



# Security Council

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## Implementation of Security Council resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#)

### Report of the Secretary-General

#### I. Introduction

1. The present report is the twenty-fourth quarterly report on the implementation of Security Council resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#), covering the period from 21 September to 7 December 2022.

#### II. Settlement activities

2. In its resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#), the Security Council reaffirmed that the establishment by Israel of settlements in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem, had no legal validity and constituted a flagrant violation under international law and a major obstacle to the achievement of the two-State solution and a just, lasting and comprehensive peace. The Council reiterated its demand that Israel immediately and completely cease all settlement activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and that it fully respect all of its legal obligations in that regard. No such steps were taken during the reporting period, as settlement activities continued.

3. On 23 November, the Supreme Court of Israel rejected a petition by an Israeli non-governmental organization and Palestinian landowners against the allocation of land, which has been declared by Israel as “State land”, for a new settlement known as Givat Eitam, near the existing settlement of Efrat. The decision allows the process planning for the new settlement to begin. If built, the settlement will impede the contiguity between Bethlehem and the southern occupied West Bank, further undermining the territorial integrity of a future Palestinian State, as well as Palestinian development in the area.

4. Demolitions and seizures of Palestinian-owned structures continued across the occupied West Bank, including in East Jerusalem, throughout the reporting period. Israeli authorities, citing the lack of Israeli-issued building permits, which remain almost impossible for Palestinians to obtain, demolished, seized or forced people to demolish 199 structures. The demolition of those structures resulted in the displacement of 196 persons, including 106 children, and affected 700 other persons.

5. A total of 6 per cent of the structures were demolished or seized with no or very short prior notice on the basis of military order 1797, which authorizes an expedited process for the demolition of unauthorized “new structures” in Area C and gives



owners 96 hours to demonstrate possession of a valid building permit. Another 10 structures were demolished by their owners following receipt of demolition orders. Of the structures that were demolished or seized, some 20 were funded by international donors.

6. On 2 October, the High Court of Justice of Israel rejected a petition for an additional hearing on its 4 May ruling on Masafer Yatta allowing for the eviction of 12 Palestinian herding communities, which comprised more than 1,150 residents, including more than 500 children, in the southern occupied West Bank. The rulings authorized the Israeli military to train in the “firing zone” located on some 7,400 acres of privately owned Palestinian land.

7. On 3 October, the High Court of Justice granted the Government of Israel a postponement until 1 February 2023 for its response to a petition aimed at compelling Israeli authorities to implement their previous decisions to evacuate the Bedouin village of Khan al-Ahmar, in Area C of the occupied West Bank.

8. On 23 November, Israeli authorities demolished a donor-funded school in Masafer Yatta. Construction of the school had recently been completed for children who previously had to walk several kilometres through settlement areas to attend school.

9. On 13 November, the Jerusalem District Court announced that it had rejected an appeal by a Palestinian family to cancel eviction orders seeking to remove the family from its homes in the Batan al-Hawa section of Silwan in favour of a settler organization. The family is one of 85 in Batan al-Hawa facing displacement.

10. Overall, in occupied East Jerusalem, at least 218 Palestinian households comprising 970 people, including 420 children, are facing eviction cases in Israeli courts. Most cases were initiated by Israeli settler organizations and are based on the application of Israeli laws that allow for properties in East Jerusalem that were owned by Jews prior to 1948 to be reclaimed. No similar law allows Palestinians to reclaim their property in Israel.

### **III. Violence against civilians, including acts of terror**

11. In its resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#), the Security Council called for immediate steps to prevent all acts of violence against civilians, including acts of terror, as well as all acts of provocation and destruction, called for accountability in that regard, and called for compliance with obligations under international law for the strengthening of ongoing efforts to combat terrorism, including through existing security coordination, and to clearly condemn all acts of terrorism.

12. Violence increased significantly and continued on a daily basis during the reporting period, including clashes between Palestinians and Israeli security forces, high levels of settler-related violence, attacks and alleged attacks by Palestinians against Israelis, and operations by Israeli security forces, including the use of lethal force.

13. In total, 56 Palestinians, including 12 children, were killed by Israeli security forces during demonstrations, clashes, security operations, attacks and alleged attacks against Israelis, as well as in other incidents. Some 1,830 Palestinians, including 75 women and 168 children, were injured. Of that number, 239 were injured by live ammunition, while 1,275 were injured owing to tear gas inhalation. In addition, Israeli settlers or other civilians perpetrated some 264 attacks against Palestinians, resulting in 103 cases of injury and/or damage to Palestinian-owned property.

14. A total of seven Israeli civilians, including one child, as well as two members of Israeli security forces, were killed. In all, 46 civilians, including 3 women and 3 children, as well as 19 members of Israeli security forces, were injured by Palestinians in attacks, clashes, rock- and Molotov cocktail-throwing, and other incidents. The majority of them were stone-throwing attacks against Israelis, including settlers, that resulted in injuries or damage to Israeli-owned property.
15. Israeli security forces conducted more than 765 search-and-arrest operations, resulting in the detention of more than 826 Palestinians, including some 54 children.
16. On 28 September, five Palestinians, including a 12-year-old-boy, were killed by Israeli security forces, and more than 50 Palestinians were injured by live ammunition in the context of an exchange of fire during an Israeli arrest operation in the Jenin refugee camp.
17. On 3 October, Israeli security forces opened fire on a Palestinian vehicle near the Jalazone refugee camp, near Ramallah, killing two Palestinian men and injuring another. The three were workers who regularly commuted along the route. Israeli security forces said that they had shot at the vehicle after an attempted ramming attack. The injured man, who was released without charges from Israeli custody on 13 October, said that the Israeli personnel shot at them from various directions as the vehicle was turning around.
18. On 8 October, Israeli security forces shot and killed a 17-year-old Palestinian and injured another 17-year-old in al-Mazra'a al-Gharbiyah, near Ramallah. The shooting occurred after the boys threw stones at Israeli security forces in the context of a protest against a settlement outpost.
19. Amid a spate of shooting attacks against Israelis, in October, Palestinians shot and killed two Israeli soldiers. On 8 October, an Israeli soldier was killed at a checkpoint outside the Shu'fat refugee camp, in occupied East Jerusalem. The Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade claimed the attacker as a member. On 19 October, the suspected perpetrator was shot and killed in an exchange of fire with an Israeli guard at the entrance of Ma'ale Adummim settlement. On 11 October, a second Israeli soldier was killed in a drive-by shooting near Nablus. The Lions' Den Brigades, a group of armed Palestinians based in Nablus, claimed responsibility for the attack.
20. On 23 October, an explosive device placed in a motorcycle killed a senior member of the Lions' Den. On 25 October, four Palestinians, including two unarmed bystanders, were shot and killed during an Israeli military operation in the Old City of Nablus. Israeli authorities said that they had been targeting an explosives workshop belonging to the Lions' Den and that a senior member of the group was among those killed. During the operation, another Palestinian was killed when his car exploded; Israeli authorities denied responsibility. Subsequently, thousands of Palestinians in Nablus and across the occupied West Bank protested against the deaths of the five Palestinians. During one related clash, a Palestinian man was shot and killed by Israeli security forces in Nabi Salih village.
21. On 25 October, a Palestinian stabbed an Israeli civilian, who later died of his injuries, in Funduq village, near Qalqilyah, in the occupied West Bank.
22. On 28 October, Israeli security forces shot and killed two Palestinian men, later identified as members of the Palestinian civil defence, and injured two others at Huwwarah checkpoint, near Nablus. Israeli authorities said that their personnel had returned fire after one of the men shot towards the checkpoint. The circumstances of the incident remain unclear.
23. On 29 October, a Palestinian shot and killed an Israeli civilian and injured three others near the Qiryat Arba' settlement in Hebron. According to video footage, the

assailant was subsequently rammed with the vehicle of a settlement guard and then shot and killed by an off-duty Israeli soldier. One Palestinian was injured by live ammunition fired by Israeli security forces during the incident.

24. On 30 October, a Palestinian conducted ramming attacks at two different junctions near Jericho, injuring five Israeli soldiers. The man was subsequently killed by Israeli security forces.

25. On 2 November, a Palestinian rammed and injured an Israeli soldier at Bayt Awr al-Fawqa checkpoint, near Ramallah. The man then exited his vehicle and wielded an axe before being killed by an Israeli soldier.

26. On 3 November, during a search-and-arrest operation in Janin, Israeli security forces shot and killed a Palestinian suspected of involvement in the earlier killing of a member of Israeli security forces. The man was later claimed as a commander by Palestinian Islamic Jihad. Amid a subsequent armed exchange, a 14-year-old boy was shot and killed by Israeli security forces, reportedly after having fired at Israeli security forces personnel, and three other Palestinians were injured by live ammunition.

27. On 3 November, a 20-year-old Palestinian man stabbed and injured two Israeli security forces personnel in the Old City of Jerusalem. The man was subsequently killed by Israeli security forces. That same day, Israeli security forces shot and killed a Palestinian man during confrontations in the context of a search-and-arrest operation in Bayt Duqqu village, near Jerusalem.

28. On 5 November, Israeli security forces shot and killed an 18-year-old Palestinian and seriously injured a 16-year-old Palestinian boy after the Palestinians threw stones towards Israeli vehicles near Sinjil village, in Ramallah.

29. On 9 November, a 15-year-old Palestinian boy was killed, reportedly while placing an explosive device that detonated, and 60 others were injured by Israeli security forces – 57 by tear gas and 3 by rubber bullets – during armed clashes between Palestinians and Israeli security forces in Nablus. The clashes began after Palestinians reportedly threw stones and explosive devices towards a group of Israelis, including members of Knesset, who were visiting the nearby Joseph's Tomb, accompanied by Israeli security forces.

30. On 14 November, Israeli security forces killed a 15-year-old Palestinian girl with autism and injured a Palestinian man in a search-and-arrest operation in Baytunya, near Ramallah. Israeli security forces said that they had opened fire towards a suspicious vehicle that was accelerating towards them. Palestinian witness accounts and video footage indicated that the car was moving slowly when Israeli security forces opened fire. The injured Palestinian man was taken to the hospital and released on 17 November without charges being pressed.

31. On 15 November, a 19-year-old Palestinian stabbed and killed two Israeli civilians and injured another near the Ariel settlement, stole the car of one of his victims, using it to ram and kill a third Israeli civilian, and then stabbed and injured another person. The man was subsequently killed by Israeli security forces.

32. On 21 November, a 17-year-old Palestinian boy was killed, reportedly a bystander, and three others were injured by Israeli security forces during a search-and-arrest operation near the Jenin refugee camp, in which Israeli security forces reportedly launched a shoulder-fired missile and exchanged fire with armed Palestinians.

33. On 23 November, two bombs exploded at separate bus stops in Jerusalem. Two Israeli civilians were killed, including a 16-year-old Israeli-Canadian boy, and 13 others were injured, 3 seriously. According to Israeli authorities, the explosions were caused by explosives planted at the sites.

34. On 23 November, Israeli security forces killed two Palestinians, including a 16-year-old boy, and injured 210 others during clashes in Nablus. The clashes occurred after Palestinians reportedly threw stones and other projectiles towards a group of Israelis who were visiting Joseph's Tomb.
35. On 28 November, Israeli security forces killed a Palestinian man in the context of armed clashes in Bayt Ummar, near Hebron. Twenty-one Palestinians were injured by live ammunition. At the time that he was killed, the man was videorecording the clashes.
36. On 29 November, Israeli security forces shot and killed a Palestinian man in Mughayyir, near Ramallah. Israeli authorities stated that the man had thrown a petrol bomb at them. Video footage and eyewitness accounts indicated that the man was running away when he was shot.
37. Also on 29 November, Israeli security forces shot and killed two Palestinians in Kafr Ayn, near Ramallah, one of whom was reportedly carrying a Molotov cocktail.
38. On 1 December, Israeli security forces shot and killed two Palestinian men with live ammunition during armed clashes in Janin.
39. On 2 December, a Palestinian man was shot and killed in Huwwarah. Video footage appeared to indicate, and eyewitnesses stated, that the man was unarmed and resisting arrest at the time that he was shot. Israeli authorities stated that the man was armed with a knife while attempting to break into a civilian vehicle in which there were two Israelis and that he subsequently stabbed a member of Israeli security forces.
40. On 5 December, Israeli security forces shot and killed a Palestinian man and injured six others with live ammunition during a search-and-arrest operation in the Dheisheh refugee camp, in Bethlehem, in the context of stone-throwing at Israeli security forces.
41. Settler-related violence increased twofold over the same period in 2021 against the backdrop of the olive harvest in the occupied West Bank.
42. On 12 October, a group of Israeli settlers, reportedly accompanied by Israeli security forces, set fire to Palestinian agricultural structures in Qusra, killing approximately 30,000 chickens. Subsequently, Israeli security forces clashed with Palestinians in the area; two Palestinians were injured with live ammunition.
43. On 18 November, a group of Israeli settlers, accompanied by Israeli security forces, attacked Palestinians whose livestock were grazing near Badiw al-Mu'arrajat Centre, a Bedouin community east of Ramallah. A 14-year-old Palestinian was injured.
44. On 18 and 19 November, approximately 35,000 Israelis, many of them settlers, visited Hebron to attend a religious festival. During the event, hundreds marched through the Palestinian-administered H1 area of Hebron, chanting nationalistic slogans and flying Israeli flags. Tensions escalated in the H2 area of Hebron as settlers threw stones, attacked Palestinian houses and businesses and smashed the windows of two mosques. One Palestinian was injured by settlers, and six were injured by Israeli security forces. One member of Israeli security forces was injured in clashes with settlers.
45. Since the start of the harvest season, at the beginning of October, at least 60 incidents have been recorded, in which 49 Palestinian harvesters have been injured, and more than 3,600 olive trees have been damaged or had their harvest stolen. Some Palestinian farmers have also faced challenges in gaining access to their groves behind the separation barrier or in the vicinity of settlements, which requires Israeli approval.

46. On 19 October, some 50 Israeli settlers attacked Palestinian farmers and Israeli activists gathering olives near the Ma'ale 'Amos settlement, south-east of Bethlehem. One 70-year-old Israeli woman was beaten and injured, and more than 300 olive trees were destroyed.

47. On 3 November, some 30 Israeli settlers attacked a Palestinian family with stones, batons, steel pipes and dogs as the family was harvesting olives on their land near the Asfar settlement, south of Bethlehem. Six Palestinians, including an older man and woman, were injured.

48. In and around the holy sites in the Old City of Jerusalem, which saw increased numbers of Israeli visitors to mark the Jewish High Holidays in October, tensions remained. In advance of the holidays, Israeli authorities imposed strict security measures around the sites, arresting dozens of Palestinians. Israeli police also arrested several Israeli activists who had sought to hold Jewish prayers at a cemetery adjacent to the holy sites, citing the potential for such actions to lead to violence. Sporadic clashes erupted between Israeli security forces and Palestinians in the area throughout the holidays, but no major outbreaks of violence were reported.

49. In the Gaza Strip, Palestinian armed groups launched five rockets from Gaza towards Israel, three of which fell short within the Strip and one of which was intercepted by the Israeli air defence system. In retaliation, the Israel Defense Forces conducted 11 air strikes against what it said were militant targets in Gaza, with no injuries reported.

#### **IV. Incitement, provocations and inflammatory rhetoric**

50. In its resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#), the Security Council called upon both parties to act on the basis of international law, including international humanitarian law, and their previous agreements and obligations, to observe calm and restraint, and to refrain from provocative actions, incitement and inflammatory rhetoric, with the aim, inter alia, of de-escalating the situation on the ground, rebuilding trust and confidence, demonstrating through policies and actions a genuine commitment to the two-State solution, and creating the conditions necessary for promoting peace.

51. Some Fatah officials and social media pages praised and glorified perpetrators of previous attacks against Israelis, while Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad issued statements praising the deadly terrorist attacks in Jerusalem of 23 November, in which two Israeli civilians were killed. Some Palestinian Authority officials denied the right of Israel to exist, as well as the historical and religious connection of Jews to the land and its holy sites.

52. An Israeli Minister called members of Israeli Arab Knesset parties “terrorists in suits”, saying that they should be banned from the Knesset, while another senior member of Knesset called the Israeli Arab parties “terrorism supporters”. Another member of Knesset called upon the Government of Israel to use live fire against Palestinians protesting and clashing with the Israeli security forces in occupied East Jerusalem, calling them “terrorists”, and in another incident brandished a gun against Palestinian protestors, some of whom had thrown stones, calling upon Israeli police to shoot them. Another member of Knesset called for changing the status quo at the holy sites in Jerusalem, saying, “we are going return to the days when the Temple Mount was truly in our hands”.

## V. Affirmative steps to reverse negative trends

53. In its resolution 2334 (2016), the Security Council called for affirmative steps to be taken immediately to reverse the negative trends on the ground that were imperilling the two-State solution. Notwithstanding some positive steps, negative trends on the ground continued during the reporting period.

54. On 13 November, an important step was taken in support of the fishing sector in Gaza as dual-use materials for the repair of fishing boats entered the Gaza Strip for the first time since 2007. This development, facilitated by the United Nations and Palestinian and Israeli authorities, will support the revitalization of a decimated fishing sector, contributing to the employment of and income generation for a vulnerable population in Gaza.

55. Some easing of movement restrictions on people and goods between Gaza and Israel continued. Since the end of the escalation of May 2021, Israeli authorities have issued a total of 18,200 permits for Gaza residents to work and do business in Israel, the highest number since 2007. The daily average of truckloads of goods, excluding fuel, entering and exiting Gaza through the Kerem Shalom crossing during the reporting period – 298 and 17, respectively – represents a 23 per cent and a 13 per cent decline compared with during the same reporting period in 2021. However, overall, for 2022, the total volume of goods exiting Gaza through Kerem Shalom increased by nearly 50 per cent. Through the Rafah Crossing to Egypt, the reporting period witnessed a 148 per cent increase in the daily average of trucks entering and a 3 per cent decline in the daily average of goods exiting Gaza compared with the same reporting period in 2021.

56. Notwithstanding some improvements, access restrictions continued, affecting the delivery of humanitarian and development programming in Gaza. Currently, nearly 300 staff of the United Nations and implementing partners have either been denied their permit applications or have not yet received a response thereto. Access restrictions also continued to affect patients in Gaza in need of medical care. During the reporting period, there were 4,544 permit applications of patients to reach health facilities outside the Gaza Strip. The approval rate was 70 per cent, with just under 1 per cent denied and 29 per cent delayed, meaning that patients received no definitive response to their application by the date of their hospital appointment.

57. Since the most recent escalation of violence in Gaza, on 5 August, which resulted in the total destruction of 26 houses and damage to 1,543 housing units, only 121 damaged units have been repaired owing to a lack of funding. As a result, 150 families – a total of 850 individuals, including nearly 400 children and 200 women – remain displaced. Approximately \$3 million is needed for the reconstruction and repair of those houses.

58. In addition, little progress has been made towards construction and the repair of damages incurred during the escalation of 2021, with only 213 of 1,688 destroyed housing units rebuilt. While work to rebuild 831 totally destroyed units is in progress, the complete reconstruction of another 644 units faces a funding gap of \$39 million, and \$10 million is needed for the repair of 12,031 partially damaged units. Meanwhile, 600 units, which were totally destroyed in the 2014, 2018 and 2019 conflicts, await reconstruction.

59. In the occupied West Bank, on 20 October, Israeli authorities began to implement a pilot phase of new regulations governing the entry of certain foreign passport holders into the occupied West Bank, formally differentiating between travellers visiting only the Occupied Palestinian Territory and those visiting Israel as well.

60. On 5 November, in Ramallah, the Palestinian security forces prevented the holding of a civil society conference to discuss reform of the Palestine Liberation Organization and detained two organizers. On 8 November, the Palestinian security forces halted a follow-up event and threatened to use force against the organizers.

61. Between 6 and 10 November, the Israeli authorities opened the Allenby Bridge border crossing between the occupied West Bank and Jordan 24 hours a day in a pilot programme that was meant to lead to the permanent opening of the crossing at all hours. This step, announced during the recent visit of the President of the United States of America, Joseph Biden, to the region, was intended to reduce delays that Palestinians faced when entering or leaving the occupied West Bank through Jordan.

62. On 29 November, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) stated that it had identified a human-made cavity underneath the grounds of one of its schools in Gaza. The Agency immediately took measures to render the school safe, including by permanently sealing the cavity, and condemned the presence of such a structure to the relevant authorities in Gaza. The presence of such a cavity was a serious violation of the inviolability of United Nations premises and a breach of international law. It exposed children and United Nations staff to significant security and safety risks.

## **VI. Efforts by the parties and the international community to advance the peace process and other relevant developments**

63. In its resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#), the Security Council called upon all States to distinguish, in their relevant dealings, between the territory of the State of Israel and the territories occupied since 1967. No such steps were taken during the reporting period.

64. Also in its resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#), the Security Council called upon all parties to continue, in the interest of the promotion of peace and security, to exert collective efforts to launch credible negotiations on all final status issues in the Middle East peace process, and urged in that regard the intensification and acceleration of international and regional diplomatic efforts and support aimed at achieving, without delay, a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East on the basis of the relevant United Nations resolutions, the Madrid terms of reference, including the principle of land for peace, the Arab Peace Initiative and the Quartet road map, and an end to the Israeli occupation that was begun in 1967. The Council underlined that it would not recognize any changes to the 4 June 1967 lines, including with regard to Jerusalem, other than those agreed by the parties through negotiations.

65. On 21 September, on the margins of the general debate of the General Assembly, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Egypt, France, Germany and Jordan met in the presence of the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Josep Borrell, and the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process. As noted in the joint ministerial statement issued after the meeting, the Ministers met “with a view to advancing the Middle East peace process towards a just, comprehensive and lasting peace on the basis of the two-State solution”. They also, *inter alia*, called for the resumption of “direct, serious, meaningful and effective negotiations between the parties at the earliest possible point in time” and for “an immediate and complete cessation of all unilateral actions”.

66. On 13 October, following an interfactional dialogue hosted by the Government of Algeria, 14 Palestinian factions, including Fatah and Hamas, signed the Algiers declaration, in which the factions agreed, *inter alia*, to “resolve differences in the Palestinian arena with the aim of full national affiliation with the Palestine Liberation



Organization as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people”. The participants also called for “the holding of presidential and legislative general elections in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including Jerusalem ... within a period not to exceed one year from the date of signature of this declaration”.

67. In Algiers, on 1 and 2 November, the League of Arab States held its first Summit since 2019. In their final statement, Arab leaders affirmed, inter alia, the “centrality of the Palestinian cause, including their right to freedom, self-determination and the establishment of the independent and fully sovereign State of Palestine on the lines of 4 June 1967, with East Jerusalem as its capital”. It was noted in the statement, that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict should be resolved “on the basis of land for peace”, and support was expressed for the 2002 Arab Peace Initiative.

## VII. Observations

68. I remain deeply concerned by continued illegal Israeli settlement activity in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem. Settlements have no legal validity and constitute a flagrant violation of international law and United Nations resolutions. They further entrench Israel’s military occupation of Palestinian territory, undermine the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination and sovereignty, encroach on Palestinian land and natural resources, and hamper the free movement of the Palestinian population. They undermine the prospect of achieving a two-State solution by systematically eroding the possibility of establishing a contiguous, independent, sovereign and viable Palestinian State. I call upon the Government of Israel to cease all settlement activity immediately, in line with its obligations under international law.

69. The reporting period saw no advancements of housing units in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem. However, the total number of settlement housing units advanced in 2022 remains high, albeit slightly lower than in 2021. Overall, during the year, in Area C, some 4,800 units were advanced compared with some 5,400 in 2021, while tenders decreased, from 1,800 in 2021 to 150 in 2022. However, in occupied East Jerusalem the number of housing units that were advanced tripled from the previous year – from some 900 units in 2021 to some 3,100 units in 2022, with tenders also doubling, from 200 to 400.

70. I remain deeply concerned by the continued demolitions and seizures of Palestinian structures, in particular the demolition of a school in Masafer Yatta and the stated intention of Israeli authorities to demolish additional structures in the herding communities of Masafer Yatta, which would exact a significant humanitarian toll if implemented. Demolitions and forced evictions entail numerous human rights violations and raise concerns about the risk of forcible transfer. I call upon the Government of Israel to immediately end the demolition of Palestinian-owned property and prevent the possible displacement and forced eviction of Palestinians, in line with its international obligations, and to approve plans that would enable those communities to build legally and address their development needs.

71. I am increasingly concerned about several consequential settlement-related legal developments in 2022. They include the legal opinion of the Attorney General of Israel enabling the advancement of settlement plans in the partially evacuated outpost of Evyatar and the potentially precedent-setting reversal by the Supreme Court of Israel of its 2020 ruling ordering the evacuation of settlers from the illegal outpost of Mitzpeh Kramim. In addition, two rulings by the Supreme Court postponed the eviction of Palestinian families from their homes in the Shaykh Jarrah and Silwan neighbourhoods of occupied East Jerusalem. The rulings may also help to delay dozens of other eviction cases in these neighbourhoods.

72. All figures point to an inevitable conclusion that there has been a sharp increase in violence against civilians on both sides. I remain gravely concerned by this trend, which risks a further deterioration of the security situation on the ground and undermines a peaceful resolution of the conflict. The violence must stop, and all perpetrators must be held accountable. I condemn all acts of terrorism and violence against civilians, which must end and be rejected and condemned by all. I call upon political, religious and community leaders on all sides to help to calm the situation, to avoid spreading inflammatory rhetoric and to speak up against those seeking to incite and escalate the situation.

73. The high levels of settler-related violence over the past year, in particular reports of armed settlers carrying out attacks against Palestinians, sometimes in proximity of Israeli security forces, is alarming. In 2022, four Palestinians were killed in settler-related violence, the same number as in 2021. Settlers are rarely held accountable for such attacks, increasing the level of threat to Palestinians and their property. I urge Israel, as the occupying Power, to ensure the safety and security of the Palestinian population and to investigate and hold the perpetrators of the attacks accountable.

74. The year 2022 has been the deadliest for Palestinians in the West Bank since the United Nations began to track fatalities, in 2005. I condemn the killing of Palestinians by Israeli security forces in incidents in which they did not appear to present an imminent threat to life, raising concerns regarding the possible excessive use of force. Approximately 58 per cent of Palestinian fatalities across the occupied West Bank in 2022 occurred during military operations or search-and-arrest operations, in many cases involving armed exchanges with Palestinians. Security forces must use lethal force only when strictly unavoidable to protect life and must promptly and thoroughly investigate all instances of death or injury resulting from its use and hold those responsible accountable.

75. I also condemn the killing of Israeli civilians by Palestinians, including in terrorist attacks. The year 2022 has been the deadliest since 2015 for Israeli civilians killed in attacks in Israel and the occupied West Bank. An increase in the use of small arms by Palestinians against Israeli security forces and civilians has also been witnessed.

76. I am particularly appalled that children continue to be victims of violence. The year 2022 has tragically witnessed the killing of 42 Palestinian children and 1 Israeli child. Children must never be the target of violence or be put in harm's way. I am also concerned that Palestinian children continue to be arrested in large numbers and held for prolonged periods of time, including in administrative detention. To date, 6,085 Palestinians, at least 452 of whom are children, have been arrested by Israeli forces in 2022 – the highest number of detainees since 2008 – and the number of those held under administrative detention has more than doubled in the past two years. I reiterate my call for Israel to use detention as a measure of last resort and for the shortest appropriate period, to prevent all forms of ill-treatment in detention and to end the administrative detention of children, who are entitled to special protection.

77. I condemn the indiscriminate launching of rockets, including from highly populated residential neighbourhoods in Gaza, towards Israeli population centres, which is prohibited under international humanitarian law and must stop immediately.

78. The fate of two Israeli civilians and the bodies of two Israel Defense Forces soldiers held by Hamas in Gaza remain an important humanitarian concern. I call upon Hamas to provide information on their status, as required under international humanitarian law, and to return the withheld bodies to their families.

79. I remain concerned by the continued Israeli practice of holding the bodies of killed Palestinians, totalling 119, including 2 women and at least 12 children,

according to available data. I call upon Israel to return the withheld bodies to their families, in line with its obligations under international humanitarian law.

80. In Gaza, a fragile calm is being maintained, but the risk of escalation persists. Efforts by the United Nations and international partners, including Egypt and Qatar, to improve Palestinian lives, as well as measures by Israel to ease pressure and facilitate more economic activity, have enabled the ceasefire to hold. While progress has been made, restrictions and delays continue to affect humanitarian and development efforts, as well as important sectors of the economy. Much more remains to be done. Notwithstanding efforts made over the past months, more needs to be done to alleviate the humanitarian situation, improve the economy and lift the debilitating Israeli closures, in line with Security Council resolution 1860 (2009). Only sustainable political solutions will restore hope to the long-suffering population of Gaza.

81. I remain seriously concerned about the financial situation of UNRWA, which is putting the delivery of essential services, including education, health and social protection, to Palestine refugees in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the region at risk. This includes a projected funding gap of between \$50 million and \$80 million. As the West Bank witnesses the highest level of violence in years, UNRWA remains one of the few stabilizing elements in the lives of thousands of Palestinians. I reiterate my urgent call to provide UNRWA with the funds needed to fully deliver on its mandate from the General Assembly.

82. While needs across the board are on the rise and require a scaled-up humanitarian response, the World Food Programme is facing a significant decline in bilateral financial support, putting at risk its ability to maintain critical food and cash assistance to some 435,000 of the most vulnerable food-insecure people across the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip. The World Food Programme needs \$35 million over the next six months to be able to continue this support, with urgent funding needed to prevent the imminent suspension of electronic food voucher assistance to 180,000 people.

83. The multiple instances in which officials have used dangerous and hateful rhetoric, which has the potential to increase tensions and spark violence, are disturbing. Terrorism, violence and incitement must be clearly condemned and unequivocally rejected by all, never celebrated or amplified.

84. I reiterate and amplify my call to the parties for the status quo at the holy sites in Jerusalem to be respected and upheld, taking into account the special and historic role of Jordan as custodian of the Muslim and Christian holy sites in Jerusalem.

85. The actions taken by the Palestinian authorities in the occupied West Bank and Gaza to restrict freedom of expression and assembly are worrying. I call upon the authorities to halt any measures that infringe on these freedoms, which are critical to ensuring effective public participation.

86. I am increasingly concerned by the fragility of the current political and security dynamics, in particular in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem. The deepening occupation, the increase in violence and terrorism, and the absence of a political horizon have empowered extremists and are eroding hope among Palestinians and Israelis that a resolution of the conflict is achievable. These dynamics are fuelling an already dangerous situation. Simultaneously, the Palestinian Authority is facing mounting economic and institutional challenges, which have been compounded by the constraints of the occupation, the absence of serious reforms by the Palestinian Authority and unclear prospects for donor support.

87. The United Nations and its partners have been engaged in extensive efforts to improve the dynamics on the ground while encouraging the parties to take concrete

steps towards improving the current conditions and establishing a political horizon. My Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Tor Wennesland, has continued to hold discussions with a range of Palestinian and Israeli officials and regional and international partners to address the dangerous dynamics in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem.

88. I welcome the signing on 13 October of the Algiers declaration by 14 Palestinian factions as a positive step towards intra-Palestinian reconciliation. I encourage all factions to overcome their differences through dialogue and urge them to follow up on the commitments included in the declaration, including the holding of elections. I reiterate the importance of Palestinian reconciliation for a politically stable, economically viable, sovereign and independent State of Palestine. Gaza is, and must remain, an integral part of a future Palestinian State as part of a two-State solution.

89. There is no substitute for a legitimate political process that will resolve the core issues driving the conflict. Israelis, Palestinians, regional States and the broader international community must take steps to enable the parties to re-engage on the path towards meaningful negotiations and, ultimately, peace. I remain committed to supporting Palestinians and Israelis in resolving the conflict and ending the occupation in line with international law, relevant United Nations resolutions and bilateral agreements in pursuit of the vision of two States – Israel and an independent, democratic, contiguous, viable and sovereign Palestinian State – living side by side in peace and security within secure and recognized borders, on the basis of the pre-1967 lines, with Jerusalem as the capital of both States.

90. I express my deep appreciation to my Special Coordinator for his outstanding service in what remains a challenging context. I also pay tribute to all United Nations personnel working under difficult circumstances in the service of the Organization.

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