

*Permanent Observer Mission
of the State of Palestine
to the United Nations*



البعثة المراقبة الدائمة
لدولة فلسطين
لدى الأمم المتحدة

Ref. SGC.63/23

27 February 2023

Excellency,

In the absence of accountability, Israel the occupying Power, brazenly carries on with its illegal settlement campaign in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, illegally transferring hundreds of thousands of Jewish settlers to colonize the Palestinian land and terrorize the Palestinian people.

In recent days, the **Israeli settler terror campaign has reached fever-pitch with gangs of settlers marauding through Palestinian towns and villages, attacking Palestinian civilians, causing death and injury, and destroying Palestinian property** in the towns of Huwwara, Burin, Odala, Asira al-Qabaliyya near Nablus. **At least 300 attacks were perpetrated by extremist settlers** who went on a vengeance rampage after the killing of two Israelis this past weekend.

The **horror inflicted on the town of Huwwara was especially shocking as settlers set fire to at least 35 homes, causing destruction to at least 40 other homes and terrorizing Palestinian families**, who were forced to flee for safety, and burning dozens of vehicles, leaving behind a **harrowing scene of destruction. Terrorist settlers also attacked the fire fighters** that had rushed to the scene to battle the blazes and **medical personnel** who had come to assist the wounded, all under the watch of Israel's occupying forces (IOF).

Settler shooting also killed a Palestinian man, Sameh Aqtash, age 37, and 100 other Palestinians were injured, some seriously wounded, in this violent attack, adding to the numbers of casualties caused by IOF and settlers in 2023. **His murder brings the number of victims of this belligerent, illegal occupation to at least 65 Palestinians, including 13 children and four elderly persons**, since the start of the year. Many victims continue to struggle for their lives in hospital.

In this regard, I regret to also inform that the **death toll from the Israeli military attack on Nablus on 22 February has risen. An elderly Palestinian man, Anan Shawkat Anab, age 66, died of wounds sustained as a result of live fire by IOF**, bringing grief and devastation to his family like so many others. Also, on 22 February, another Palestinian man, **Mohammad Nabil Sabah, age 30, died of wounds sustained in an earlier Israeli military raid on Jenin**. On 24 February, a **Palestinian youth, Mohammed Jawabreh, age 21, died after being shot in the head by live fire from Israeli soldiers in a raid on al-Arroub refugee camp, north of Al-Khalil (Hebron) a day earlier.**

It is a fact that the **absence of consequences for the perpetual crimes of Israel's illegal settlers in Occupied Palestine – and for the crimes perpetrated for decades by this illegal colonial, apartheid occupation – has only emboldened such provocations, incitement, violence and terror**, as witnessed in such continual displays of vulgar and destructive impunity. Clearly, **Israel and its settlers function on the belief that they will never be held accountable for their crimes against the Palestinian people.**

It is past time to put an end to this impunity with concrete measures for accountability to impose a tangible cost on Israel for its gross human rights abuses, its war crimes, its deliberate decisions to breach international law. It cannot be allowed to trample international law, disrespect the authority of the Security Council and ignore the appeals from every corner of the globe for a halt to all of its violations and crimes without consequences.

Faced with this **systematic, intensifying Israeli aggression**, we thus reiterate **our calls for protection of the Palestinian people**, in accordance with international law, including humanitarian and human rights law, and in implementation of relevant United Nations resolutions and decisions. This includes **Security Council resolution 904 (1994)**,

H.E. Ambassador Vanessa Frazier
The President of the Security Council
The United Nations, New York

which called for protection to be provided, including by a **temporary international monitoring presence and moreover for the disarming of the violent settler population**, which Israel has illegally transferred to the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and which the current, extremist Israeli government has announced it **seeks to further arm and militarize, encouraging and fueling their violence and terror against the Palestinian people**.

We therefore **call once again on the Security Council, the General Assembly, the Secretary-General and States, individually and collectively, to uphold their international legal, humanitarian and moral obligations to ensure protection to the defenseless Palestinian people** in the face of the aggressions they continue to suffer under Israel's illegal occupation and apartheid regime at the hands of its military as well as its army of settlers.

In this regard, I must also draw attention to recent decisions by Israel **to accelerate plans to expand its illegal settlements** in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. These actions must be unequivocally condemned. All such settlement activities are being perpetrated in **grave breach of international law, including the Fourth Geneva Convention and the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, as well as Security Council and General Assembly resolutions**, which have explicitly **affirmed the illegality of Israeli settlement activities and demanded their complete and immediate halt and reversal**.

As Israel persists with its illegal settlement campaign – whether the construction of settlements or the wall or the transfer and arming of settlers or the seizure of Palestinian land and demolition of Palestinian homes or the forced transfer of Palestinian civilians – it is **flagrantly and deliberately violating resolution 2334 (2016) and all resolutions preceding it**.

Moreover, it is **openly defying the Security Council's authority just days since Council members unanimously endorsed Presidential Statement S/2023/PRST/1**, which, *inter alia*, reiterated that *“continuing Israeli settlement activities are dangerously imperiling the viability of the two-State solution based on the 1967 lines”* and underscored strong opposition to *“all unilateral measures that impede peace, including, inter alia, Israeli construction and expansion of settlements, confiscation of Palestinians' land, and the “legalization” of settlement outposts, demolition of Palestinians' homes and displacement of Palestinian civilians”*.

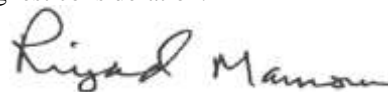
Such flagrant impunity demands a firm, concrete response from the international community. **It is time for action**, foremost by the Security Council, to uphold international law **to bring a halt to all of these Israeli crimes and to ensure international protection to the Palestinian people until a just solution that ensures their freedom, inalienable rights, and security is achieved**.

Only practical, concrete measures of accountability to impose consequences on Israel for the war crimes and crimes against humanity it is committing can alter the extremely dangerous trajectory that it is insisting to drag us all on. It is time to hold Israel to the same rules of international law as all other members of the international community. **It is time to stop enabling Israel, to stop exempting its acts of colonization and annexation and human rights abuses from the application of international law, to stop treating it as a State above the law. Millions of human lives depend on swift action by the international community to uphold the law and bring an end to this historic injustice**.

This letter is in follow-up to our **780 letters** regarding the ongoing historic injustice against the Palestinian people and the crimes being perpetrated by Israel, the occupying Power, in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which constitutes the territory of the State of Palestine. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 22 February 2023 (A/ES-10/928-S/2023/___) constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, acts of State terrorism and systematic human rights violations being committed against the Palestinian people, Israel must be held accountable and the perpetrators brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the present letter made available to the members of the Security Council for their immediate, valuable consideration and also distributed as an official document of the Security Council.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.



Dr. Riyadh Mansour
Minister, Permanent Observer