



DIVISION FOR PALESTINIAN RIGHTS

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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:
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I. UN INDEPENDENT HUMAN RIGHTS EXPERTS EXPRESS CONCERN AT TREATMENT OF PALESTINIAN HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER

On 13 August 2013, a group of United Nations independent human rights experts in Geneva expressed deep concern at the alleged treatment directed against Issa Amro, a prominent Palestinian human rights defender. Excerpts from the press release issued on the occasion is reproduced below:

Mr. Amro was arrested and detained 20 times in 2012, and six times so far in 2013, although he has never engaged in violence nor been charged with a crime. He is a founder of non-governmental organizations Youth Against Settlements and Hebron Defenders.

“Mr. Amro appears to be the victim of a pattern of harassment that includes an effort to intimidate him prior to his participation at the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva in June 2013 as NGO representative where he delivered two statements,” said the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the occupied Palestinian territories, Richard Falk.

“Right before participating at this session of the Council, he received a summons to appear at Ofer Military Court on 30 December 2013,” Mr. Falk recalled. “At this point, there is no indication of any charges against Mr. Amro.”

...

“I am very concerned for Mr. Amro’s life, physical integrity and the psychological toll that this is having on his health and family,” said the UN Special Rapporteur on torture, Juan E. Méndez, while stressing that there is an absolute and non-derogable ban under international human rights law on the use of torture as well as cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. “It is beyond comprehension that the police summoned him the following morning to the same police station where he was abused.”

...

“This is an unacceptable campaign of harassment, intimidation and reprisals against Mr. Amro, and other human rights defenders who peacefully advocate for the rights of Palestinians in the West Bank, including by cooperating with UN human rights bodies,” added the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of Human Rights Defenders, Margaret Sekaggya.

The UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of opinion and expression, Frank La Rue, noted that during his visit to the West Bank in 2011 he had been deeply concerned by the restrictions imposed by Israel on the work of human rights defenders and journalists working in the occupied territory. “Intimidation through arbitrary arrests risks silencing important voices that inform us about the real situation on the ground,” he said.

“We call on the Government of Israel to make sure that every allegation of torture or of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment of Palestinians in Israeli custody is investigated in a thorough and transparent investigation and that those responsible are held accountable for their acts,” urged the Special Rapporteur on the occupied Palestinian territories.

“The Government of Israel must take steps to ensure that Israeli settlers are not permitted to harass and intimidate Palestinians with impunity. I also continue to be concerned by Israel’s use of military courts to try Palestinian civilians in the occupied territories,” Mr. Falk said.

II. SECRETARY-GENERAL VISITS THE STATE OF PALESTINE

During his official visit to the Middle East, including the State of Palestine, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on 15 August 2013 met with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, Prime Minister Rami Hamdallah, and other Palestinian officials, and attended the launch of the UN Development Assistance Framework for the State of Palestine. The Secretary-General also held a press encounter with President Abbas before heading to Israel. The following is the reproduction of the text of his remarks at the launch of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework in Ramallah (SG/SM/15220, PAL/2162), and at the press encounter with President Abbas in Ramallah:

...

The world is changing, and so are demands on the United Nations. We are engaged in a continuous process of reform to strengthen our ability to deliver to those in need. We are enhancing our strategic focus and better aligning our development programmes in support of national priorities.

This means greater transparency and flexibility. It means doing more with what we have and strengthening our accountability. We are working to better integrate efforts in health, education, agriculture, infrastructure and other areas to make a real difference in the lives of people.

The United Nations Development Assistance Framework is central to these efforts. Today's launch marks a new chapter of partnership between the people and Government of Palestine and the United Nations.

United Nations agencies have a long history of providing assistance for Palestine, starting with the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, UNRWA, in 1950. UNDP [United Nations Development Programme] commenced activities on the ground in 1980. Today, 19 UN agencies operate here.

Through the UNDAF, the UN is combining our efforts to deliver better results for all Palestinians, including

refugees. I am impressed by the achievements of the Palestinian state-building agenda, which the UNDAF will continue to support.

The Palestinian people are clearly determined to transform an ambitious vision into reality — even against considerable odds. Meaningful and sustained progress on development remains challenging given the continued occupation of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip.

But along with our national and international partners, many of whom are represented here today, the United Nations is helping to strengthen the capacity of the Palestinian Government and other institutions to provide essential services to the Palestinian people. We are helping to enhance the resilience of individuals and communities. Yet, more needs to be done.

The long overdue goal of the Palestinian people is to live in a viable, independent and sovereign State. It is the right of all Palestinians and central to the stability of the region. And it is a goal of the United Nations.

I, therefore, welcome the resumption of credible negotiations to achieve the two-State solution and appreciate the courageous efforts of President [Mahmoud] Abbas and Prime Minister [Benjamin] Netanyahu of

both parties. These important steps towards peace augur well for this first-ever UNDAF.

And I am that much grateful for all your strong support for a socioeconomically viable State of Palestine, and let us work together and help two parties so that they can make progress in negotiations. And I am very much glad to be able to visit at this time, a crucially important time, when they have just begun these meaningful negotiations and I am here to support the United Nations, as well as, as a member of the Quartet, to strongly support ongoing progress.

I am sure that, unfortunately, there will be many obstacles, but how to create a conducive atmosphere politically by both sides and with the support of all the international partners that will be the key of the success. And I am very much grateful for both leadership and particularly President Abbas and Prime Minister [Rami] Hamdallah whose people have been working hard under occupation and with the strict restrictions of passages and freedoms, and their independent and viable two State-solution aspiration is long overdue.

This is the right time and let us seize this moment for the benefit and interest of Palestinian people and Israeli people so that they can live side by side in peace and security. That's our dream and aspiration of a two-State solution. Thank you very much. Thank you.

Secretary-General's remarks at press encounter with President Mahmoud Abbas

Ramallah, 15 August 2013

...

I am here to demonstrate the continued commitment of the United Nations to the

Palestinian people's legitimate rights to self-determination and aspirations for statehood and a just and a lasting peace.

A viable Palestinian state is long overdue.

There is renewed hope thanks to the commitment of the Palestinian and Israeli leadership. This must be sustained.

I appreciate the efforts of the United States, particularly Secretary of State John Kerry. I am also encouraged about the recent pledge by the Arab leaders to revive the 2002 Arab Peace Initiative for regional stability.

I want to highlight the leadership and courage of President Abbas and Prime Minister Netanyahu. I urge all parties to avoid actions that would risk undermining prospects during the negotiations.

A two-state solution can be achieved through negotiations that resolve permanent status issues such as borders, security, refugees and Jerusalem.

I am encouraged that the parties have embarked on direct talks. These talks must be meaningful with a clear political horizon and must mark progress in the immediate period ahead.

There must be visible improvements on the ground.

I remain deeply troubled by Israel's continuing settlement activity in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.

Settlement activity is deepening the Palestinian people's mistrust in the seriousness on the Israeli side towards achieving peace. It will ultimately render a two-state solution impossible.

I welcome the release of 26 Palestinian prisoners. But I remain concerned about the fate of some 5,000 Palestinian prisoners who remain in Israeli jails, especially those on hunger strike and administrative detention. They should either be tried or released.

I also call for the further easing of restrictions on the Palestinian movement and access, whether of goods or peoples.

The United Nations will continue to ensure the development of Palestinian communities in the West Bank and Gaza. These communities deserve economic growth and recovery, with access to land, sea and resources.

The President and I agreed that in the context of a resumed peace process we cannot and must not forget Gaza.

The deteriorating humanitarian situation has an adverse impact on Gaza's civilian population.

I continue to emphasize the importance of access through legitimate crossings.

At the same time, Israel's legitimate security concerns must be addressed.

I continue to support the efforts of President Abbas to promote Palestinian reconciliation. This is an indispensable part of a permanent settlement.

And in all our efforts, we must never lose sight of the plight of five million Palestinian refugees.

I commend President Abbas for his leadership and commitment under difficult circumstances. Hard choices lie ahead.

After years of frustrations, many remain doubtful about the prospect of success. Now is the moment to prove sceptics wrong.

I want to assure President Abbas and the Palestinian people that I, along with my Special Coordinator Robert Serry, and the entire United Nations team, will spare no effort to assist the parties in achieving lasting peace.

Thank you. Shukran jazeelan.

III. SECRETARY-GENERAL VISITS ISRAEL

During his official visit to the Middle East, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on 16 August 2013 held a press encounter with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Jerusalem. The following is the text of his off-the-cuff remarks:

...

It is a great honour for me to visit Israel for the sixth time as Secretary-General of the United Nations. I think my visit is taking place at a crucially important timing for the Middle East peace process which you courageously and wisely agreed to resume. I am here to lend my strong support, of myself and the United Nations and the Quartet.

I am encouraged that Israelis and Palestinians have re-engaged in direct dialogue. But for these negotiations to have a chance at success, they need to be meaningful.

I know that when a problem has remained an open wound for decades, causing hardships and casualties on both sides, it might sometimes seem that the problem will never be solved.

Dealing [with] the symptom might seem easier in the short-term. It takes courage, vision, and creativity to decide that the long-term cost of that problem is actually too high.

That is what is happening now with the Israeli-Palestinian issue.

I applaud Prime Minister Netanyahu for having the courage to set out a solution as a priority.

I know that many Israelis look at regional unrest and ask whether now is the time to try to make peace with the Palestinians. Some might want greater government focus on tackling other issues within their own society.

I also say to the Israeli people that this process should and must lead to increased security and hope for a more stable region. The time is now for Israel to be fully respected as a member of the international community. In this regard I would welcome very much welcome, a more constructive relationship between Israel and the Human Rights Council.

I believe Prime Minister Netanyahu recognizes that Israel will never realize its potential internally or externally, as long as there is no peace with Israel's closest neighbours, the Palestinians. The Prime Minister knows that occupying Palestinian lands is not a long-term solution to Israel's regional challenges.

I am here to urge all the leaders to continue along the path to peace and to underscore a shared commitment to work together to make 2013 a decisive year for Israeli-Palestinian peace and peace in the region.

And as you have discussed I am also ready to discuss on all other regional issues including the Syrian crisis, the Egyptian situation, and the Iranian nuclear issue and the situation in Lebanon, and the situation in broader Middle East peace and stability. And I am grateful for your leadership, and count on your continuing leadership and great success and prosperity of the Israeli people and Government.

IV. ASG FOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS BRIEFS SECURITY COUNCIL ON THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST, INCLUDING THE PALESTINIAN QUESTION

On 20 August 2013, Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs Oscar Fernandez-Taranco briefed the Security Council on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question. The following are excerpts from the briefing (S/PV.7020):

The Council meets again amid continued regional unrest, with a volatile situation in Egypt, a fragile Lebanon and on-going turmoil in Syria. The Secretary-General has issued two statements in recent days regarding the situation in Egypt, and the Deputy Secretary-General briefed Council members last Thursday. The developments in Egypt and their regional implications continue to be of great concern and merit

our close attention. In the period under review, we also witnessed a small but important opening for peace with the launch, last month, of resumed direct talks between Israelis and Palestinians. It has long been the belief of the United Nations that progress on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict could have a positive impact on regional stability. That has become all the more critical in recent weeks against the backdrop of such

troubling developments elsewhere in the region.

Efforts led by the United States Secretary of State over a four-month period culminated in a series of preparatory meetings between the negotiators in Washington, D.C., on 29 and 30 July, where parties agreed on an agenda that would cover all core final status issues and to working towards a comprehensive agreement within nine months. Those meetings were followed by a first formal round of talks in Jerusalem on 14 August, after the release of 26 pre-Oslo prisoners from Gaza and the West Bank, based on an Israeli Cabinet decision of 29 July. A second round took place between negotiators today in Jericho. In its statement of 30 July, the Quartet welcomed the resumption of talks and reiterated its members' shared commitment to helping the parties achieve a negotiated two-State solution within the agreed time frame. Quartet envoys intend to meet soon to discuss next steps.

It is against that background that the Secretary-General travelled to the region — to Jordan, Palestine and Israel — on 15 and 16 August to lend his personal support to the leaders on both sides. He has been encouraged by the seriousness of the efforts to bring the parties to the negotiating table after a prolonged political stalemate, and he has praised the determination of United States Secretary of State Kerry in that regard. He also welcomed the appointment of United States special envoy for Israeli-Palestinian Negotiations, Mr. Martin Indyk. He was particularly heartened by the bold decision of President Abbas and Prime Minister Netanyahu to embark on direct dialogue, which remains the single most credible path to a solution. The Secretary-General found both Palestinian and Israeli leaderships recommitted to the vision of a two-State solution, which is clearly in the

best interest of both peoples. His own message was that this is an opportunity neither could afford to miss. It is his firm belief that direct negotiations are the only way through which Palestinians can realize their rightful aspirations for an independent and viable Palestinian State, and Israelis can meet their legitimate security needs and finally become a crucial partner in the development of a stable and prosperous Middle East.

The Secretary-General continues to believe that a two-State solution can be achieved through negotiations that resolve permanent status issues such as borders, security, refugees and Jerusalem. For those negotiations to have a chance at success, they need to be meaningful, with a clear political horizon, and yield early dividends in the immediate period ahead.

The Secretary-General recognizes that the road ahead is fraught with obstacles. He has nevertheless appealed to political leaders on both sides, as well as to Palestinian and Israeli youth, to overcome their deep scepticism and embolden their leaders in efforts to shape the better future their peoples deserve. It is incumbent upon regional and international stakeholders to help the parties carry those efforts forward. Both sides now need to sustain an environment conducive to the peace process moving forward. The parties must refrain from actions that would risk undermining prospects during the negotiations, and there have to be visible improvements in the situation on the ground.

The reporting period witnessed a decrease in search and arrest operations conducted by Israeli security forces; 229 such operations in the West Bank resulted in 276 Palestinians arrested. A total of 88 Palestinian civilians were injured by Israeli forces, including 20 children and 5 women.

Two Israeli soldiers were injured by Palestinians. However, in a worrisome development, on 19 August, 39 Palestinians, including 18 children, were forcibly evicted and their homes were destroyed in what appears to be a significant increase in demolitions in East Jerusalem during the reporting period. At least six other structures were also demolished today in Area C.

As reported last month, the Israeli authorities implemented a number of measures aimed at easing access for Palestinians from the rest of the West Bank to East Jerusalem during the holy month of Ramadan. Israeli authorities also partially opened the historic access road into Hebron city from the south to Palestinian traffic, which had been closed for the last 12 years, citing security concerns for nearby settlers. Though limited, such measures represent important steps forward at this crucial moment in the political process. The Secretary-General was encouraged by indications from the Israeli authorities of additional measures in the planning to further ease restrictions on Palestinian movement and access, whether of people or goods.

At the same time, the Secretary-General remained deeply troubled by Israel's continuing settlement activity in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, referencing recent announcements of the approval of some 2,000 housing units. The position of the United Nations on settlements being against international law remains firm. Furthermore, settlement activity deepens mistrust, undermines efforts to advance peace and will ultimately render a two-State solution impossible.

Continued settler violence is also disconcerting. On 25 July, Israeli settlers set fire to about 100 Palestinian-owned olive trees in the village of Mikhmas, near

Ramallah. Such violent attacks undermine the livelihoods of communities across the West Bank. I urge the Israeli authorities to ensure that all measures are taken ahead of the olive harvest later next month to protect Palestinians and their property and enable Palestinian access to their land to maintain their crops year-round.

The Secretary-General has welcomed the Israeli Cabinet's decision on the release of pre-Oslo prisoners. He nevertheless remains concerned about the fate of some 5,000 Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails, especially those on hunger strike — of which there are currently 10, after 4 Jordanians ended their strike — and those in administrative detention, who should be either tried or released.

In Ramallah, the Secretary-General met with the newly reappointed Palestinian Prime Minister, Rami Hamdallah, who was asked by President Abbas on 15 August to form a new Government within five weeks. He reiterated the United Nations commitment to ensuring the development of Palestinian communities in the West Bank and Gaza deserving of economic growth and recovery, with access to land, sea and resources. He further supported efforts to shore up the Palestinian economy and safeguard the important State-building achievements, issues that will be addressed in next month's meeting of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee for the Coordination of the International Assistance to Palestinians.

On the occasion of his visit, the Palestinian Authority and the United Nations signed the first-ever United Nations development assistance framework for the State of Palestine. Describing the collective United Nations response to national development priorities, the framework places the Palestinian people at the centre of development programming and empowers

people to exercise human rights, enjoy access to basic services and achieve their right to an adequate standard of living.

The calm in Gaza has been tentative, with six projectiles shot at Israel, acts that we strongly condemn. Two Israeli incursions and one air strike were recorded during the reporting period. One Palestinian was killed while attempting to infiltrate Israel through the fence in the north-east of Al-Bureij refugee camp on 10 August, and six others were injured in similar situations, including three at sea. Three Palestinians were arrested on 17 August while attempting to swim towards Israel west of Beit Lahia. We call on Israel to show maximum restraint in such situations and make every effort to protect Palestinian civilians.

Gaza remains a high priority for the United Nations and must not be forgotten in the context of a resumed peace process. Despite early negative reactions, we express the hope that the Hamas de facto authorities will not hamper efforts to achieve the two-State solution, which is the only opportunity for achieving lasting peace and ending the isolation of the Gaza Strip.

As a result of political developments in Egypt, access through Rafah has been restricted for security reasons. Combined with the long-standing restrictions on the free movement of people and goods via Israel, such measures have continued to have an adverse impact on the civilian population, including by limiting access to health care for some of the most vulnerable patients in Gaza and resulting in shortages in key medical supplies. The continued robust measures undertaken by the Egyptian authorities against illegal activity through tunnels into Gaza have also affected the availability of key commodities, in particular construction materials.

Access through legal crossings has therefore become all the more critical. The Secretary-General has seriously engaged relevant partners, including the Israeli authorities, at the request of the Palestinian Government, on further increasing access through legal crossings and in particular on liberalizing access of construction materials into Gaza. We are hopeful that positive steps in that regard will be taken soon. Such steps would further solidify the November ceasefire understanding, which calls for the lifting of closures and addressing of Israel's security concerns.

In the latest incident in the Sinai peninsula, yesterday we witnessed alarming news of an ambush on two minibuses, which killed 25 Egyptian police officers. The Secretary-General condemned the ambush, and the United Nations hopes that the perpetrators will be swiftly identified and brought to justice.

In a separate yet troubling development, three missiles were shot on the night of 12 August at the resort city of Eilat. Two missiles were intercepted by the Iron Dome system and no damage was reported. A terror group named Ansar Bayt Al-Maqdis claimed responsibility for the attack. Such shootings are unacceptable and condemned in the strongest terms.

...

In conclusion, despite an ever-challenging regional environment, we are finally observing long-awaited movement in the peace process in the form of direct negotiations. Let me stress our hope that such efforts mark a first opportunity to overcome the recent years of shared frustration at the political deadlock. Last week, we witnessed a promising opening in the efforts under way to develop a meaningful political initiative on the Israeli-

Palestinian issue. We have now reached a decisive point. The test will be for both sides to go the distance and not disappoint their peoples. Now is also the moment to translate our collective call for action into a shared sense of urgency as leaders on both sides

must realize that they have an opening that they cannot afford to lose. The Secretary-General and the United Nations, together with the Quartet, will continue to provide all possible support to their efforts.

V. SECRETARY-GENERAL ISSUES REPORT ON HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN THE OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORY, INCLUDING EAST JERUSALEM

On 22 August 2013, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon issued a report on the Human rights situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 22/28. The conclusion and recommendations of the report are reproduced below (A/HRC/24/30):

...

VI. Conclusion and recommendations

61. Serious violations of international law continue to be committed in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The general human rights situation remains of heightened concern and needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency. The Secretary-General is deeply concerned about the recurrence of violations already highlighted in several of his previous reports and those of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. The majority of these violations could be avoided if the relevant duty-bearers would take the necessary preventive and corrective actions as highlighted in the recommendations below.

A. Recommendations to the Government of Israel

62. The Government of Israel is under an obligation to conduct investigations into all allegations of serious violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law. Investigations must be conducted independently, impartially, thoroughly, promptly and effectively. Transparency in

investigations should also be ensured. Where appropriate, individuals who are allegedly responsible for violations should be prosecuted and victims should be provided with an effective remedy, including equal and effective access to justice and reparations.

63. The Government of Israel should review the methods and mechanisms used to enforce the access restricted areas (ARAs) in Gaza, in order to ensure full compliance with international human rights law and international humanitarian law.

64. Notwithstanding legitimate Israeli security concerns, the Government of Israel should fully lift the blockade of Gaza to remedy the ongoing punitive measures against the civilian population. All measures taken to address security concerns should comply with international law, including international human rights law and international humanitarian law.

65. The Israeli authorities should take all necessary measures to prevent violence perpetrated by Israeli settlers, and to address all such violence that is perpetrated. Accountability for crimes, including through justice and effective remedy for victims, should be ensured

without discrimination. Failure to do so will constitute a violation of Israel's human rights obligations and will perpetuate a culture of impunity.

66. Israeli plans that would result in the forcible transfer of Palestinian civilians should be terminated immediately. Israel, as the occupying Power, has the obligation to protect the Palestinian civilian population and to administer the occupied territory for the benefit of the Palestinians. Israel has an obligation under international law to provide Palestinian communities in Area C, including communities at risk of forcible transfer in the Jerusalem periphery and the Masafer Yatta area, with adequate housing, security of tenure and access to water and services, including health and education, in their current locations. The forcible transfer of the Palestinian population, including that part currently residing in the eastern Jerusalem periphery, would violate Israel's obligations under international humanitarian and international human rights law.

67. In accordance with its international obligations, the Government of Israel should take immediate steps to respect and ensure the respect of the right to freedom of movement for Palestinians in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, as well as freedom of movement between Gaza and the West Bank.

68. The Government of Israel should review its use of administrative detention, with a view to ending it speedily.

69. The Government of Israel should treat Palestinian children in detention with due consideration of their age and in accordance with international standards, in particular the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

70. The Government of Israel should ensure that any use of lethal force is in compliance with international law, including during law enforcement operations, including a review of regulations on the use of weapons and crowd control in operations carried out by its forces, to ensure that these regulations are in line with Israel's international legal obligations. In cases of excessive use of force, Israel should ensure accountability, including through investigations and, where appropriate, prosecutions.

B. Recommendations regarding accountability of the de facto authorities and Palestinian armed groups in Gaza

71. Accountability for violations of international law committed by the de facto authorities or armed groups in Gaza, including the killing of civilians, must be ensured by relevant actors. This includes violations that occurred in the context of the 14-21 November 2012 hostilities with Israel.

C. Recommendations to the Government of the State of Palestine

72. The Government of the State of Palestine should conduct effective investigations into all suspected violations of international human rights law. Investigations must comply with the standards of independence, impartiality, thoroughness, promptness and effectiveness. Transparency in investigations should also be ensured. Individuals found responsible should be held accountable and victims compensated. Accountability for crimes must be ensured without discrimination.

73. The Government of the State of Palestine should ensure the adoption of a comprehensive National Plan of Action for Human Rights which prioritizes compliance with international human rights law and

establishes concrete targets and goals for integrating human rights into national development efforts, and should, with the

assistance of international actors, ensure its full implementation through the Palestinian National Development Plan.

VI. UN OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS EXPRESSES CONCERN OVER FORCED EVICTIONS OF PALESTINIANS IN THE WEST BANK

The United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) on 27 August 2013 expressed concern over the forced eviction of Palestinians in the West Bank as a result of recent demolitions carried out by the Israeli authorities. The text of the press release is reproduced below:

The demolitions began on 19 August and have been carried out by Israeli authorities in at least six different locations, including East Jerusalem, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) said.

In one incident, Israeli authorities demolished all of the structures in the Bedouin community of Tel al Adassa in East Jerusalem, rendering some 39 people homeless, citing a lack of building permits.

“The Israeli authorities ordered the community to evacuate the area permanently or risk high monetary fines and confiscation of livestock,” OHCHR spokesperson Cécile Pouilly told reporters in Geneva.

“No alternative locations or housing options were offered. Left with no choice, the community has split and moved to two different temporary locations, where they remain vulnerable to further demolitions and repeated displacement due to lack of legal security of tenure and inability to obtain building permits.”

Ms. Pouilly said the permanent removal of the families from Tel al Adassa may amount to a violation of the prohibition to forcibly transfer individuals or communities under article 49 of the Fourth Geneva

Convention. The case also raises concerns regarding the prohibition of forced eviction under international human rights law, and the right to adequate housing and freedom from arbitrary or unlawful interference with privacy, family and home.

OHCHR also expressed concern over reports of excessive use of force by Israeli security forces against Palestinian civilians in refugee camps in the West Bank. Since 18 August, at least four Palestinian civilians have been killed during search and arrest operations and at least 19 have been injured.

“While we do not yet have sufficient information to make an assessment of each of these specific cases, we have raised our concerns several times before, including in our reports, regarding the excessive use of force by Israeli security forces in law enforcement operations in the West Bank,” Ms. Pouilly said.

She added that the Israeli Government has the obligation to investigate all cases in an independent and impartial manner and hold accountable all those responsible for violations. OHCHR also urged Israeli authorities to publish its findings on the matter.