



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-second quarterly report on the implementation of Security Council resolution 2334 (2016), covering the period from 19 March to 16 June 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 27 March, members of an Israeli settler organization, accompanied by Israeli police, took over the first floor of a historic building in the Old City in occupied East Jerusalem. The settlers' actions occurred amid legal proceedings over ownership of the property between the settler organization and the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem. In a statement issued on 29 March, the Patriarchate called the move a "threat to the continued existence of a Christian quarter in Jerusalem". On 8 June, the Supreme Court of Israel rejected an appeal filed by the Patriarchate against the ruling of a lower court, which had found that the building and two other properties had been sold legally by the Patriarchate to the settler organization.

4. On 21 March, Israeli security forces evacuated 20 structures in the outposts of Maoz Esther and Habaladim, in the central part of the West Bank. During the evacuation, the settlers who were occupying the structures injured two Israeli police officers and damaged Palestinian vehicles with stones and punctured their tyres. Six settlers were arrested but released the same day. It has been reported that the outpost was later rebuilt.

5. On 12 April, the Israeli authorities proceeded with plans to declare "a nature reserve" on approximately 5,500 acres of land south of Jericho, of which some 1,500



acres are private Palestinian-owned property. Objections to the order declaring the reserve can be filed within 60 days of its issuance. The so-called Nachal Og Nature Reserve is the largest reserve to be declared in 25 years. To date, Israel has declared about 48 nature reserves in the occupied West Bank with a total area of at least 95,000 acres, comprising some 12 per cent of Area C and about 7 per cent of the entire occupied West Bank.

6. On 19 April, thousands of Israeli activists, accompanied by right-wing members of the Knesset, marched to an outpost located at the site of the evacuated Homesh settlement and demanded that the settlement be re-established. Before the march, Israeli security forces temporarily closed the main road and blocked the entrances to several villages, prompting clashes with Palestinians. Israeli security forces injured at least 14 Palestinians with rubber-coated metal bullets during those clashes. On 29 May, the Government of Israel stated that the outpost at Homesh must be evacuated, without specifying a time frame. The Government made that statement as part of its response to a petition lodged with the High Court of Justice by Palestinian landowners and an Israeli non-governmental organization (NGO), who argued that the Government was not fulfilling its legal obligations to evacuate the outpost at the site and permit Palestinians to have access to their lands.

7. On 28 April, the Supreme Court of Israel rejected a petition challenging the construction of 31 settlement housing units in an apartment complex in the heart of the H2 area of Hebron. If built, those units would be the first new settlement construction in the city in nearly two decades, further consolidating the Israeli presence in and reinforcing the existing separation and division of that highly volatile area, where some 500 Israeli settlers live among some 40,000 Palestinians.

8. On 13 May, dozens of settlers took over an uninhabited Palestinian-owned house in Hebron without a permit, claiming that they had purchased the house from its Palestinian owner. The owner subsequently filed a complaint with the police. On 15 May, the settlers were evacuated from the building pending the settlement of the claim. Israeli security forces control access to the property. At the time of reporting, right-wing Israeli activists had set up a makeshift office in front of the building.

9. On 12 May, Israeli authorities advanced some 20 plans for the construction of more than 4,000 housing units in Area C settlements. Some of the plans cover settlements that are located in particularly sensitive areas, including Qiryat Arba' next to Hebron (156 units), Shilo near Nablus (534 units), Dolev near Ramallah (472 units) and Beitar Illit at the southern borders of Jerusalem (800). Two of the plans would retroactively legalize the Mitzpe Dani and Booster outposts as new neighbourhoods of existing settlements; in another plan, the structures covered are for recreational rather than residential purposes and were also retroactively legalized. This is the largest number of settlement units advanced in Area C since October 2020; approximately one third of those would be built in outlying locations that are deep inside the occupied West Bank, further impeding the contiguity of a future Palestinian State.

10. On 15 May, the Supreme Court of Israel rejected four petitions filed by Palestinian residents, Israeli NGOs and academics against a controversial plan to construct a cable car between West Jerusalem and occupied East Jerusalem, including the Old City. Palestinian residents of occupied East Jerusalem, Israeli NGOs and some in the international community have serious concerns that the aim of the plan is to deepen Israeli control over the area and that its implementation could lead to the demolition of Palestinian houses and further evictions in Silwan.

11. During the reporting period, demolitions and seizures of Palestinian-owned structures continued across the occupied West Bank, including in East Jerusalem. 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 133 structures. The demolition of those structures resulted in the displacement of 188 persons, including 94 children, and affected 887 other persons.

12. A total of 6 per cent of the structures were demolished or seized with no or very short prior notice based on 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 11 structures were demolished by their owners following receipt of demolition orders. Of the structures that were demolished or seized, some 24 were funded by donors.

13. On 30 March, the Supreme Court of Israel decided to postpone by some six months handing down a ruling on the potential demolition of 38 homes in the Palestinian village of Walajah in occupied East Jerusalem, citing progress in discussions between the Palestinian residents and Israeli authorities on advancing a building and zoning plan for the village. The demolition freeze does not apply to 13 other homes in Walajah, one of which was demolished on 31 May. The other 12 homes remain under threat of demolition.

14. On 25 April, the Jerusalem Magistrate Court accepted the appeal of a Palestinian family concerning the family’s pending eviction from its home in the occupied East Jerusalem neighbourhood of Shaykh Jarrah. The Court ordered that the case be reconsidered by Israeli authorities while an eviction freeze remains in place.

15. On 4 May, the High Court of Justice of Israel rejected petitions seeking to overturn eviction orders issued to 1,200 Palestinian residents, including more 500 children from 12 herding communities in Masafer Yatta, in the southern occupied West Bank. The Court, in its ruling, stated that permanent structures in the area located on some 7,400 acres of privately owned Palestinian land did not exist when it was declared a “firing zone” by the Israeli military in the 1980s. The Palestinian residents disputed that claim, arguing that they had been living there before the establishment of Israel. There are nine settlement outposts located in and near the firing zone. The decision allows the Israeli authorities to enforce the eviction orders.

16. On 7 May, Israeli forces demolished, as a punitive measure, parts of a residential structure in Silat al-Harithiyah, Janin, that served as the home of a Palestinian accused of involvement in the killing of an Israeli civilian on 16 December near the evacuated settlement outpost of Homesh, near Nablus. The demolition displaced two family members of the accused Palestinian.

17. On 1 June, Israeli security forces demolished nine Palestinian structures, of which six were residential tents, in Masafer Yatta for lack of Israeli building permits. Some 38 Palestinians were displaced as a result of the demolitions.

18. Also on 1 June, Israeli security forces demolished, as a punitive measure, a residential structure in the village of Ya‘bad, near Janin. The structure was the home of the suspected perpetrator of the Bnei Brak shooting in March, in which five Israelis were killed.

III. Violence against civilians, including acts of terror

19. 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.

20. The reporting period was marked by an increase in daily violence throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory and Israel, including clashes between Palestinians and Israeli security forces, high levels of settler-related violence, attacks and alleged attacks by Palestinians against Israelis, including three terrorist attacks in Israel, and the use of lethal force by Israeli security forces against Palestinians resulting in a significant number of Palestinians killed and injured.

21. In total, 41 Palestinians, including 9 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 3,665 Palestinians, including 57 women and 261 children, were injured. Of that number, 2,449 were injured owing to tear gas inhalation, while 214 were injured by live ammunition. In addition, Israeli settlers or other civilians perpetrated 195 attacks against Palestinians, resulting in the death of one person. Another 53 persons were injured and Palestinian-owned property was damaged.

22. A total of 10 Israeli civilians, three foreigners and one member of Israeli security forces were killed and 75 civilians, including at least 10 women and 3 children, one foreigner and 10 members of Israeli security forces were injured by Palestinians in attacks, clashes and rock- and Molotov-cocktail-throwing and other incidents. The majority of those were stone-throwing attacks against Israelis, including settlers, that resulted in injuries or damage to Israeli-owned property.

23. Israeli forces conducted 869 search-and-arrest operations, resulting in the arrest of 1,099 Palestinians, including 80 children, and injuries to 280 other persons during subsequent clashes.

24. Israeli authorities significantly reinforced the presence of security forces along the separation barrier and increased military operations inside the occupied West Bank, particularly around Janin, following a wave of terrorist attacks in Israel. Operations were often conducted in densely populated areas, leading to clashes, some with armed Palestinians, including militants, and resulting in casualties.

25. On 22 March, an Arab Israeli killed four Israeli civilians, including two women, in an attack in the Israeli city of Be'er Sheva⁴, before being shot and killed by Israeli civilians.

26. On 27 March, two Arab Israelis carried out a shooting attack in the Israeli city of Hadera, killing two Israeli civilians and injuring four others before being shot and killed by Israeli security forces. Da'esh later claimed responsibility for the incident.

27. On 29 March, a Palestinian man from the occupied West Bank shot and killed three Israelis and two foreign nationals and injured 10 other persons in a shooting attack in the city of Bnei Brak in central Israel. The assailant was shot and killed by Israeli police.

28. On 31 March, Israeli security forces killed two Palestinians, including a 17-year-old boy, in clashes and armed exchanges in Janin when they carried out a search-and-arrest operation. A total of 20 Palestinians were injured in the operation.

29. On 7 April, a Palestinian from the Jenin refugee camp in the occupied West Bank carried out a shooting attack in the centre of Tel Aviv, killing 3 Israeli civilians and injuring 14 others. The assailant was shot and killed by Israeli security forces on 8 April.

30. On 9 April, Israeli security forces shot and injured a 17-year-old Palestinian boy during a vehicle pursuit as part of an arrest operation that involved the use of live ammunition. The boy died of his injuries the next day.

31. On 10 April, Israeli security forces shot and killed an unarmed Palestinian woman with a visual impairment who ran with raised arms towards an Israeli security forces checkpoint near Husan, west of Bethlehem. She was not carrying any suspicious object in her hands, nor did she attempt to engage in violent action against Israeli security forces.
32. On 13 April, a 14-year-old Palestinian boy was shot dead by Israeli security forces during clashes in Husan. The security forces said that the boy had been attempting to throw a Molotov cocktail at their personnel when he was shot. That account is disputed by Palestinian eyewitnesses.
33. Some 16 Palestinians, including 2 children, were killed by Israeli security forces during search-and-arrest operations, exchanges of fire and clashes, including on 1 April in the H2 area of Hebron; 2 April and 9 April in Janin; 10 April in Bethlehem; 13 April in Silwad, near Ramallah, and in Nablus; 14 April in Kafr Dan, near Janin, where a 17-year-old boy and two other Palestinians were killed; 18 April in Yamun, near Janin; 26 April at Aqbat Jabr refugee camp in Jericho; 27 April in Jenin refugee camp; and 2 June in Dheisheh refugee camp in Bethlehem.
34. Four Palestinians, including two women and a child, were shot dead, reportedly during attacks or alleged attacks by Israeli security forces or Israeli civilians. The incidents occurred on 31 March, near the settlement of Newe Daniyyel; on 10 April, in Hebron; on 8 May, in the settlement of Tekoa; and on 1 June, near Arroub refugee camp in Hebron.
35. In March and April, tensions were high at the holy sites and in and around the Old City in occupied East Jerusalem as Muslims, Jews and Christians celebrated the holidays of Ramadan, Passover and Easter. The tensions were exacerbated by inflammatory posts and misinformation circulated on social media.
36. On 15 April, large numbers of Israeli security forces entered the Aqsa Mosque compound as Palestinians gathered for the dawn prayer. Some Palestinians threw stones and fireworks towards Israeli security forces. In response, those forces used stun grenades, sponge-tipped bullets and batons, including against bystanders. Following a standoff, Israeli police entered the mosque and arrested those inside. Some damage was caused to the structure of the mosque during the clashes. About 160 Palestinians were injured, including 4 women, 27 children and at least 1 journalist, while some 400 persons were arrested, most of whom were released later that day. According to Israeli security forces, three police officers were injured. Tens of thousands of worshippers participated in noon prayers later that day without any major incident.
37. In addition to the events of 15 April, some 102 Palestinians were injured by Israeli security forces in other incidents in and around the Old City, including at the holy sites, from the start of Ramadan on 2 April up to and including the Independence Day of Israel on 5 May. Meanwhile, eight Israelis were injured by Palestinians in 14 separate incidents over that period. On 14 May, a 23-year-old Palestinian man died as a result of the injuries that he had sustained on 22 April. During that period of holidays, Israeli security forces arrested over 200 Palestinians in and around the holy sites, including at least 14 children and at least 1 woman.
38. On 30 April, a Palestinian man was shot and killed by Israeli security forces in Azzun, near Qalqilyah. The man reportedly threw a Molotov cocktail at soldiers and, according to video footage of the incident, was shot in the back while running away.
39. On 5 May, two Palestinians from the Janin area killed three Israeli civilians and wounded four others with axes in a terrorist attack in the Israeli city of El'ad. Israeli security forces arrested the perpetrators on 8 May.

40. On 8 May, Israeli security forces shot and killed an unarmed Palestinian attempting to cross the security fence near Tulkarm. The security forces claimed that the man was shot according to their arrest procedure.

41. On 11 May, a Palestinian-American journalist, Shireen Abu Akleh, was shot dead while covering clashes between Israeli security forces and armed Palestinians at Jenin refugee camp. Another journalist was shot and injured in the same incident. Both were wearing press vests and helmets, had approached the area slowly to make their presence visible to the Israeli forces and, according to reports, had not received warnings to stop.

42. Clashes broke out during Abu Akleh's funeral procession on 13 May, when Israeli police entered Saint Joseph Hospital in occupied East Jerusalem and beat pallbearers and other mourners with batons, at one point causing the coffin to fall towards the ground, while firing stun grenades and sponge-tipped bullets to disperse Palestinians who had assembled there to join the procession, injuring 33 persons and arresting another 15.

43. The Attorney General of the State of Palestine, in his preliminary findings of 13 May regarding Abu Akleh's death, said that only Israeli forces were in a position to kill the journalist. The preliminary findings of an Israeli Defense Force military probe, which were published that same day, were inconclusive because a ballistic examination of the projectile had not been conducted.

44. Also on 11 May, Israeli security forces shot and killed a 16-year-old Palestinian boy and injured another in Birah, where, according to eyewitnesses, some 30 Palestinian youths were throwing stones at Israeli security forces. The boy was shot in the chest from a distance of about 100 m, in circumstances in which he did not seem to pose an imminent threat to Israeli security forces.

45. On 13 May, a Palestinian and an Israeli soldier were killed, while at least 14 other Palestinians, including a 16-year-old, were injured during an Israeli security forces arrest operation in Jenin refugee camp that triggered clashes with armed Palestinians.

46. On 16 May, the funeral of a 23-year-old Palestinian, who had died the previous day from injuries sustained on 22 April during clashes with Israeli security forces at the holy sites, also led to confrontations between Israeli police and Palestinians in occupied East Jerusalem. Some 64 Palestinians and two Israeli police officers were injured as a result.

47. On 20 May, during a search operation in Janin in which there was an exchange of fire, Israeli security forces shot and killed a 17-year-old Palestinian as he was reportedly throwing a Molotov cocktail.

48. On 24 May, Israeli security forces shot and killed a 16-year-old Palestinian and injured more than 20 others in Nablus during clashes near Qabr Yusuf. According to Israeli security forces, the Palestinian who was shot dead had reportedly thrown a Molotov cocktail at security forces and Jewish Israelis at the site.

49. On 27 May, Israeli security forces shot and killed a 14-year-old Palestinian boy near Khidr, Bethlehem Governate, during clashes. There are conflicting accounts as to the boy's involvement in the events. Palestinians and Israeli security forces clashed during the boy's funeral; three Palestinians, including a child, were shot with live ammunition and injured.

50. On 29 May, approximately 70,000 Israelis took part in a controversial flag march through the Old City of Jerusalem to celebrate the capture by Israel of East Jerusalem in 1967. Some demonstrators shouted anti-Arab racist chants, including "death to Arabs". In one incident, which was widely publicized on social media, a

young Israeli man spat on and kicked an old Palestinian woman. During the event, scuffles broke out between Palestinians, on the one hand, and Israeli demonstrators and Israeli security forces, on other, throughout occupied East Jerusalem, including in the Old City. Some 87 Palestinians were injured, as were an Israeli civilian and a member of the Israeli security forces, and 72 Palestinians were arrested. On 29 and 30 May, in other parts of the occupied West Bank, Israeli security forces shot and injured 53 Palestinians, including 21 who were injured with live ammunition, in clashes that erupted during demonstrations, many of which were held as a response to the flag march.

51. Earlier on 29 May, a record 2,600 Jewish Israeli visitors had entered the Holy Esplanade, with some flying the Israeli flag and performing prayers, triggering violent confrontations between Palestinians and the Israeli police. Israeli forces fired rubber bullets, stun grenades and tear gas canisters at Palestinians and arrested at least 20 Palestinians, including 3 women.

52. On 1 June, a punitive demolition in Ya'bad, near Janin, triggered clashes with local residents during which Israeli security forces shot and killed a Palestinian with live ammunition and injured six other Palestinians. A second Palestinian died on 11 June, succumbing to the wounds that he had sustained in those clashes.

53. On 2 June, Israeli security forces shot and killed a 17-year-old Palestinian in Midyah, Ramallah, in unclear circumstances

54. On 9 June, Israeli security forces shot and killed a Palestinian man during clashes that erupted during a search operation in Halhul, near Hebron. Four other Palestinians, including two children, were wounded by live ammunition.

55. During the reporting period, arrests of Palestinians, including children, continued to increase. As at 31 May, 4,700 Palestinians, including 170 children, were being held in Israeli prisons. Of that number, 640 Palestinians, including a child, were being held in administrative detention without charge or trial.

56. Against the backdrop of continued settlement advancements and ongoing pressure on Palestinian communities in the occupied West Bank, settler-related violence increased, in particular following the terrorist attacks in Israel.

57. On 10 April, dozens of Palestinians vandalized and set fire to a Jewish holy site located in the city of Nablus before being dispersed by Palestinian security forces.

58. On 17 April, in the Old City of Jerusalem, Palestinians assaulted three Jewish worshippers who were on their way to the Western Wall, and several buses were stoned, injuring seven Israelis, including a 13 year-old girl. Some nine Palestinians were arrested for those attacks.

59. On 23 April, Israeli security forces and settlers fired live ammunition at a Palestinian family on agricultural land near Surif, Hebron Governorate, injuring three persons, including a 16-year-old boy. The persons who were injured have submitted a complaint to the Israeli police.

60. On 26 April, Israeli settlers erected a tent on private Palestinian-owned land near the Ma'ale Adummim settlement. When asked to leave, the settlers attacked and injured four Palestinians, including a 68-year-old who sustained multiple fractures.

61. On 29 April, armed Palestinians shot and killed an Israeli civilian guard in the settlement of Ari'el. Israeli security forces arrested two suspects on 30 April.

62. On 8 May, Israeli settlers, accompanied by Israeli security forces, entered the Palestinian town of Haris, west of Salfit, and clashed with local youths. A young Palestinian was injured by live ammunition, reportedly fired by one of the settlers, and two others were shot by Israeli security forces with rubber-coated metal bullets.

63. Between 20 and 26 May, Israeli settlers and Israeli security forces clashed with Palestinians in Huwwarah, Nablus, in a series of incidents in which Israeli settlers took down Palestinian flags in the village. At least 54 Palestinians were injured in the clashes.

64. On 22 May, Israeli settlers entered Qusrah, south of Nablus, and threw stones at two Palestinian boys, resulting in one of the boys being hospitalized with a head injury.

65. On 27 May, Israeli settlers attacked Palestinian houses and vehicles with stones in the Ra's area of the H2 area of Hebron, sparking clashes with Palestinians. Three Palestinians, including a child, were injured in the clashes.

66. During the reporting period, Palestinian armed groups in Gaza launched five rockets and three mortar shells towards Israel, one of which fell in the Israeli town of Sderot, causing property damage. In retaliation, the Israel Defense Forces conducted eight air strikes and fired 21 missiles against what it said were Hamas targets in Gaza, with no injuries reported.

67. Following the rocket launches, Israeli authorities closed the Erez crossing between Gaza and Israel to Palestinian workers and traders on 24 and 25 April. The Israeli authorities closed the crossing again, from 3 to 14 May, except for humanitarian cases. The closure led to significant economic losses, as workers were unable to enter Israel. The decision to close the crossing was taken after the terrorist attack in El'ad in Israel and calls by senior Hamas leaders for Palestinians to carry out further attacks against Israelis.

68. In the period from 25 to 27 April, Israeli security forces arrested 11 fishers, among whom were three children, injuring three of the fishers in the process, and confiscated four boats off the Gaza coast for allegedly breaching the fishing limit, currently set by Israel at 15 nautical miles. Between 25 May and 9 June, Israeli security forces arrested 16 fishers, including a child, off the Gaza coast, injuring six of the fishers with rubber-coated metal bullets, and confiscated five boats. To date, Israeli security forces had arrested 41 Gaza fishers in 2022, injuring 15 of them, compared with only 11 in 2021. According to the Israeli military, on 8 April, naval forces thwarted an attempt to smuggle arms by sea and arrested three Palestinians.

69. On 15 June, the Be'er Sheva' District Court convicted the former director for Gaza of World Vision, Mohammad el-Halabi, on 13 charges of terrorism, including membership of a terrorist organization and diverting humanitarian funds to finance the terrorist activities of armed groups in Gaza. Halabi, who has consistently denied the charges, and his defence team announced that he would appeal against the ruling. He was arrested by Israeli authorities in 2016 and remained in detention during the court proceedings, which spanned six years and were postponed multiple times.

IV. Incitement, provocations and inflammatory rhetoric

70. 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.

71. Tensions around the holy sites in occupied East Jerusalem were further heightened during the convergence of various religious holidays when some Fatah

and Palestinian Authority officials denied the Jewish connection to Jerusalem and claimed that the Israeli authorities intended to allow Jewish extremists to “storm the Aqsa Mosque in the Old City of Jerusalem to slaughter sacrifices”, a claim that Israeli police and other Israeli officials denied several times. Fatah and Hamas officials praised and glorified the perpetrators of recent terrorist attacks inside Israel, despite the clear condemnations of the attacks that were issued by the President of the State of Palestine, Mahmoud Abbas. In addition, Hamas leaders called for additional attacks against Israelis, with one saying that “everybody who has a gun should take it, and those who don’t have a gun should take a butcher’s knife or any knife they can get”.

72. Exacerbating the tensions in occupied East Jerusalem during Ramadan, a far-right Israeli member of the Knesset visited the holy sites twice during the reporting period after receiving police approval. He also attempted to lead a nationalist march through the Damascus Gate and the Muslim quarter of the Old City. The police did not authorize the march, which the Israeli authorities ultimately blocked. A separate, inflammatory annual flag march through the Damascus Gate and the Muslim quarter was approved by Israeli authorities and went ahead on 29 May.

73. Actions taken by Israeli authorities during the funeral of Shireen Abu Akleh, with police entering a hospital and beating pallbearers and other mourners with batons, were also highly offensive and inflammatory. A member of the Knesset criticized the decision of the Commissioner of the Israel Police to investigate those incidents, saying that Abu Akleh was part of the “Arab war machine against Israel”.

74. In remarks made at a religious school in a settlement in the occupied West Bank, an Israeli military commander said that the “army and the settlements are one and the same”. He was later reprimanded by his superiors for the remarks. At a high school in another West Bank settlement, a deputy minister in the Government of Israel said that “if there were a button you could press that would make all the Arabs disappear ... I would press that button”.

75. Speaking at a plenary session of the Knesset, a member of the Knesset threatened Israeli Arab students who flew Palestinian flags at Israeli universities, telling them to “remember ... your Nakbah” in 1948, adding that, “if you don’t calm down, we will teach you a lesson that will not be forgotten”.

V. Affirmative steps to reverse negative trends

76. 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. Negative trends on the ground continued during the reporting period.

77. On 26 March, the Central Election Commission of the State of Palestine conducted the second phase of local council elections, which were held in the largest communities of the occupied West Bank. Nearly 54 per cent of the approximately 715,000 eligible voters cast their ballots in 50 competitive elections. Independent lists won 64.4 per cent of contested council seats, while, in accordance with a quota system, women were elected to 18 per cent of contested council seats. In January, the Cabinet of the State of Palestine postponed local elections in Gaza after Hamas demanded guarantees that presidential and legislative elections would be held in addition to local elections and raised concerns about the impartiality of the electoral courts.

78. On 27 March, the Government of Israel announced that it had increased to 20,000 the approved quota of permits available for Palestinian workers from Gaza

who wish to enter Israel. As at 9 June, some 9,900 economic needs permits had been issued. That number is in addition to some 2,500 existing permits for traders and businesspeople. In a related development, the Government allocated some \$12 million to improving the crossings between Gaza and Israel, as the amount of goods exiting Gaza remained at a relatively high level. In a separate decision, the Israeli authorities approved the import into Gaza of essential medical equipment, such as mobile x-ray machines, and eased restrictions on the import into Gaza of 56 communications items, many of them routine.

79. On 10 May, the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics released the labour force statistics for the first quarter of 2022, which showed that the number of Palestinians working in Israel had risen by approximately 33 per cent, from some 130,000 workers at the end of 2021 to about 173,000 workers at the end of the first quarter of 2022. The Palestinian economy continued to recover from the impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) crisis, as the labour force participation rate in the first quarter of 2022 increased in both the occupied West Bank and the Gaza Strip compared with the fourth quarter of 2021.

80. In Gaza, the United Nations continued to deliver vital humanitarian and development assistance. It also continued to engage in diplomatic efforts, with a view to encouraging Israel to further ease restrictions on the movement of people and goods into and out of the Gaza. Following an agreement by the Palestinian Authority and Israel, plans have been put in place to support the revitalization of the fishery sector in Gaza, including by facilitating entry of dual-use items under the Gaza Reconstruction Mechanism. To improve oncology services in Gaza and reduce the debt burden on the Palestinian Authority arising from medical referrals, the United Nations is supporting preparations for a five-year operational plan for oncology that will include prevention, treatment and palliative care.

81. The reconstruction of homes that were fully or partially damaged during the May 2021 escalation continued, albeit slowly, owing largely to lack of funds. The volume of goods, the majority of which are agricultural products, exiting Gaza through the Kerem Shalom crossing increased by 34 per cent compared with the average volume of goods exiting prior to the escalation. The volume of materials and goods entering Gaza through Kerem Shalom declined by 19 per cent when compared with the pre-escalation period, while there was a slight increase in the volume of materials and goods moving through the Rafah crossing, with some 3,000 tons of rebar entering Gaza.

82. Rising prices and market disruptions, which have been amplified by the war in Ukraine, threaten the food security of vulnerable families in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the ability of the United Nations to maintain services. The quarterly distribution costs of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) in Gaza, where the United Nations accounts for nearly 60 per cent of food supply, have increased by 42 per cent compared with the Agency's average distribution costs in 2021. Meanwhile, the impact of the assistance provided by the World Food Programme e-voucher has been diminished by soaring food prices.

83. On 10 May, the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee for the Coordination of the International Assistance to Palestinians met in Brussels and addressed key economic issues, including Palestinian Authority fiscal reforms, enhancing Palestinian Authority revenues, trade, water and energy. The Palestinian Authority committed itself to engaging with international partners, including the International Monetary Fund, in order to improve overall public financial management and begin implementation of important reforms by the third quarter of 2022 that would safeguard financial viability. Meanwhile, the Government of Israel highlighted its

determination to strengthen the Palestinian Authority and take additional economic steps in the coming months. While many participants noted some of the positive steps that Israel had taken in recent months in relation to the movement of persons and goods, they emphasized the need for such steps to be anchored within a broader political discussion and horizon.

84. On 31 May, hundreds of Palestinian and Israeli civil society activists met in Jerusalem for one of the largest-ever conferences of organizations engaged in peacebuilding, organized by the Alliance for Middle East Peace. During the conference, which was attended by representatives of the United Nations and diplomats from some 30 countries, participants discussed, inter alia, ways to increase the impact of their work and how to use peacebuilding initiatives as a tool for policy change.

85. On 14 June, the European Commission announced a renewed financial support package of €224.8 million for the Palestinian people, including €145.35 million in direct support to the Palestinian Authority for the payment of salaries and pensions of civil servants, allowances to vulnerable families and financial support for referral services to the East Jerusalem hospitals and for COVID-19 vaccines. The support package also includes earmarked funding for the Gas for Gaza and the Gaza Central Desalination Plant infrastructure projects.

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

86. 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.

87. On 13 May, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency ruled that “product of Israel” labels, without any additional clarifying information, affixed to two wines produced in Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank were considered “false” and therefore not in compliance with applicable Canadian federal statutes concerning food labelling. The Agency made its determination following a decision in the matter that was handed down by the Federal Court of Appeal of Canada in May 2021 and earlier related court proceedings in Canada, which the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and my Personal Representative to the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority addressed when he briefed the Security Council on my eleventh quarterly report (see [S/PV.8625](#)).

88. On 10 June, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway announced that “foodstuffs originating in the territories occupied by the State of Israel must bear the indication of their territory of origin, accompanied, where those foodstuffs come from an Israeli settlement within that territory, by the indication of that provenance”, indicating that such a requirement would be in line with the December 2019 ruling of the European Court of Justice concerning the interpretation of European Union Regulation 1169/2011 (also known as the European Union regulation on the provision of food information to consumers). I had reported on that ruling in my twelfth quarterly report ([S/2019/938](#)). The Ministry added that the regulation was incorporated into the Agreement on the European Economic Area and its implementation was therefore part of the country’s obligations under that Agreement.

89. In its resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#), the Security Council also 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 began 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. No such steps were taken during the reporting period.

VII. Observations

90. I remain deeply troubled by the continued Israeli settlement expansion in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, with the highest number of settlement units advanced since October 2020. Settlements further entrench the military occupation of Israel, undermine the right 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.

91. Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, have no legal validity and constitute a flagrant violation of international law and United Nations resolutions. They undermine the prospect of achieving a two-State solution by systematically eroding the possibility of establishing a contiguous, independent, viable and sovereign Palestinian State. I urge the Government of Israel to cease all settlement activity immediately, in line with its obligations under international law.

92. Settlement activity, alongside Israeli restrictions on land, also undermines Palestinian economic potential. The municipal boundaries of settlements cover approximately 10 per cent of the occupied West Bank. Approximately 18 per cent of Area C of the occupied West Bank has been designated as a closed military zone for training, with some 50 per cent more designated as State lands, nature reserves or under settlement council jurisdiction, effectively closing it off to Palestinian construction, economic activity and development.

93. In an increasing number of locations across the Occupied Palestinian Territory, settlers have cut off access to grazing land long used by Palestinian pastoralists and built informal structures, effectively denying Palestinian access to the lands. Such restrictions on Palestinian access to the productive assets in Area C further limit Palestinian economic potential.

94. I am particularly disturbed by reports of armed settlers carrying out attacks inside Palestinian communities, sometimes in the proximity of and with the support of Israeli security forces. Settlers are rarely held accountable for these attacks, increasing the level of threat to Palestinians and their property. Israel, as the occupying Power, has an obligation to protect Palestinians and their property in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

95. I am deeply concerned by the potential implications of the High Court's ruling on Masafer Yatta and the humanitarian toll on the communities in question if eviction orders are enforced. International humanitarian law allows only for the temporary evacuation of civilian populations for their own security or for an imperative military reason. The continued demolitions and seizures of Palestinian-owned structures, including internationally funded humanitarian projects, as well as structures related to income-generation and the provision of essential services, remains disturbing. I call upon the Government of Israel to end the demolition of Palestinian-owned property and prevent the possible displacement and forced eviction of Palestinians, in line with the obligations of Israel under international humanitarian and

international human rights law and to approve plans that would enable those communities to build legally and address their development needs. Demolitions and forced evictions entail numerous human rights violations and raise concerns about the risk of forcible transfer.

96. I remain gravely concerned by the continuing violence against civilians, which exacerbates mistrust and undermines a peaceful resolution to the conflict. The violence must stop, and all perpetrators must be held accountable. I condemn all terrorist attacks carried out against civilians in Israel. These attacks, the deadliest in years, must be clearly rejected by all.

97. I also condemn the continued killings of Palestinians, including children, by Israeli security forces, including in incidents in which they did not appear to present an imminent threat to life. The frequency of these incidents raises significant questions over the compliance of the rules of engagement of the Israeli security forces with international law, including international human rights standards regulating the use of firearms. I reiterate that security forces must exercise maximum restraint, use lethal force only when it is strictly unavoidable in order to protect life and carry out thorough, independent, impartial and prompt investigations into all instances of possible excessive use of force.

98. I am appalled by the killing of journalist Shireen Abu Aqleh. The outpouring of sympathy from thousands of Palestinian mourners during the funeral procession was moving. The confrontations between Israeli security forces and Palestinians gathered at St. Joseph Hospital, and the behaviour of some police present at the scene, was disturbing. I echo the Security Council's unanimous condemnation of her killing and its call for those responsible to be held accountable. I reiterate my call for an independent and transparent investigation into her killing. I condemn all attacks and killings of journalists; they must never be the target of violence. A free press is essential for peace, justice, sustainable development and human rights.

99. I reiterate that the indiscriminate launching of rockets towards Israeli population centres is prohibited by international humanitarian law and must stop immediately.

100. I am particularly dismayed that children continue to be victims of violence, arrested in large numbers and detained for prolonged periods of time, including in military detention. Children are entitled to special protection, while primary consideration should be given to their best interest in every action concerning them, including in the context of law enforcement operations. I reiterate my call upon Israel to use detention as a measure of last resort and for the shortest appropriate period, end the administrative detention of children and prevent all forms of ill-treatment in detention. Children must never be the target of violence or put in harm's way.

101. I am concerned that the number of Palestinian administrative detainees, held in Israeli detention without trial or charge, is, according to the Israel Prison Service, at its highest since 2016. All detainees should be promptly charged and ensured fair trial guarantees or released.

102. 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 by international humanitarian law, and to return the withheld bodies to their families.

103. I also remain concerned by the continued Israeli practice of holding the bodies of killed Palestinians, totalling 103, including 3 women and at least 10 children. I call upon Israel to return withheld bodies to their families, in line with its obligations under international humanitarian law.

104. I remain concerned by the multiple instances in which officials used dangerous and hateful rhetoric that has raised tensions and sparked violence in the reporting period. Terrorism, violence and incitement must be clearly condemned and unequivocally rejected by all, never celebrated or amplified. I welcome the clear condemnations by Mr. Abbas of the brutal attacks against Israeli civilians in Tel Aviv, Bnei Brak and El'ad, as well as the strong rejection by senior ministers of the Government of Israel of the blatant racism displayed by members of extremist groups towards Palestinians in the Jerusalem Day flag march.

105. During the reporting period, once again, the volatility surrounding developments at the holy sites in Jerusalem was clearly witnessed. I reiterate and amplify my call for the parties to respect and uphold the status quo, taking into account the special and historic role of Jordan as custodian of the Muslim and Christian holy sites in Jerusalem. It is critical that all relevant actors maintain open channels of communication so that crises and further violence can be avoided.

106. I remain concerned about the fragility of the current political and security dynamics, particularly in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem. The persistence of conflict drivers and the absence of a political horizon have empowered extremists and are eroding the perception among Palestinians and Israelis that a resolution of the conflict is achievable. These dynamics are becoming increasingly dangerous.

107. The financial crisis faced by the Palestinian Authority – compounded by the constraints of the occupation, the absence of serious Palestinian reforms and unclear prospects for donor support – requires urgent attention. Full salaries have not been paid to its civil servants since October 2021. Economic productivity has not returned to pre-pandemic levels, particularly in the Gaza Strip, where the unemployment rate is about 47 per cent and the poverty rate is 60 per cent. While Palestinian Authority revenues have improved in recent months, expenditures continue to grow and adequate budget support from donors has not been forthcoming. Taken together, these factors make it increasingly difficult for the Palestinian Authority to meet minimum recurrent expenditures, let alone address outstanding arrears and make critical investments in the economy and the Palestinian people. The parties, as well as regional and international partners, must work collectively to move the Palestinian Authority onto a firmer fiscal footing, while addressing broader systemic issues. In this regard, I welcome the renewed financial support from the European Union, which will give critical temporary relief to the Palestinian Authority.

108. While we have seen some encouraging initiatives and Israeli-Palestinian cooperation to address economic challenges in recent months, I encourage leaders on both sides to make crucial decisions that will help to de-escalate the situation. While immediate steps to reverse negative trends and support the Palestinian people are essential, a better coordinated and strategic approach by the parties and the international community is needed. Economic relief must be expanded and more sustainable. An agreed and updated regulatory framework for the Israeli-Palestinian economic relationship is not only vital to bringing about meaningful economic dividends for the Palestinians but would add a tangible political perspective to these advances.

109. This approach must be combined with political and security steps that address core conflict drivers and ultimately lead towards an end to the occupation and the achievement of a negotiated two-State solution. Regrettably, positive Israeli economic measures towards the Palestinians are regularly undermined by parallel negative steps, such as settlement advancement, demolitions and continued violence. This approach will not enable progress towards creating an environment conducive to a return to negotiations.

110. I remain seriously concerned about the financial situation of UNRWA, which is putting the delivery of essential services – including education and health – to

Palestine refugees in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and in the region at risk. This includes a projected funding gap of \$72 million to sustain food assistance for over 1 million people in Gaza. Any service interruption could exacerbate an already tense situation on the ground. I reiterate my urgent call to provide UNRWA with the funds needed to fully deliver on its mandate from the General Assembly and strongly appeal to all Member States to come forward with new or increased contributions at the pledging conference for UNRWA on 23 June.

111. In Gaza, the situation remains fragile, and the risk of escalation persists. Efforts by the United Nations and international partners to improve Palestinian lives and measures by Israel to ease pressure and facilitate more economic activity have enabled the fragile ceasefire to continue. However, increasing international prices for construction materials and fuel will impact recovery and reconstruction efforts in Gaza and could have consequences for stability. It will be vital to ensure that United Nations agencies will be able to continue to deliver critical support for the most vulnerable. Maintaining the calm, however, is neither enough nor sustainable. Despite efforts made over the past months, more needs to be done to alleviate the humanitarian situation, improve the economy, and lift the Israeli debilitating closures, in line with Security Council resolution [1860 \(2009\)](#). Only sustainable political solutions will restore hope to Gaza's long-suffering population.

112. While local elections were successfully held in the occupied West Bank, it has now been over a year since Palestinian legislative elections and, consequently, ensuing Presidential elections were postponed. It is crucial that efforts are intensified to resume the process as the holding of elections in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and Gaza would be a crucial step towards Palestinian unity, giving renewed legitimacy to national institutions, including a democratically elected Parliament and Government in Palestine.

113. It is critical that intra-Palestinian reconciliation efforts continue. The United Nations stands firm in its support of Egyptian efforts in that regard. I call upon all Palestinian factions to redouble efforts to ensure the reunification of Gaza and the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, under a single, democratic, national government. Gaza is, and must remain, an integral part of a future Palestinian State as part of a two-State solution.

114. I remain committed to supporting Palestinians and Israelis in resolving the conflict and ending the occupation in line with relevant United Nations resolutions, international law and bilateral agreements in pursuit of achieving 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.

115. There is no substitute for a legitimate political process that will resolve the core issues driving the conflict. I urge Israelis, Palestinians, regional States and the broader international community to take steps that will enable the parties to re-engage on the path towards meaningful negotiations and, ultimately, peace. The United Nations remains actively engaged in advancing these efforts with key regional partners and Israeli and Palestinian leaders.

116. I express my deep appreciation to Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Tor Wennesland, 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.