Quartet expresses its appreciation for the efforts of President [Barack] Obama and Secretary [of State] Kerry in helping the parties reach agreement to resume negotiations. The Quartet commends the Arab League for its constructive role in support of renewed negotiations, including its reaffirmation of the Arab Peace Initiative, recognizes many others in the international community for their important contributions and expresses hope that such efforts will continue.

While noting that much hard work lies ahead, the Quartet expresses its hope that renewed negotiations will be substantive and continuous and set a clear path towards a two-State solution, the end of conflict, and lasting peace and security for both Israelis and Palestinians. The Quartet intends to meet soon at the envoys level to discuss next steps.

**VIII. CEIRPP CHAIRMAN ADDRESSES LETTER TO THE PRESIDENT
OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY REGARDING BOLIVIA'S REQUEST
FOR MEMBERSHIP IN THE COMMITTEE.**

The Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, Abdou Salam Diallo, on 31 July 2013 addressed the following letter to the President of the General Assembly regarding Bolivia's request to become a member of the Committee: (A/67/957):

I have the honour to inform you that, by a letter dated 29 May 2013 addressed to the Chair of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (see annex), the Permanent Representative of the Plurinational State of Bolivia conveyed the decision of his Government to become a member of the Committee.

The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, at its 353rd meeting held on 30 July 2013, welcomed this decision by the Plurinational

State of Bolivia and approved its request. In the view of the Committee, this reflects the growing international support for its efforts to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine.

In the light of the above, and since the membership of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People has been established by the General Assembly, I have the honour to request that you bring the matter to the attention of the Assembly for its approval.