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Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem  
and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council  
Seventieth year

### **Identical letters dated 23 December 2015 from the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council**

As the international community looks ahead to a new year with much hope and anticipation, the Palestinian people's hopes are dampened by the deep despair and suffering they are enduring under Israel's occupation. Regrettably, the turmoil and deterioration of the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, continue as Israel, the occupying Power, persists with illegal, destructive and provocative policies and practices, exacerbating hardships, claiming more and more innocent lives, inflaming tensions and further destabilizing the situation.

Every single day, Palestinian civilians, including children and women, are attacked by the occupying forces and settler terrorists; Palestinian civilians are detained and arrested; and collective punishment measures such as home demolitions render families homeless, while restrictions on Palestinian movement suffocate and impact negatively all aspects of Palestinian socioeconomic life. Clearly, this is all part of a systematic and deliberate campaign to oppress and dehumanize the Palestinian people and make their lives unbearable under this inhumane foreign occupation.

Moreover, as the world prepares to celebrate Christmas, we must highlight the dismal and bleak situation facing Palestinian Christians and Muslims in Bethlehem, revered as the birthplace of Jesus Christ. During this holiday season, Bethlehem, with a population of 220,000 Palestinians, has traditionally been host to massive church services, markets and festivals and to Christians from across the world coming to partake in religious rituals and celebrations. However, owing to the fact that 82 per cent of Bethlehem falls inside the so-called Area C, which is under the full military and administrative control of the Israeli occupying Power, severe movement restrictions on Palestinians, including on the more than 10,000 Christians, are continuously imposed. This year, the severe conditions across the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the escalation of instability and the suffering of

Palestinians since the start of October 2015 have regrettably overshadowed the city's Christmas celebrations, which are normally a major occasion and significant period for tourism. In this context, I wish to quote the words of the mayor of Bethlehem, Ms. Vera Baboun, in her 2015 Christmas message: "True peace can never prevail in the world as long as the city of peace does not live in peace. We remain hopeful that the star of Bethlehem will be forever sparkling."

Such injustice continues daily, unabated not just in Bethlehem but throughout the entire occupied State of Palestine, including East Jerusalem, and innocent lives continue to be taken and ruined by the occupying Power. It is clear that the Israeli occupation is the source of all the suffering and instability. In this regard, since 1 October 2015, Israeli occupying forces and terrorist settlers have killed 131 Palestinians, among them 26 children and 6 women. Moreover, in this period, more than 4,714 Palestinians have been shot and wounded and nearly 10,000 persons have been treated for excessive tear-gas inhalation, while 393 have been injured in other ways, including from assaults by the occupying forces and burns from tear-gas canisters. Military raids of Palestinian villages, towns, refugee camps and cities continue to occur on a nearly daily basis and hundreds more Palestinians have been abducted, arrested and detained in the recent period. At this time, it has been documented that more than 3,000 Palestinians have been arrested by the Israeli occupying forces since 1 October 2015, nearly half of them children.

The list below reflects only some of the many crimes perpetrated in the recent period by Israeli occupying forces and terrorist settlers against the Palestinian people: 18 December 2015:

- Mahmoud Mohammad Saed Al-Agha (age 20) was shot and killed by Israeli occupying forces near Khan Younis in southern Gaza
- Mohammad Abdul Rahman Ayyad (age 21) was shot and killed by Israeli occupying forces near Silwad, north-east of Ramallah
- Nashaat Asfour (age 33) was fatally shot in the chest with an explosive bullet by Israeli occupying forces in Sinjel, north of Ramallah

19 December 2015:

- Israeli settlers physically assaulted and briefly detained a Palestinian farmer and his son in Tuqu', southeast of Bethlehem

21 December 2015:

- The occupying Power issued an administrative detention order against Bassam Hammad (age 49), the father of a Palestinian who was shot dead by the occupying forces earlier this month
- The family of Mohammad Ayyad, who was shot dead by the occupying forces, was served a notice by the occupying Power that its home is to be demolished
- Israeli occupying forces detained at least 29 Palestinians, most of them during predawn and night raids across the West Bank, including East Jerusalem
- It was reported that Palestinian prisoner Bassam Ameen Al-Sayeh (age 43), who, according to the Commission of Prisoners' Affairs, was detained on 8 October 2015 and sentenced to 20 years in an Israeli prison, suffers from poor health as a result of cancer and heart disease

22 December 2015:

- Terrorist settlers attacked the home of Hussein Al-Najjar (age 30) and vandalized the exterior walls of the house by spraying graffiti, including the Hebrew phrases "revenge" and "hello from the detainees of Zion", referring to reports of the arrest of the extremists who had carried out the terror attack against the Al-Dawabsheh family, and then smashed a window and threw tear-gas bombs inside, causing gas inhalation by the entire family, including a nine-month-old baby
- Israeli occupying forces detained 22 Palestinians, including two minors and a former detainee

23 December 2015:

- Israeli occupying forces shot and killed two Palestinians, Issa Assaf and Anan Abu Habsa, in Occupied East Jerusalem
- Israeli occupying forces raided and fired on an area east of the Al-Bureij refugee camp in central Gaza
- Occupying forces detained 10 Palestinian fishermen and seized their boats off the coast of Gaza City and it was reported that the fishermen were harassed,

intimidated and ordered to swim towards Israeli naval boats before being detained

- Extremist settlers from the illegal settlement Ma'ale Levona, north of Ramallah, destroyed 45 olive trees on Palestinian land. This destruction was perpetrated under the watch and protection of occupying forces, which prohibited the rightful Palestinian owners from accessing and protecting their land and olive trees
- Extremist Israeli settlers, accompanied by occupying forces, harassed and detained Palestinian shop owner Hussein Al-Qaisi and seized his shop in the Old City of Occupied East Jerusalem, claiming ownership of the shop and ruining the livelihood of yet another Palestinian family

In light of these ongoing negative developments and the continued deterioration of the situation at the hands of this brutal Israeli occupation, we reiterate the urgent need for the international community to take action to address all of the serious violations and grave breaches of international law, including humanitarian and human rights law, being committed by the occupying Power and its military forces and terrorist settlers against the Palestinian people. We urge the Security Council in particular to uphold its duties towards the maintenance of international peace and security and to act forthwith to compel Israel, the occupying Power, to cease immediately and completely all of its crimes against the Palestinian people. International law cannot be selectively applied when it comes to the Palestinian people, who continue to bear this grave injustice under Israel's nearly five-decade military occupation and who face the new year with diminished hopes as their suffering is deepening and the prospects for peace and justice are being destroyed by the occupying Power.

The present letter is in follow-up to our 569 previous letters regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which constitutes the territory of the State of Palestine. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 ([A/55/432-5/2000/921](#)) to 17 December 2015 ([A/ES-10/706-5/2015/989](#)), constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, acts of State terrorism and systematic human rights violations being committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators must be brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of this letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Riyadh **Mansour**

Ambassador

Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations

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