

**STATEMENT OF MS. MERVAT TALLAWY**  
**UNDER-SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS**  
**EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF THE**  
**ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR WESTERN ASIA**  
**REGARDING THE REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL**  
**ON**  
**THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL REPERCUSSIONS OF THE ISRAELI**  
**OCCUPATION ON THE LIVING CONDITIONS OF THE PALESTINIAN**  
**PEOPLE IN THE OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORY, INCLUDING**  
**JERUSALEM, AND OF THE ARAB POPULATION IN THE OCCUPIED**  
**SYRIAN GOLAN**

**NEW YORK, 20 OCTOBER 2006**

Madame Chair,

Distinguished delegates,

I have the honor to present the Note by the Secretary-General on the Economic and Social Repercussions of the Israeli Occupation on the Living Conditions of the Palestinian People in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem, and of the Arab Population in the Occupied Syrian Golan.

This Note, prepared by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, in cooperation with a number of concerned United Nations entities, is submitted in response to Economic and Social Council resolution 2005/51 of 27 July 2005 and General Assembly resolution 60/183 of 22 December 2005.

As the report before you clearly indicates, the social and economic situation in the occupied Palestinian territory continues to deteriorate as Palestinians struggle to survive in an environment of mounting hardships.

Figures of Palestinian deaths and injuries resulting from Israel's disproportionate use of force and extrajudicial killings are increasing. Arbitrary arrests and detentions continued; while over 9000 Palestinian political prisoners remain in Israeli prisons. Property destruction and confiscation persisted. During the course of last year UNRWA recorded a total of 224 Palestinian structures (residential houses, agricultural houses, tents) demolished by the Israeli army in the West Bank. In East Jerusalem, the Israeli authorities destroyed 114 Palestinian homes. 788 hectares of Palestinian land were

confiscated for the construction of the barrier, military observation towers and new road barriers. Israeli forces have razed 28,882 dunums of agricultural land, uprooting trees and destroying crops belonging to Palestinians and impoverishing 60,101 Palestinians.

Israel's mobility restrictions and closure policies, a primary cause of poverty and humanitarian crisis, has severed Palestinian access to health and education services, employment, markets and social and religious networks. Despite some easing of closure, Palestinian movement in the West Bank remains problematic, by March 2006 there were 471 closure obstacles. Access by health and humanitarian workers to different areas in the West Bank continue to be impeded in the form of denials, delays and obstructions. Alone through 2005, UNRWA incurred over \$10 million in losses. Access to the Gaza Strip remains closely linked to security incidences. Most commercial and personnel crossings to the Gaza Strip remain fully or partially closed for extensive periods of time.

Further restricting Palestinian access and movement is the ongoing construction of the barrier in the West Bank, including in and around occupied East Jerusalem. The barrier, which contravenes international law and General Assembly resolution ES-10/15 of July 2004, places 10 per cent of West Bank territory on its West side. 10.1 per cent of some of the most fertile Palestinian land, home to some 50,000 Palestinians, is expected to be isolated.

Adding to the Palestinian plight is the growing network of Israeli settlements. Israel maintains 121 settlements in the West Bank, in addition to 14 Israeli settlements in occupied Jerusalem. There are also an estimated 100 unofficial settlements or outposts in the West Bank. At the end of 2005 there were 3700 new West Bank settlement housing units being built, in addition to 1650 in occupied Jerusalem.

Mr. Chairman,

These very measures have condemned the majority of the Palestinian population to a life of poverty and deprivation. Unemployment and poverty rates remain high, estimated at 23 per cent and 62 per cent respectively. Malnutrition and other health problems afflict a growing number of Palestinians at a time of restricted access to essential services. 350,000 children under the age of five suffer from chronic malnutrition.

Should the current political and economic conditions continue coupled with the occupation, the future does look bleak for Palestinians. According to UNCTAD, the Palestinian economy could shrink to levels not witnessed for a generation. From 2006 to 2008, losses in GDP could reach \$5.4 billion. 84 per cent of the jobs available last year will disappear.

Mr. Chairman,

Turning to the occupied Syrian Golan, the report documents that, as of 2005, Israeli settlers occupy 33 settlements in the Golan, of which 27 are primarily agricultural.

The Arab population of the occupied Syrian Golan is generally unable to travel to the Syrian Arab Republic to visit family members on the other side of the line of separation and have, over time, experienced increasing limitations on land use owing to military and environmental zoning restrictions imposed by Israel.

A large number of the Syrian Arab population has lost significant acreage traditionally used for pasture. This has resulted in changing production, commercial and land-use patterns within a traditionally rural society.

Mr. Chairman,

Recent events in the Middle East, including the war on Lebanon, the continuation of the conflict as well as the suffering of the Palestinian and Syrian populations under occupation underscore how interconnected the region's problems are and how military solutions only complicate as well as further destabilize an already precarious situation.

The only path forward is a negotiated settlement that would achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting peace, based on relevant UN resolutions and international law.

Thank you.