



26 July 2019

The Ambassador's statement regarding the recent developments in East Jerusalem

On Monday, in the Sur Bahir neighbourhood of occupied East Jerusalem, a number of Palestinian families (24 people in total, 14 of them children) were forcibly removed from their homes before they were promptly demolished. 10 residential buildings containing some 70 apartments were razed. The Israeli government, backed by a concerningly politicised judiciary, cites the absence of Israeli-approved building permits as justification for its actions, despite the obvious fact that these structures were located (and had been approved) in areas A and B of the West Bank where the Palestinian Authority exercises full jurisdiction over civil and planning matters.

The fact of the matter is that, feeble pretexts aside, Israel, in defiance of numerous and significant UN resolutions, including the Security Council resolution 2334 (2016), continues to establish a fait accompli in line with its vision of a greater and Jewish-majority Jerusalem. This is despite both outspoken criticism from the UN and the EU, and a 2004 ICJ advisory opinion which stated that, because the land grabs and demolitions that accompanied the construction of the discrimination wall could not be justified by military exigencies, Israel was in breach of international law.

But this is about more than just international law. If piecemeal home demolitions designed to irrevocably alter an area's demography in occupied territory do not signal Israel's utter contempt for the two-state solution, then I'm not sure what further course of action Israel would need to pursue in order to prove that this is the case. While the Palestinian leadership is determined to resolve the conflict in accordance with international law, Israel, as is now clear, is determined only to cement the annexation of its 'eternal and undivided capital' by cutting it and its surrounding areas off from the West Bank. Needless to say, there is no room for negotiation or compromise in this approach.

I respectfully urge all concerned parties to consider what these actions mean for a just and lasting peace, and how Israel intends to meaningfully resolve the conflict when its land theft and colonial enterprise are accompanied only by the expulsion of that land's inhabitants.

Ambassador of the State of Palestine

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Head of the General Delegation of Palestine to Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific

