



DIVISION FOR
PALESTINIAN RIGHTS

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relevant to the question of Palestine

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

I. UN COORDINATOR FOR HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE AND DEVELOPMENT AID ISSUES STATEMENT ON ADMINISTRATIVE DETENTION

The following [statement](#) was issued on 2 February 2016 by the United Nations Coordinator for Humanitarian Assistance and Development Aid for the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Robert Piper, on Israel's continued practice of administrative detention:

“I am deeply concerned about the continued practice of administrative detention in Israeli jails and detention centers.

In particular, I am alarmed by the rapidly deteriorating health of Palestinian administrative detainee, Mohammed Al-Qiq, who is on hunger strike in protest against the arbitrary nature of his detention and ill-treatment.

According to data from Israel Prison Service (IPS), 527 Palestinians, including

one woman and five minors were held in administrative detention in IPS facilities at the end of November 2015.

After 69 days of hunger strike, Mr. Al-Qiq is in a dangerous state of health and his physicians have informed him of the possibility of irreversible damage. I reiterate the United Nations' long-standing position that all administrative detainees – Palestinian or Israeli – should be charged or released without delay. All allegations of ill-treatment must also be independently and promptly investigated.”

II. SECRETARY-GENERAL CONDEMNS ARSON ATTACK ON WEST BANK SYNAGOGUE

The following statement was issued on 8 February 2016 by the Spokesman for UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon ([SG/SM/17523](#)):

The Secretary-General condemns the arson attack on 6 February against a synagogue in the occupied West Bank and calls for a thorough investigation to quickly bring the perpetrators to justice.

The Secretary-General also calls on all sides to respect the sanctity of all holy sites,

refrain from any inflammatory actions or statements and reject the extremist elements that are pursuing a political agenda seeking to transform the current situation into a religious conflict.

III. SPECIAL COORDINATOR WELCOMES PALESTINIAN UNITY TALKS

The following [press release](#) was issued on 9 February 2016 by the office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for Middle East Peace Process in Jerusalem containing Mr. Nickolay Mladenov's statement on the Palestinian unity talks:

“I welcome the ongoing Palestinian unity talks hosted by Qatar. The United Nations supports all efforts undertaken to advance genuine Palestinian reconciliation

on the basis of non-violence, democracy and PLO principles.

I urge all sides to follow up on these discussions in good faith and implement previous agreements, in particular those brokered by Egypt. The formation of a National Unity Government that abides by the PLO programme and the conduct of long-overdue elections are important elements of this process.

The Palestinian people, particularly in Gaza, have suffered enough. They deserve

to see the West Bank and Gaza reunited under a single, democratic and legitimate Palestinian authority. This is an essential step towards lifting the closures, ending the occupation and achieving a negotiated and lasting resolution of the conflict that allows for two states -- Israel and Palestine -- to live side by side in peace, security and mutual recognition.”

IV. MIDDLE EAST QUARTET ISSUES STATEMENT ON MEETING IN MUNICH

The following statement was issued on 12 February 2016 by the Middle East Quartet on the meeting held in Munich ([SG/2224](#)):

Representatives of the Quartet — European Union High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy Federica Mogherini, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, United States Secretary of State John Kerry and United Nations Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson — met in Munich on 12 February.

The Quartet condemned all acts of terror and expressed its serious concern over the continuing violence against civilians. Reiterating its call for restraint, the Quartet called upon all parties to reject incitement and actively take steps to de-escalate the current tensions.

The Quartet expressed its serious concern that current trends on the ground — including continued acts of violence against civilians, ongoing settlement activity and the high rate of demolitions of Palestinian structures — are dangerously imperilling the viability of a two-State solution. The Quartet reiterated that unilateral actions by either party cannot prejudge the outcome of a negotiated solution.

The Quartet underlined its commitment to achieving a negotiated, comprehensive,

just and enduring resolution of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, on the basis of United Nations Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

The Quartet reiterated that the status quo is not sustainable and that significant steps, consistent with the transition contemplated by prior agreements, are urgently needed to stabilize the situation and to reverse negative trends on the ground. It noted that the continued absence of such steps was leading to further deterioration, to the detriment of both Israelis and Palestinians.

The Quartet underscored that both sides must swiftly demonstrate, through policies and actions, a genuine commitment to a two-State solution in order to rebuild trust and avoid a cycle of escalation.

It emphasized that a robust Palestinian economy and enhanced governance capacity will serve as cornerstones of a Palestinian state and that genuine Palestinian unity, on the basis of democracy and the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) principles, is essential to reuniting Gaza and the West Bank under one legitimate, democratic Palestinian Authority.

The Quartet urged an immediate focus on accelerating efforts to address the dire situation in Gaza, emphasized the importance of increased access through legal crossings and called on all international partners to expedite the disbursement of their pledges made at the Cairo Conference in October 2014.

The Quartet will remain engaged with the parties in order to explore concrete actions that both sides can take to demonstrate their genuine commitment to pursuing a negotiated two-State solution.

The Quartet reaffirms its commitment to act in coordination with key stakeholders, including regional countries and the United Nations Security Council, to stabilize the situation and to actively support a just, comprehensive and lasting settlement of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. In that regard, the Quartet will prepare a report on the situation on the ground, including recommendations that can help inform international discussions on the best way to advance the two-State solution.

V. OCHA ISSUES UPDATE ON PALESTINIAN BEDOUIN COMMUNITY

The following [flash update](#) entitled “Palestinian Bedouin community almost totally demolished” was issued on 16 February 2016 by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA):

On 15 February 2016, the Israeli army demolished almost all existing structures in the Palestinian Bedouin community of Ein Ar Rashash, in the Ramallah governorate, on grounds of lack of building permits. According to OCHA’s initial assessment, a total of 43 structures were targeted, including ten homes, 25 animal-related structures and eight external kitchens. Nearly 60 people, including 38 children, permanently residing in the community were displaced, and another 35 residing there seasonally or having their livestock structures on this site, were otherwise affected. Residents have remained in the community in precarious conditions.

Ein Ar Rashash is located in an area designated by the Israeli military as a “firing zone” and is one of the 46 Palestinian Bedouin communities at risk of forcible transfer in the context of an Israeli “relocation” plan.

Since the beginning of 2016, Israeli forces destroyed or dismantled 283 homes and other structures across the West Bank, the vast majority in Area C, displacing over 400 Palestinians, more than half of them children. More than 1,000 other people lost structures related to their source of income. More than a third of the structures targeted since the beginning of the year were provided as humanitarian assistance to families in need.

VI. HUMANITARIAN COORDINATOR CALLS ON ISRAEL TO HALT WEST BANK DEMOLITIONS IMMEDIATELY

The following [press release](#) was issued on 17 February 2016 by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in Jerusalem containing Mr. Robert Piper's statement regarding Israeli demolitions in the West Bank:

The Coordinator for Humanitarian and UN Development Activities for the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt), Robert Piper, today called for an immediate halt to the destruction of Palestinian-owned property in the occupied West Bank and for respect for international law.

“The number of demolitions for just the first six weeks of 2016 is greatly alarming,” said Mr. Piper. “Over 400 Palestinians have been displaced from their homes — equivalent to over half the total number of Palestinians displaced in all of 2015.”

Between 1 January and 15 February 2016, Israeli forces destroyed, dismantled or confiscated 283 homes and other structures, displacing 404 Palestinians, including 219 children, and affecting another 1,150 Palestinians, who lost structures related to their source of income. Over 100 of the demolished structures were already provided as humanitarian assistance to families in need, often in the wake of an earlier demolition. These incidents occurred in 41 Palestinian locations, many in Palestinian Bedouin or herder communities in Area C.

“Most of the demolitions in the West Bank take place on the spurious legal grounds that Palestinians do not possess building permits,” said Mr. Piper, “but, in Area C, official Israeli figures indicate only 1.5 per cent of Palestinian permit applications are approved in any case. So what legal options are left for a law-abiding Palestinian?”

The UN Secretary-General has noted that the Israeli zoning and planning policy in the West Bank is restrictive and discriminatory. Under international humanitarian law, the destruction of property in an occupied territory is also prohibited unless absolutely necessary for military operations.

“International law is clear — Palestinians in the West Bank have the right to adequate housing and the right to receive humanitarian assistance,” said Mr. Piper. “As the occupying power, Israel is obliged to respect these rights.”

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

On 18 February 2016, the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Nikolay Mladenov, briefed the Security Council on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question. Excerpts from the briefing are reproduced below ([S/PV.7627](#)):

I regret to inform the Security Council that the violence that has been erupting in Israel and Palestine since October of last year shows no sign of relenting. Some recent

incidents may point to a troubling new phase in the conflict. On 31 January, a Palestinian security officer traveling in an official vehicle opened fire at a checkpoint near

Ramallah and injured three Israeli soldiers. This was one of three incidents to date involving a member of the Palestinian security forces. Although he was acting independently, such incidents can be potentially harmful to the relationship between both security forces. On 3 February, a complex attack took place at Damascus Gate that resulted in the death of an Israeli border policewoman. In a worrying advancement in weaponry and tactics, the three assailants, all of whom were killed, carried semi-automatic weapons, pipe bombs and knives. Just a couple of hours before this meeting, in a supermarket in the West Bank, two Israelis were stabbed, one of whom later succumbed to his wounds. The two 14-year-old Palestinian attackers were shot by an armed civilian. Our thoughts go out to the families of these latest victims.

As tensions persist, Israelis continue to grapple with the fear of terrorism just as Palestinians continue to be killed and injured in clashes across the West Bank. Once again, the United Nations strongly condemns all acts of terror and violence. This spiral of violence, which has to date taken at least 137 Palestinian and 19 Israeli lives, cannot be reversed by security means alone. It must be addressed at the political level, with leaders showing a political horizon to their people and standing up to incitement and the radicals among their own constituents.

Only genuine progress towards a just peace that allows the people of Israel and the people of Palestine to live side by side in safe and secure borders will end the bloodshed and counter the rise of extremism. Against the backdrop of radicalisation, terror, sectarian violence, war and tectonic geopolitical shifts in the Middle East, peace and security for Palestine and Israel is imperative now more than ever.

Over the past year, the United States, Russia, the European Union and the Secretary-General, as part of the Middle East Quartet, have engaged actively in seeking a way forward out of the deadlock. Quartet envoys have travelled to the region to meet with Palestinian and Israeli leaders. We have consulted with Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and, most recently, Norway. Since September of last year, the Quartet principals have met three times.

We have sought how not only to preserve the two-State solution, but to create the conditions that would allow the parties to return to meaningful negotiations on resolving the final status issues and ending the occupation that began in 1967. This includes steps on the ground consistent with prior agreements that both parties can take to strengthen Palestinian institutions, security and economic prospects, while upholding security for Israelis. We have voiced our common concern that the current trends on the ground — including continued acts of violence against civilians, ongoing settlement activity, and the high rate of demolitions of Palestinian structures — are dangerously imperiling the viability of a two-State solution.

The commitment of the Middle East Quartet to remaining engaged with the parties and to working with key international stakeholders, the region and the Security Council is unequivocal. This is why, at their latest meeting in Munich, the principals agreed that the Quartet should prepare a report on the status quo, including recommendations on the way forward. The report should focus on the dangers of continuing on the current trajectory, identify the impediments to the two-State solution on all sides, and point the way towards restoring a political horizon. Ultimately, the report should also help build international consensus on the way ahead.

Collective international efforts to help establish a political horizon will all be for naught absent genuine Israeli and Palestinian motivation to address the chronic realities endangering the two-State solution. From the outset, significant policy shifts by Israel, including increasing Palestinian investment and economic activity in Area C, are required to strengthen Palestinian institutions, economy and security prospects.

Israel's settlement enterprise continues to be an impediment to peace. While 2015 may have seen a slower overall pace of settlement planning and construction, the reality is that Israel continues to push forward with consolidation of its control of the West Bank. Several moves since the beginning of the year — such as the classification of new “State land” in the Jordan Valley and the approval of several plans in settlements — also appear to point towards an increase in settlement activities.

During the past few weeks alone, Israeli authorities in Area C and East Jerusalem have demolished 201 Palestinian-owned structures, including 79 that were donor-funded. As a result, 320 people were displaced. Since the beginning of 2016, Israel has demolished on average 29 Palestinian-owned structures per week, which is three times the weekly average for 2015. These actions run directly counter to the idea of peace.

Separately, we also remain deeply concerned about the deteriorating condition of Mohammed Al-Qiq, the Palestinian journalist who has been on hunger strike for over 85 days to protest against his administrative detention. I take this opportunity to once again join the Secretary-General and the High Commissioner for Human Rights in calling for all persons subject to administrative detention to be either charged or released immediately.

The challenge of getting back to an environment conducive to peace also falls heavily on the shoulders of the Palestinians. Advancing genuine reconciliation on the basis of non-violence, democracy and the Palestine Liberation Organization principles is a key priority. I welcome the recent unity talks in Qatar and urge all sides to continue their discussions and implement previous agreements, particularly those brokered by Egypt. The formation of a national unity Government and long-overdue elections are vital to laying the foundations of a future Palestinian State.

The issue of incitement runs to the heart of the current climate of tension and fear. It is essential that authorities on both sides do more to address this scourge. I am particularly concerned that some Palestinian factions continue to glorify violence and terror. Such acts only contribute to tensions and violence. Governance reforms must also remain a central commitment of the Palestinian Authority.

Volatility persists in Gaza amid a tenuous security situation. The collapse of another four tunnels — bringing the total to date this year to five — and the continued test-firing and launching of rockets at Israel indicate that Hamas continues to directly threaten the security of Israel. Such actions risk not only people's lives but also the fragile reconstruction process in the devastated Strip. The population of Gaza is squeezed from all sides. With little prospect of seeing public sector salaries paid, increased informal taxation and a strangled economy, tensions are rising. I have just returned from Gaza, where I visited the Al-Shujaiya neighborhood that had been devastated during the conflict in 2014. It was encouraging to see the visible positive changes and new construction as life is reborn out of the rubble, but I am all too well aware that work is yet to start on the

homes of some 74 per cent of families displaced in 2014.

Rebuilding these houses, however, will not be enough. We must secure peace and focus on building Gaza for the future. This means providing clean water and sufficient energy, creating jobs and a sustainable economy, restoring free movement for people and goods and, above all, ensuring integration between the West Bank and Gaza under a single democratic and legitimate Palestinian Authority.

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In closing, let me return to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and appeal to the leaders of both peoples and all international stakeholders. There are clear avenues out of the current political morass, but they require unity of effort and bold, creative and courageous work on the part of many. Despite the work that has been done, the cold reality for the Israeli and Palestinian people is that all have failed them. The conflict has now arrived at a pivotal point. Israelis and Palestinians must now actively shape their future, with the dedicated support of the international community, before the opponents of peace decide their fate for them.

