



DIVISION FOR
PALESTINIAN RIGHTS

Bulletin

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

July 2015
Volume XXXVIII, Bulletin No. 7

Contents

	<i>Page</i>
I. Palestinian Rights Committee convenes the United Nations International Meeting on Israeli-Palestinian Peace in Moscow	1
II. Human Rights Council adopts a resolution on ensuring accountability for violations of international law in the OPT	7
III. Special Coordinator concerned by lethal incidents in the West Bank and East Jerusalem	9
IV. ECOSOC adopts a resolution on economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation	9
V. Security Council holds an open debate on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question	17
VI. Humanitarian Coordinator calls on Israel to suspend demolitions in Area C	21

Contents (cont'd)

	<i>Page</i>
VII. Special Coordinator concerned by heightened tensions in Jerusalem's Old City	21
VIII Special Rapporteurs urge Israel to halt legalizing force-feeding of hunger strikers	22
IX. Secretary-General condemns the Israeli approval of new settlement construction	23
X. Secretary-General condemns a terrorist arson attack against Palestinians	23
XI. Security Council condemns an arson attack in the West Bank	24

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I. PALESTINIAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE CONVENES THE UN INTERNATIONAL MEETING IN SUPPORT OF ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN PEACE IN MOSCOW

On 1 and 2 July 2015, the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People convened the United Nations International Meeting in Support of Israeli-Palestinian Peace in Moscow, under the title “Two-State solution: a key prerequisite for achieving peace and stability in the Middle East”. The following are the message of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon (SG/SM/16902-GA/PAL/1338) delivered at the Meeting by Nickolay Mladenov, United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, as well as the Chairman’s Summary issued after the Meeting:

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon’s message

It is my pleasure to extend greetings to all those taking part in the United Nations international meeting on Israeli-Palestinian peace. I thank the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for organizing this event as well as the Government of the Russian Federation for hosting it.

As the Middle East faces a vicious tide of terror and extremism, we must maintain our focus on the urgent need to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and realize the legitimate right of Palestinians to their own State, and of Israelis and Palestinians to live in peace and security. Failing to do so can further destabilize the region. The nearly half century-long occupation must end, and the two-State solution is the only viable way forward. A just and lasting peace can only be achieved through negotiations. It will demand difficult decisions from both parties. However, it is precisely because of the dangers that lurk in the Middle East today that both sides must show leadership and personal commitment to peace and negotiations.

The current reality is unsustainable and will only further disenfranchise the Palestinian people and increase the risk of escalation and violence. After all the setbacks, a majority of people on both sides still support the idea of two States. It is their

voices we must listen to and their efforts we must support.

I welcome recent statements of support for the two-State solution by Prime Minister [Binyamin] Netanyahu and have written to encourage him to take concrete and credible steps, including a freeze on building and planning settlements, in order to promote the resumption of meaningful negotiations. The building of settlements on occupied land is illegal under international law, makes a final agreement more difficult if not impossible, undermines the possibility of establishing two viable States and risks isolating Israel. Politicians on both sides should avoid provocative actions and rhetoric and must expend every effort to build upon existing agreements, including relevant Security Council resolutions, the Road map and the Arab Peace Initiative, to generate momentum towards a final status agreement.

I am deeply worried that the Palestinian reconciliation process has made very limited progress in nearly a decade. This is hurting the people of Gaza and undermining Palestinian statehood aspirations. The Palestinian Government should be fully empowered to take its legitimate governance and security responsibilities in Gaza, including control of the crossings. I urge Israel to lift its blockade on Gaza. All the crossings into Gaza should be opened to enable the legitimate movement of people and goods.

I am also deeply concerned by the recent resumption of rocket attacks by Palestinian militants from Gaza towards Israel. All factions on the ground have a responsibility to ensure that Gaza remains peaceful and to avoid another escalation, with its intolerable human cost. I urge donors to help Gaza get back on its feet by honoring the commitments they made at the Cairo conference last October.

I will continue to work with all parties to encourage a return to peace negotiations on the basis of an agreed framework. I am encouraged by the commitment of Arab leaders to uphold the Arab Peace Initiative and I encourage the Quartet, the Arab League, the Organization for Islamic Cooperation and all regional and international stakeholders to play a more active, supportive role in fostering an enduring peace. The United Nations remains committed to a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine resulting in two States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security.

Please accept my best wishes for a successful meeting.

Chairman's Summary

The **United Nations International Meeting in Support of Israeli-Palestinian Peace** was convened under the auspices of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (CEIRPP). The Meeting aimed to mobilize support for a just and comprehensive solution to the Question of Palestine. It explored ways to foster the conditions for a successful political process and reviewed international efforts to achieve the two-State solution – including those made within the framework of the Arab Peace Initiative, the Middle East Quartet, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and other

multilateral organizations, as well as within the context of the United Nations.

Invited to the meeting were all United Nations Members and Observers, inter-governmental organizations, UN Agencies, civil society organizations, and the media. Seventy-one Member States, two Observer States and three regional organizations participated. Speakers included internationally renowned experts on the Question of Palestine, Palestinian members of Government, Parliament and civil society, as well as Israeli members of the Knesset, political parties and civil society. The Meeting was open to the public and the media.

In his message to the Meeting at the opening session, the **Secretary-General of the United Nations** emphasized that Israel's nearly half a century-long occupation must end and failure to do so could further destabilize the region. The Secretary-General welcomed recent statements by the Prime Minister of Israel in support of the two-State solution and said that he had written the Prime Minister to encourage concrete, credible steps – including a freeze on illegal settlement building and planning – to jumpstart meaningful negotiations. Politicians on all sides should refrain from provocative actions and should build upon existing agreements, including relevant Security Council resolutions, the Roadmap and the Arab Peace Initiative, to advance a final status agreement. He added that the Palestinian Government should be fully empowered to assume responsibility for Gaza's governance and security, including control of the Gaza Strip border crossings. He also expressed concern over recent rocket attacks on Israel by Palestinian militants in Gaza.

On behalf of the **Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation**, the

Director of the Department of International Organizations at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said that his Government would do its part in international fora, particularly the Quartet, to reach a just and comprehensive settlement in line with all relevant General Assembly and Security Council resolutions, as well as the Arab Peace Initiative. Russia was concerned about the grave humanitarian situation in Gaza and called for an end to Israel's blockade of the coastal strip, stressing the important role of donor countries in financing reconstruction.

The Chair of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People noted that last year's breakdown of negotiations had culminated in one of the deadliest wars in Gaza. Amidst an almost complete blockade, reconstruction had barely begun and would take years. Settlement construction, land confiscation, housing demolitions and violence were ongoing in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. The Israeli Government's statements before the last elections in March of this year had raised questions over its commitment to the two-State solution. Still, there was a new international awareness that the situation could not continue. The Committee welcomed recent efforts to rescue the two-State solution, notably by the European Union, the League of Arab States' follow-up committee of foreign ministers and France's initiative for a Security Council resolution calling for a final status agreement.

The Foreign Minister of the State of Palestine recalled that the 1993 Oslo Accords signed by Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) were supposed to have led to a comprehensive peace agreement by May 1999 and European States had committed to recognize the State of Palestine. Instead, Israel continued to violate international law. The

devastating consequences of the 2014 conflict in Gaza, the forcible transfer of Palestinians and the growth of settlements undermined any peace prospect. He warned against attempts to transform a political conflict into a religious one. Palestine was seeking a "new framework for peace" with clear terms of reference, a timetable for a final status agreement, the end of the occupation and an international monitoring mechanism to ensure implementation and accountability. He welcomed France's initiative for a Security Council resolution. In parallel, the State of Palestine was seeking accountability through the International Criminal Court (ICC), the Human Rights Council and the Conference of the High Contracting Parties to the Geneva Conventions.

The Secretary-General of the League of Arab States was alarmed at Prime Minister Netanyahu's statement that the two-State solution was "behind" him. The Security Council must take necessary measures to implement existing resolutions. He also called for supporting France's initiative setting terms of reference, a mechanism for implementation and a complete halt of settlement activity. The Quartet had to be reviewed because it had not accomplished its objectives. Resorting to the International Court of Justice and the ICC were useful options.

In the **ensuing sessions**, participants emphasized the need for serious negotiations based on the **"land for peace" principle**. So long as Israel continued to occupy Palestinian territory, the Middle East would never achieve the peace desired. The **parties must refrain from unilateral measures** undermining the peace process. Diplomacy must support peace until the Palestinians were given the security, dignity and independent State they deserved, and until they play their rightful role in the

Middle East. A one-State reality would be disastrous for the Palestinians and the wider region.

There were calls for inclusive negotiations with all political parties, with the international community's full support, and for Palestinian parties and factions to form a collective front for negotiations. Statements emphasized that **"on-again, off-again negotiations" had not produced anything concrete.**

There was consensus about the need to **overhaul the peace process** initiated in 1991 to transform it into a "meaningful" process with **clear terms of reference** and with the international community **monitoring compliance. To ensure success of the peace process,** achievements of previous negotiations must be built upon. Much had been accomplished and a range of legal and diplomatic tools existed; they must be implemented. Most importantly, the parties must not attack each other but instead go the distance to reach compromise on the most burning, seemingly insurmountable problems.

Future negotiations must focus on borders and security for both sides, the establishment of East Jerusalem as the capital of the State of Palestine, a just settlement for Palestinian refugees, and water rights. Participants also reaffirmed the principle of **accountability** and that perpetrators of crimes must be brought to justice. The recent publication of the report of the Commission of Inquiry investigating Israel's 2014 conflict in Gaza was welcomed; Palestinians were encouraged to use it in international courts to demand that Israel be held accountable.

Reconstruction of Gaza and affirmation of the Palestinian Governments' control over the enclave was urgent, as was

reconciliation between Fatah and Hamas. Israel's move to conduct **indirect talks with Hamas** was perceived as intended to undermine Palestinian unity. United Nations efforts to work with the Israeli Government and the Palestinian Government to ensure delivery of much-needed construction materials into Gaza were encouraging. Gaza's reconstruction must not be followed by another conflict and the Israeli blockade should be lifted. Ideas proposed included the establishment of an international inspection and monitoring mechanism as a way to facilitate the lifting of the naval blockade.

Israel's occupation would continue as long as it was not "expensive" for the occupier. There must also be a complete **settlement freeze** in all of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the gradual **release of the 6,000 Palestinian prisoners** currently in Israeli jails. There were also calls to stop the "Judaization" of Jerusalem. *Faits accomplis* would only lead to a feeling of injustice among Palestinians. Israel's continued occupation of Palestine was exploited by terrorist groups – notably the so-called "Islamic State" – to recruit more youth: if there was no progress in advancing the peace process, the extremists' influence over Gaza, and the radicalization of the enclave's youth, would only grow.

Participants from Israeli civil society recalled that while the administration of Yitzak Shamir during the 1980s was considered to be "more extreme" than the current Israeli Government it had nonetheless entered into a peace process with the Palestinians. But the Palestinian Government's lack of control over Gaza gave excuses to the Israeli Government to claim that **"we have no partner for peace"**. Prime Minister Netanyahu's concept of two States – which involved Israeli soldiers

stationed within the Palestinian State – was a non-starter.

Concrete steps to advance the two-State solution before a final agreement was reached could include a gradual redeployment of Israeli troops, measures to foster Palestinian State institutions and development of the Palestinian economy, including easing restrictions on Palestinian projects planned for Area “C”, which comprised 60 per cent of the occupied Palestinian territory. One suggestion flagged included transferring some land in Area “C”, currently under Israeli control, to Area “B” under Palestinian control. That transfer could include the removal of some Israeli settlements that most seriously harmed Palestinian livelihoods. In addition, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas should publicly condemn Palestinian attacks against Israeli civilians, because not doing so only deepened Israelis’ doubts over his commitment to peace.

One Israeli speaker said that **Hamas’ end to terrorist attacks** should be Israel’s main condition for negotiations, but its formal recognition of the State of Israel and its compliance with the PLO’s agreements could wait until a later date. Defeatist attitudes toward the peace process should not be allowed to become a self-fulfilling prophecy. It was important to generate positive self-fulfilling prophecies – not just negative ones.

With the **Arab Peace Initiative**, the Arab world had declared with one voice its commitment to live with Israel in peace. Against a difficult backdrop in the region – including concerns over Iran’s nuclear programme and civil wars in Syria and Yemen – the initiative had taken on greater meaning. The OIC had, since its founding in 1969, adopted several proposals and annual resolutions stating its Member States’

unanimous support for the rights of the Palestinian people and the two-State solution. The peace initiative launched in Fez, Morocco, in 1982 by the League of Arab States had been an important milestone, as it was the first time that recognition of Israel was proposed and that Arab States declared their acceptance of an independent State of Palestine along the 1967 borders. The fourth Islamic Summit Conference in 1984 had endorsed that initiative, and OIC members have pledged to employ all means to implement it.

According to Israeli participants, there is **little or no understanding of the Arab Peace Initiative among Israelis**. Seventy-five per cent of Israelis were born after 1967 and considered the occupation as “normal”. While they lived in freedom and democracy, millions of Palestinians were subjected to all forms of harassment, and restrictions on their movement and voting rights. At the same time, each side perceived the other as a threat to its very existence. A new commitment by both sides was essential as the one-State solution was not feasible.

The Israeli Government had made security its top priority, but its actions were in fact endangering Israel. The Government was building barriers and destroying any advances in the peace process. The Israeli electorate voted for hawkish Governments in part due to fear of being left exposed to the dangers of total international isolation. A prominent Arab leader could visit Israel as a gesture to promote the aims of the Arab Peace Initiative.

The plight of **Arabs living inside Israel** was harsh, as they struggle against Israeli policies that exclude their rights in the economic, social and political spheres. Recent decisions to forcibly transfer Bedouin communities were another example

of the Israeli Government's policies of exclusion.

Experts called for expanding the **Middle East Quartet**, implementing the Arab Peace Initiative and fostering greater awareness of it in Israel. The **Quartet** in its present form was deemed no longer adequate to address current realities. There were suggestions that the Quartet work closely with representatives of the League of Arab States and other regional players, as well as China and India.

There were calls for France to "officially recognize the State of Palestine". In December 2014 the French Senate had adopted a resolution calling on the French Government to do so. Soon after, the French National Assembly adopted a similar draft. The French Parliament's resolutions were a first step toward creating an equal relationship between Israel and Palestine, and making the latter's recognition a prerequisite for genuine negotiations. **France's initiative for a Security Council resolution** should not wait until the draft had the support of both parties before presenting it to the Council. If the resolution is not adopted in the Security Council, **an international conference should be organized in Paris**, establishing a framework to oversee negotiations and set deadline for negotiations, under the supervision of the League of Arab States, the European Union and the "G5" comprising Germany, the United States, France, Japan and the United Kingdom.

In closing remarks, the **Permanent Representative of the Observer State of**

Palestine, reminding Member States of their responsibility under the General Assembly's 1948 partition plan, said that Palestine needed everyone's help to complete the pending part of the plan – the establishment of an independent State of Palestine. He applauded the French initiative in the Security Council and informed that the Palestinian and other Arab Governments had set up a special ministerial committee to work with the French Government to facilitate the text's adoption. Palestinians were also ready for a serious conference in order to accomplish the same objective. But if neither plan came to fruition Palestinians would resort to other peaceful tools to achieve the two-State solution. Palestine would also resort to the Human Rights Council and the ICC to seek justice for the victims in Gaza and continued settlement building – both of which were war crimes. It was just a matter of time before Israel and the United States accepted the existence of Palestine as a State.

The Committee Chair **acknowledged** the fruitful exchange during the meeting. The large and diverse participation and keen interest of Russian and international media was proof of the high priority the international community attached to the issue. Achieving a just solution to the Question of Palestine in a region marred by conflict and increasing instability was of utmost priority. He called on the meeting's participants to keep the focus on the strategic goal: the end of the Israeli occupation, the emergence of a sovereign and independent State of Palestine with the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, and the return of the refugees.

II. HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL ADOPTS A RESOLUTION ON ENSURING ACCOUNTABILITY FOR VIOLATIONS OF INTERNATIONAL LAW IN THE OPT

On 3 July 2015, the Human Rights Council, during its 29th session, adopted the following resolution on “Ensuring accountability and justice for all violations of international law in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem” (A/HRC/RES/29/25):

The Human Rights Council,

Guided by the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations,

Recalling the relevant rules and principles of international law, including international humanitarian law and human rights law, in particular the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, which is applicable to the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem,

Recalling also the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the other human rights covenants, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child,

Recalling further its relevant resolutions, including resolutions S-9/1 of 12 January 2009 and S-21/1 of 23 July 2014, and the report of the United Nations Fact-Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict,¹

Expressing its appreciation to the independent commission of inquiry on the 2014 Gaza conflict for its comprehensive report,²

Affirming the obligation of all parties to respect international humanitarian law and international human rights law,

Emphasizing the importance of the safety and well-being of all civilians, reaffirming the obligation to ensure the protection of civilians in armed conflict, and deploring the civilian deaths that resulted from the conflict in and around the Gaza Strip in July and August 2014, including the killing of 1,462 Palestinian civilians, including 551 children and 299 women, and six Israeli civilians,

Gravely concerned by reports regarding serious human rights violations and grave breaches of international humanitarian law, including possible war crimes, committed in the context of the military operations conducted in the Occupied Palestinian Territory in 2008 and 2009 and in 2014, particularly in the Gaza Strip, including the findings of the United Nations Fact-Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict, of the independent commission of inquiry on the 2014 Gaza conflict, and of the boards of inquiry convened by the Secretary-General,

Condemning all violations of human rights and of international humanitarian law, and appalled at the widespread and unprecedented levels of destruction, death and human suffering caused,

Stressing the urgency of achieving without delay an end to the Israeli occupation that began in 1967,

Deploring the non-cooperation by Israel with the independent commission of inquiry on the 2014 Gaza conflict and the refusal to grant access to or to cooperate with international human rights bodies seeking to investigate alleged violations of

¹ A/HRC/12/48

² A/HRC/29/52

international law in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem,

Regretting the lack of implementation of the recommendations contained in the report of the United Nations Fact-Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict, which follows a pattern of lack of implementation of recommendations made by United Nations mechanisms and bodies,

Alarmed that long-standing systemic impunity for international law violations has allowed for the recurrence of grave violations without consequence, and stressing the need to ensure accountability for all violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law in order to end impunity, ensure justice, deter further violations, protect civilians and promote peace,

Emphasizing the need for States to investigate grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions of 1949 to end impunity, uphold their obligations to ensure respect, and promote international accountability,

Noting the accession by Palestine to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court on 2 January 2015,

1. *Welcomes* the report of the independent commission of inquiry on the 2014 Gaza conflict;²

2. *Calls upon* all duty bearers and United Nations bodies to pursue the implementation of all recommendations contained in the report of the commission of inquiry, in accordance with their respective mandates;

3. *Notes* the importance of the work of the commission of inquiry and of the United Nations Fact-Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict of 2009 and the information collected regarding grave violations in support of future accountability efforts, in

particular, information on alleged perpetrators of violations of international law;

4. *Emphasizes* the need to ensure that all those responsible for violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law are held to account through appropriate fair and independent domestic or international criminal justice mechanisms, and to ensure the right of all victims to an effective remedy, including full reparations, and stresses the need to pursue practical steps towards these goals;

5. *Calls upon* the parties concerned to cooperate fully with the preliminary examination of the International Criminal Court and with any subsequent investigation that may be opened;

6. *Calls upon* all States to promote compliance with human rights obligations and all High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention to respect, and to ensure respect for, international humanitarian law in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, in accordance with article 1 common to the Geneva Conventions, and to fulfil their obligations under articles 146, 147 and 148 of the said Convention with regard to penal sanctions, grave breaches and the responsibilities of the High Contracting Parties;

7. *Recommends* that the General Assembly remain apprised of the matter until it is satisfied that appropriate action with regard to implementing the recommendations made by the United Nations Fact-Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict in its report has been or is being taken appropriately at the domestic or international levels to ensure justice for victims and accountability for perpetrators;

8. *Requests* the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to present, as part of the reporting requested by the Human Rights Council in its resolutions S-9/1 and S-12/1, a report on the implementation of the present resolution, as well as on the implementation of the recommendations contained in the reports of

the independent commission of inquiry on the 2014 Gaza conflict and of the United Nations Fact-Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict, to the Council at its thirty-first session;

9. *Decides* to remain seized of the matter.

III. SPECIAL COORDINATOR CONCERNED BY LETHAL INCIDENTS IN THE WEST BANK AND EAST JERUSALEM

On 3 July 2015, United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process Nickolay Mladenov issued the following statement about security-related incidents in the West Bank and East Jerusalem:

I am increasingly concerned by the continued lethal incidents in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem against Israelis and Palestinians. I call for an immediate end to the violence. All sides must exercise restraint, maintain calm and promptly bring the perpetrators of the violence to justice

I condemn today's fatal shooting by Israel Defense Forces of a 17-year-old

Palestinian during an alleged stone-throwing incident.

These tragic incidents, once again, highlight the need for a return to a political process with the goal of establishing two states living side-by-side in peace and security. They are happening at time when the Middle East faces a vicious tide of terror and extremism.

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

On 20 July 2015, the Economic and Social Council adopted the following resolution on "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" (E/RES/2015/17):

The Economic and Social Council,

Recalling General Assembly resolutions 69/241 of 19 December 2014 and 69/92 of 5 December 2014,

Recalling also its resolution 2014/26 of 16 July 2014,

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 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 1949², to the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and other Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967,

Recalling the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,³ and the Convention on the Rights of the Child⁴, 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, in this regard, of the accession by Palestine to several human rights treaties and the core humanitarian law conventions as well as other international treaties,

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

Stressing the urgency of achieving, without delay, an end to the Israeli occupation that began in 1967 and a just, lasting and comprehensive peace settlement

on all tracks 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 map⁶, 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 and which, deplorably, continued during the reporting period,

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,

Expressing alarm, in this regard, about the extremely high levels of unemployment in the Gaza Strip in particular, which, according to World Bank estimates, is 43 per cent, with youth unemployment reaching 60 per cent, and is exacerbated by the prolonged Israeli closures and severe

¹ A/70/82-E/2015/13.

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

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.

economic and movement restrictions that in effect amount to a blockade and about the continuing negative repercussions of the military operations in the Gaza Strip on economic and social infrastructure 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, and welcoming in this regard the United Nations Development Assistance Framework launched on 15 August 2013, which aims at, inter alia, enhancing developmental support and assistance to the Palestinian people and strengthening institutional capacity in line with Palestinian national priorities,

Gravely concerned about the accelerated construction of settlements and the 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,

Encouraging all States and international organizations to continue to actively pursue policies to ensure respect for their obligations under international law with regard to all illegal Israeli practices and measures in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, particularly Israeli settlements,

Taking note of the report of the independent international fact-finding mission to investigate the implications of the Israeli settlements on the civil, political,

economic, social and cultural rights of the Palestinian people throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem⁷.

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

Gravely concerned by the serious repercussions on the economic and social conditions of the Palestinian people caused by Israel's construction of the wall and its associated regime inside the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in and 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 this 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 Territory⁸ and General Assembly resolution⁸, 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,

⁷ A/HRC/22/63.

⁸ See A/ES-10/273 and Corr.1.

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 and dispossession 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, 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 Palestine refugee population, which remains that of a humanitarian crisis,

Expressing grave concern, in particular, over the continuing crisis in the Gaza Strip as a result of the prolonged Israeli closures and severe economic and movement restrictions that in effect amount to a blockade, stressing that the situation is unsustainable, and 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 conflict in and around the Gaza Strip in July and August 2014 and the civilian casualties caused, including the killing and injury of thousands of Palestinian civilians, including children, women and the elderly, the widespread destruction of or damage to thousands of homes and vital civilian infrastructure, including schools, hospitals, water, sanitation and electricity networks, economic, industrial and agricultural properties, public institutions, religious sites and United Nations schools and facilities, as well as the internal displacement of hundreds of thousands of civilians, and any violations of international law, including humanitarian and human rights law, in this regard,

Gravely concerned about the consequent prolonged and extensive negative impact of the military operations in July and August 2014, as well between December 2008 and January 2009 and in November 2012, on economic conditions, the provision of social services and the social, humanitarian and physical living conditions of the Palestinian civilian population, including the Palestine refugee population,

Recalling, in this 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, where the humanitarian crisis continues to deepen, 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 Cairo International Conference on Palestine: Reconstructing Gaza, held on 12 October 2014,

Gravely concerned at 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 subject to harsh conditions, including unhygienic

conditions, solitary confinement, excessive use of administrative detention, lack of proper medical care and widespread medical neglect, including for prisoners who are ill, with the risk of fatal consequences, and the 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 detainees 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 this regard the ongoing efforts to develop the institutions of an independent Palestinian State, including through the implementation of the Palestinian National Development Plan 2011-2013 on governance, economy, social development and infrastructure, and the significant achievements made, as confirmed by the positive assessments made by international institutions regarding readiness for statehood, including by the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the United Nations and the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee for the

Coordination of International Assistance to Palestinians, while also expressing concern about the negative impact of the current financial crisis being faced by the Palestinian Government,

Commending, in this 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, as well as the vital assistance being provided in the humanitarian field,

Welcoming the formation of the new Palestinian Government of national consensus under the authority of President Mahmoud Abbas, in line with the Quartet principles, emphasizing the need for the respect and preservation of the territorial integrity and unity of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and affirming the need to support the Palestinian Government of national consensus in its assumption of full government responsibilities in all fields in both the West Bank and the Gaza Strip,

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 closure system, and for other urgent measures to be taken to alleviate the serious humanitarian situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, which is dire 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 1994⁹;

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;

⁹ See A/49/180-S/1994/727, annex, entitled "Agreement on the Gaza Strip and the Jericho Area", annex IV.

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, and to prevent Israeli settlers from perpetrating such illegal activities;

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 the implementation of critical environmental projects, including the sewage treatment plants in the Gaza Strip, notably the provision of the electrical power needed for the work of the northern Gaza emergency sewage treatment project, and stressing in this regard the urgency of the reconstruction and development of water infrastructure, including the project for the desalination facility for the Gaza Strip;

11. *Calls for* the assistance necessary for the safe removal of all unexploded ordnance in the Gaza Strip, which endangers Palestinian lives and has a negative impact on the environment and on reconstruction and development efforts, and urges support for the efforts of the Mine Action Service of the United Nations in this regard;

12. *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;

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

14. *Also calls for* urgent attention to be paid to the plight and the rights, in accordance with international law, of Palestinian prisoners and detainees in Israeli prisons and for efforts between the two sides for the further release of prisoners and detainees;

15. *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 2004⁸ and in General Assembly resolution ES-10/15 and subsequent relevant resolutions;

16. *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;

17. *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;

18. *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 commensurate with their increased socioeconomic and humanitarian needs, in cooperation with official Palestinian institutions and consistent with the Palestinian National Development Plan;

19. *Reiterates* the importance of and need for increased and renewed international efforts 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), and the Madrid Conference, the principle of land for peace, the Arab Peace Initiative and the Quartet road map, 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;

20. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its seventieth 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;

21. *Decides* to include in the agenda of its substantive session of 2016 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”.

V. SECURITY COUNCIL HOLDS AN OPEN DEBATE ON THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST, INCLUDING THE PALESTINIAN QUESTION

On 23 July 2015, the Security Council held an open debate on “The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question”. The following are excerpts from the briefing given by Nickolay Mladenov, United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process (S/PV.7490):

Let me begin by extending my warmest wishes to all of our Muslim colleagues and their families on the occasion of Eid Al-Fitr and the end of the Holy Month of Ramadan.

In a region currently torn by religious radicalism, age-old sectarian rivalries and geopolitical realignments, one conflict has endured for over 65 years. Some see it as the core problem in the region; others dismiss it as unrelated to the current turmoil. Either way, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is increasingly entangled in the tectonic shifts of the Middle East. Given the region’s massive transformation, it is imperative — perhaps more than ever before — that a permanent settlement be found, based on the concept of two States, Israel and a sovereign, contiguous and viable Palestine, living side by side in peace, security and mutual recognition.

Despite continuing security coordination in the West Bank, today the two sides are further apart from that goal than ever. Support for the two-State solution among both Palestinians and Israelis is fading away. The current situation on the ground is not sustainable, as the two-State solution continues to be under threat, including from settlement construction, security incidents,

occupation-related violence and the lack of Palestinian unity. In the absence of a political process, the rise of violent extremism and terrorism in the region presents a danger as much to the legitimate aspirations of Palestinians for statehood as to the security of Israel.

In the current environment of mistrust, we in the international community must work with Israelis and Palestinians alike to create the conditions on the ground, regionally and internationally, that will facilitate a return to meaningful negotiations on the basis of an agreed framework and within a reasonable time frame. Both parties must undertake steps on the ground that demonstrate their continued commitment to a two-State solution, including through the implementation of existing agreements and by avoiding unilateral actions. Advancing the two-State solution requires a fundamental change in policy with regard to the occupied Palestinian territory. I welcome the recent decision by Israel to add 8,000 new work permits for Palestinians from the West Bank, bringing the number of permits issued for employment in Israel to a new high of approximately 60,000. That and other similar initiatives should be sustained

and expanded, while much more needs to be done for improving the quality of life for Palestinians.

Unilateral actions in the West Bank — including settlement construction, so-called legalization of outposts, demolitions and evictions — must stop. While settlement expansion has slowed of late, planning for related infrastructure has not ceased. I am concerned by recent reports about the imminent approval of new residential units in the occupied West Bank. Such a decision would inevitably damage the prospects for peace and increase the risk for political escalation. I urge the authorities to reconsider that action. Settlements are illegal under international law and undermine the very essence of the viability of a future Palestinian State.

Meanwhile, the Palestinian people rightly expect their leaders to act to advance unity and empower their Government to take control of the border crossings in Gaza, implement civil service integration, pay public-sector salaries and ensure that the governance framework between the West Bank and Gaza is integrated under a single authority. Those efforts will pave the way for much-delayed elections to take place.

I call on all Palestinian groups to avoid in-fighting and find common ground on the basis of nonviolence and reconciliation in order to achieve national unity, which is critical for the two-State solution. The Secretary-General stands ready to work with the Security Council and with our partners in the Middle East Quartet on a reinvigorated effort to create the conditions for the return to meaningful negotiations. In that context, I note the proposed establishment of an international support group that could contribute to such efforts. In the past month, as part of an active outreach effort, Quartet envoys engaged

constructively with Egypt, Jordan and the League of Arab States. I take this opportunity to encourage the leadership of Israel to endorse the Arab Peace Initiative as an important contribution to a resolution of the conflict.

The date of 8 July marked the one-year anniversary of the outbreak of conflict between Israel and Hamas. Gaza's painstaking emergence from last summer's conflict is undermining belief among the population that genuine progress can be achieved. The activities of Salafi jihadists and other extremist groups are a cause for concern, not only in Gaza but also in neighbouring Sinai, where there are reports of their active support of militants on the Egyptian side of the border.

On 18 July, six cars were blown up in Gaza City. Palestinian Salafist militants launched a rocket at Israel on 16 July, which exploded in an open area near Ashkelon. In response, Israel conducted four airstrikes against militant infrastructure targets in Gaza. Militants also fired a rocket from the Sinai on 3 July, which landed in Israel close to the Egyptian border. All of that highlights the potential for violence to expand beyond the borders of the Sinai.

The Secretary-General calls upon all actors in Gaza to provide information as to the possible whereabouts and conditions of two Israeli civilians who entered Gaza sometime over the past year and remain unaccounted for, as well as to take prompt action to facilitate their safe return to their families.

Those, and other incidents, underscore the fragile dynamics within Gaza that, without positive change, will continue to provide fertile ground for extremism to flourish.

Last month, the Palestinian Authority and Israel reached a welcome agreement on a new mechanism to allow Palestinians in Gaza access to needed construction material for the reconstruction of fully destroyed homes and for new construction. Close to 700 families have already been cleared, and over 120 of them have purchased the required construction materials. Given that development, I take this opportunity to once again urge donors to fulfil their pledges, in particular those allocated to housing construction and to addressing Gaza's urgent energy and water needs.

I also welcome the recent agreement to install an additional scanner for containers at the Kerem Shalom crossing. That should enable a substantial increase in exports from, and imports into, Gaza.

The lifting of the Gaza closures within the framework of resolution 1860 (2009) remains an important objective for the United Nations. Absent that, the United Nations continues to work with Israeli and Palestinian authorities to support vital efforts to rebuild the lives of people in Gaza.

Turning to the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, while the frequency of security incidents decreased as compared with last month, the situation remained tense. Israeli security forces conducted some 186 search-and-arrest operations, resulting in the arrest of some 300 Palestinians. Meanwhile, Palestinian security forces also arrested more than 100 people in the West Bank. I continue to be concerned by the situation of Palestinian prisoners held in Israel, including those on hunger strike. All those held in administrative detention should be promptly charged and tried in a court of law, or released without delay.

In total, during the reporting period 50 Palestinians were injured and four were shot

and killed by Israeli security forces, including two at checkpoints near Nablus and Ramallah. Two members of the Israeli security forces were stabbed and injured, one seriously. Clashes between Palestinians and Israeli civilians in the West Bank also continued, resulting in the death of one Israeli and injury to eight Israelis and nine Palestinians, including one child.

Just as such incidents contribute to the lack of hope and anger, which feed a continuing cycle of violence and highlight the imperative to seek a resolution to the conflict, so too do the demolitions and displacement in the West Bank. On 12 July, Israel announced that it would seek to execute demolition orders of structures in the Palestinian village of Susiya, in Area C. That comes ahead of a hearing scheduled for 3 August on a directly related planning-approval process. The Secretary-General joins the United States and the European Union in expressing deep concern about the demolition and displacement plans for Susiya. My Deputy Special Coordinator visited the community earlier today. We hope that the ongoing dialogue between the authorities and the herding community will protect the rights of the persons affected.

Against that backdrop, intra-Palestinian talks to form a national unity Government have faltered. I note the efforts of President Abbas and Prime Minister Hamdallah to reshuffle the current Government, and call on them to proceed without delay to appointing the new ministers. The reshuffling comes at a particularly sensitive time, as the Palestinian Authority faces significant financial challenges — including a 2015 budget deficit of approximately \$500 million in 2015. That gap cannot be closed through fiscal measures alone, and I urge donors to rapidly scale up their direct budget support. In that respect, it is also important

to revive the functioning of the Israeli-Palestinian joint economic committee.

While it is first and foremost up to the Palestinian authorities to take the lead, the United Nations stands ready to support the President, the Government and all factions in their efforts to reunite the West Bank and Gaza, in line with the intra-Palestinian unity agreement of 23 April 2014. Palestine is one, and the United Nations will work determinedly to advance unity through its legitimate institutions.

...

I am deeply concerned about the current unprecedented financial crisis at the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). If the current \$100 million gap is not closed in the next weeks, there is a serious risk that UNRWA schools — which educate 500,000 children throughout the Middle East — will not open. That will have grave implications for Palestinian refugee children in Gaza, the West Bank, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria, and for the stability and security of a region already in turmoil. I urge donors to step up support for UNRWA at this critical time.

Let me return to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and to reiterate our collective resolve to prevent a further deterioration of the situation, to uphold the two-State solution and to create the conditions for a return to meaningful negotiations. Prime Minister Netanyahu and President Abbas

recently spoke and reaffirmed their desire for peace. That is a welcome sign, but words need to be translated into concrete and sustained actions on the ground.

Let me also be abundantly clear: measures undertaken to improve the situation must not be considered an end unto themselves, but part of a broader political framework with the goal of achieving a final-status agreement. Now is the time to act decisively to reverse the growing perception that the two-State solution is on life support and that it is slowly dying a death by a thousand cuts.

A comprehensive agreement will require committed engagement with key Arab States, including through the Arab Peace Initiative. The Secretary-General stands ready to support both sides in order to overcome their divisions and to rise to the challenge of forging a path forward towards a peaceful future.

In conclusion, let me place on record my deep appreciation for the support that the Security Council and the Secretariat have given on the ground to the excellent team of the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process. I would also like to take this opportunity to welcome Mr. Robert Piper of Australia as the new Deputy Special Coordinator, who will also serve as the Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator for the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

VI. HUMANITARIAN COORDINATOR CALLS ON ISRAEL TO SUSPEND DEMOLITIONS IN AREA C

On 23 July 2015, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs issued the following press release on a visit to the Susiya herding community in the West Bank by the United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Robert Piper:

Today, the Humanitarian Coordinator for the occupied Palestinian territory, Robert Piper, visited Susiya, a Palestinian herding community in Area C in the southern West Bank, where homes and community structures are at imminent threat of demolition. He was accompanied by senior officials from the Governments of Norway, Switzerland and Italy.

“I came here today along with senior diplomats and humanitarian partners to learn about the hardships and anxieties of a community whose homes and livelihoods are under threat,” Mr. Piper said.

Some of the families at risk have been subject to three waves of demolitions and displacements since 1986. A settler outpost now stands at the site of their initial displacement, which was classified as an archaeological site by the Israeli authorities at the time, requiring the community to move. At their current site, successive attempts by the community to have a spatial

plan and building permits approved have been rejected. A petition against the latest rejection will be heard by the Israeli High Court of Justice on August 3.

“Susiya is emblematic of a pattern of injustice that is repeating itself across many parts of the West Bank. Too many communities are coming under multiple threats and intimidation - by legal process, by bulldozer, by settler violence - to relocate completely or relinquish surrounding agricultural and grazing lands on which their livelihoods depend. The international community cannot stand by and witness these acts in silence,” Mr. Piper said.

“The destruction of private property in an occupied territory is prohibited under international humanitarian law. I call on the Israeli authorities to suspend all demolitions of Palestinian structures in Area C and to provide its residents with a planning and permit regime that allows them to meet their needs,” he added.

VII. SPECIAL COORDINATOR CONCERNED BY HEIGHTENED TENSIONS IN JERUSALEM’S OLD CITY

On 27 July 2015, United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process Nickolay Mladenov issued the following statement about incidents in the Old City of Jerusalem:

I am concerned by recent incidents and heightened tensions in and around the Holy Sites of the Old City of Jerusalem and call upon people on all sides to maintain calm. Provocative actions and language carry the seed of violence and ultimately undermine the ability of worshippers of all faiths to

have access to their respective Holy Sites. Respect for the status quo is in the interest of all and is essential for stability.

I call upon all religious and political leaders to prevent extremist elements from abusing the sanctity of Holy Sites and the different religious sentiments of all people.

VIII. SPECIAL RAPPORTEURS URGE ISRAEL TO HALT LEGALIZING FORCE-FEEDING OF HUNGER STRIKERS

On 28 July 2015, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, Juan E. Méndez, and the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the right to health, Dainius Pûras, urged Israel to halt the legalization of force-feeding of hunger strikers in its detention. The following is the related press release issued by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights:

Two United Nations human rights experts today reiterated their call on the Israeli authorities to stop the process of legalizing force-feeding and medical treatment of prisoners and detainees on hunger strike against their will.

Their call comes after the current Knesset decided to continue the legislative process of a Bill to amend the Prisons Act (preventing damages due to hunger strikes) initiated by the previous legislature.

The independent experts warned that the Bill is expected to primarily affect Palestinians held by Israel, including those in administrative detention.

The United Nations Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, Juan E. Méndez, underlined that “feeding induced by threats, coercion, force or use of physical restraints of individuals, who have opted for the extreme recourse of a hunger strike to protest against their detention, are, even if intended for their benefit, tantamount to cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment.”

As stressed in past expert findings, the conscious decision of the person and his or her informed and voluntary refusal of medical measures are crucial to fulfil, respect and protect human rights.

“Under no circumstance will force-feeding of prisoners and detainees on hunger strike comply with human rights standards,” the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the right to health, Dainius Pûras, said. “Informed consent is an integral part in the realization of the right to health.”

The international experts have engaged with the Israeli authorities on different occasions regarding the issue of force-feeding of hunger-striking prisoners and detainees. “The way to end the hunger strikes is not to force feed hunger-striking prisoners but to address the underlying human rights violations against which they are protesting, namely, the practice of administrative detention”, they said.

“We reiterate our call on the Government of Israel to refrain from force-feeding and other coercive measures and look for alternative solutions to extreme situations resulting from hunger strikes, including good faith dialogue,” they said. “We stand ready to provide the necessary guidance and assistance to the authorities on these matters.”

The independent experts call has been endorsed by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, Makarim Wibisono.

IX. SECRETARY-GENERAL CONDEMNS THE ISRAELI APPROVAL OF NEW SETTLEMENT CONSTRUCTION

On 29 July 2015, the Spokesperson for Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon issued the following statement on Israel's approval of new settlement construction in the West Bank and East Jerusalem (SG/SM/16978):

The Secretary-General condemns the announcement today that Israel has approved construction of some 300 housing units in the West Bank settlement of Beit El, as well as the planning and construction of nearly 500 housing units in a number of settlements in East Jerusalem. He reiterates that settlements are illegal under international law, an impediment to peace, and cannot be reconciled with the Government of Israel's stated intention to pursue a two-State solution. The Secretary-General urges the Government of Israel to

halt and reverse such decisions in the interest of peace and a just final status agreement.

The Secretary-General remains concerned about the imminent threat of demolitions in the Palestinian village of Susiya in Area C of the West Bank ahead of a 3 August court hearing on a directly related planning petition. The destruction of private property in occupied territory is prohibited under international humanitarian law, and for which actions there must be accountability.

X. SECRETARY-GENERAL CONDEMNS A TERRORIST ARSON ATTACK AGAINST PALESTINIANS

On 31 July 2015, the Spokesperson for Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon issued the following statement on an arson attack in the West Bank (SG/SM/16983):

The Secretary-General strongly condemns today's murder of a Palestinian child in the West Bank and calls for the perpetrators of this terrorist act to be promptly brought to justice. He expresses his deepest condolences to the family of Ali Dawabsha, who were themselves severely injured in the arson attack. Continued failures to effectively address impunity for repeated acts of settler violence have led to another horrific incident involving the death of an innocent life. This must end.

The absence of a political process and Israel's illegal settlement policy, as well as

the harsh and unnecessary practice of demolishing Palestinian houses, have given rise to violent extremism on both sides. This presents a further threat to the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people for statehood, as well as to the security of the people of Israel. The Secretary-General urges both sides to take bold steps to return to the path of peace.

The Secretary-General reiterates his call on all parties to ensure that tensions do not escalate further, leading to more loss of life.

XI. SECURITY COUNCIL CONDEMNS AN ARSON ATTACK IN THE WEST BANK

On 31 July 2015, the President of the Security Council, Gerard van Bohemen (New Zealand), issued the following statement on the arson attack in the West Bank (SC/11994-PAL/2193):

The members of the Security Council expressed profound outrage and condemned in the strongest terms the vicious terrorist attack in the village of Duma near Nablus, which killed a Palestinian child and injured his family members.

The members of the Security Council extended their condolences and sympathies to the family of the victim of this heinous act and to the Palestinian leadership and to the Palestinian people. They underlined the need to bring the perpetrators of this deplorable act to justice.

The members of the Security Council strongly condemned all such acts of violence, which have affected both the Palestinian and Israeli people, expressed concern about increased tensions, and called

for immediate calm. The members of the Security Council emphasized the importance of all statements condemning this attack and condemning all acts of violence, and encouraged all sides to work to lower tension, reject violence, avoid all provocations, and seek a path toward peace.

The members of the Security Council reaffirmed that terrorism in all its forms and manifestations is criminal and unjustifiable, regardless of its motivation, wherever, whenever and by whomsoever committed, and should not be associated with any religion, nationality, civilization or ethnic group. The members of the Security Council reminded States that they must ensure that measures taken to combat terrorism comply with all their obligations under international law.