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### **BUREAU OF PALESTINIAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE SAYS SITUATION IN OCCUPIED EAST JERUSALEM 'DEEPLY DISTURBING'**

This statement was issued today by the bureau of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People on the situation in occupied East Jerusalem:

Further to the statement by the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People of 19 May 2009, expressing concern about illegal and provocative Israeli policies and measures in occupied East Jerusalem, the bureau of the Committee is once again, compelled to voice its alarm about recent developments in the city.

The situation in East Jerusalem is deeply disturbing. The Israeli authorities continue to expand illegal settlements in and around East Jerusalem, as well as take discriminatory measures against the city's Palestinian residents. On 2 August, following a decision by the Israeli High Court of Justice, Israeli security forces had forcibly evicted nine Palestinian families – 53 refugees registered by United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), including 20 children – from their homes in the Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood of East Jerusalem. Their property was handed over to a settler organization.

Moreover, on 7 September, Defence Minister Ehud Barak approved the construction of 455 new settlement units. On the same day, the Israel Land Administration published tenders for the construction of 486 units in the "Pisgat Ze'ev" settlement. There are also plans to build 14,000 housing units in the area of the Palestinian village of Al-Walaja, south-west Jerusalem, which would become the largest settlement project in the vicinity of East Jerusalem since the construction of the "Pisgat Ze'ev", "Gilo" and "Har Homa" settlements.

Most recently, the violent incidents at the Al-Haram Al-Sharif compound demonstrate how tense and explosive the situation in the city is. Any illegal or provocative actions, in particular at or near the city's holy sites, are prone to escalate into large-scale violence with far-reaching implications.

The bureau of the Committee states most emphatically that continued house demolitions, eviction of Palestinian residents, settlement construction, transfer of settlers or any other legal or administrative measures aimed at altering the status and physical and demographic character of occupied East Jerusalem constitute violations of international law and must be rescinded by the occupying Power. These unilateral policies and actions also sabotage the important efforts by the Quartet and its partners to relaunch permanent status negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians. Moreover, they call into question the credibility of official declarations by the Israeli Government regarding its readiness to resume serious negotiations with the declared goal of reaching a two-State solution to the conflict on the basis of the 1967 borders.

East Jerusalem remains part of the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Achieving a negotiated solution of the question of Jerusalem based on international law and relevant United Nations resolutions is absolutely essential for resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and crucial for a durable peace in the whole region. The bureau of the Committee stresses that in the absence of the political will on the part of the Israeli Government to adhere to its obligations, the international community must shoulder the responsibility of ensuring respect for the norms of international law.

The bureau of the Committee also urges the Security Council to implement its own resolutions on the question of Jerusalem. The members of the Quartet must also ensure the implementation by the parties of their obligations under the Road Map. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, for its part, pledges to continue to work in support of a comprehensive, just and lasting solution of the question of Palestine. The status and the future of the Holy City of Jerusalem remain an important integral part of any such settlement.

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