

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



البعثة المراقبة الدائمة  
لدولة فلسطين  
لدى الأمم المتحدة

Ref. SGC. 241/2021

29 December 2021

Excellency,

The year is regrettably ending once again on a somber note for the Palestinian people, as they have endured yet another year of oppression under Israel's colonial occupation and apartheid regime and another year has passed denying them the justice and freedom they seek, their inalienable human rights still unrealized and grossly violated as this grave injustice continues.

For the Palestinian civilian population in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, what should be a joyous holiday season, with the celebration of Christmas and the coming new year, has again been marred by the violence and terror being perpetrated against them by Israeli occupying forces (IOF) and Israeli settlers, armed extremists rampaging through our land.

In delivering the Secretary-General's quarterly report on the implementation of Security Council resolution 2334 (2016), the UN Special Coordinator warned about the rising levels of violence and the urgency of addressing this reality in order to avert another destruction round of violence and the human suffering it would cause to a people who have still not recovered from the trauma and destruction caused by the Israeli military aggressions in May of this year, especially in the Gaza Strip.

In the tens days since my last letter, absent any efforts to address this critical situation, violent military raids and settler attacks have caused harm to dozens more Palestinians, many of them severely injured by live ammunition, rubber-coated bullets, tear gas, stun grenades and vicious physical assaults, including a car ramming. Just a few examples are the following:

On Thursday, 23 December, 125 Palestinian civilians in the village of Burqa in the occupied West Bank were injured by IOF and hundreds of settlers that descended upon and attacked the village, attempting to raid homes and terrorizing residents. In addition to the many injuries sustained, two ambulances that arrived to treat the wounded were hit with stun grenades and tear gas canisters fired by IOF.

On Friday, 24 December, a 63-year old Palestinian woman, Ghadir Anis Abdullah Fuqaha, was killed when an Israeli settler deliberately struck her with his car. The woman had been waiting for a taxi with her husband at the entrance of the town of Sinjil, northeast of Ramallah, when the settler rammed his car into her and sped away.

On Saturday, 25 December, at least 58 Palestinian civilians were injured by Israeli soldiers who had sealed off the entrance to Burqa. A large military presence was deployed on the Nablus-Jenin road there to accompany buses of extremist settlers coming to an evacuated settlement outpost in the area that has become the scene of repeated provocation and incitement.

On Sunday, 26 December, a 16-year old Palestinian boy was shot in the chest and wounded by a rubber-coated steel bullet fired by IOF in Kufr Qaddoum village near Qalqilya. On the same day, occupying forces also raided the village of Mughayyir near Ramallah and Sahal al-Baqai'a in the northern Jordan Valley.

On Monday, 27 December, Israeli settler gangs invaded Midya village near Ramallah, which is surrounded by illegal settlements, and, with the protection of IOF, attacked Palestinian residents of the village.

H.E. Mr. Abdou Abarry  
President of the Security Council  
The United Nations, New York

Children have not been spared the horrors of this occupation's constant violence. As documented by Defense for Children International - Palestine, in 2021, Israeli occupying forces and settlers relentlessly targeted Palestinian children with military assaults, excessive force, arbitrary military detention, expulsions and home demolitions. This has caused untold suffering and trauma to Palestinian children and families. In the past year, at least 83 children have been killed and hundreds more have been injured in Israeli attacks against the Gaza Strip and in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. Children also comprise a majority of the more than 1,000 Palestinians forcibly dispossessed and displaced from their homes this year.

In fact, the threat of displacement continues to loom over thousands of Palestinian children and their families. This is especially true in occupied East Jerusalem, where Jerusalem neighborhoods like Sheikh Jarrah, Silwan, Al-Tur, Isawiyyeh and other areas have been targeted by the occupation and settler organizations seeking to remove, i.e. ethnically cleanse, Palestinians from their homes in the City and create an artificial Jewish majority, in grave breach of international law prohibiting all measures aimed at altering the demography, character and status of the occupied territory.

For many, the nightmare of expulsion from their homes and dispossession becomes reality with each passing day. On Monday, 27 December, this fate befell three families, totaling 23 people, including 17 children, whose three-story home in Isawiyyeh was demolished by the Israeli occupying authorities in occupied East Jerusalem under the pretext of "lack of building permits", which are nearly impossible for Palestinians to obtain. This morning, in the Bustan and Jabal Al-Mukkaber neighborhoods of Silwan, IOF demolished another two homes. In this holiday season and cold days of winter, these families have been cruelly rendered homeless and forcibly displaced with no recourse for justice under this illegal colonial occupation.

At the same time, the occupying Power continues its arrest raids in Palestinian towns, villages and refugee camps, detaining dozens of Palestinians, mostly young men, every single day. Those arrested, including a mother of two imprisoned Palestinian men, are being added to the nearly 5,000 Palestinians currently held captive by Israel, the occupying Power, in its prisons and abused by all manner of psychological and physical mistreatment and torture in grave breach of international law. This includes the ill-treatment and neglect of prisoners on hunger strike in protest of their unlawful detention and of prisoners in need of medical care. Among the many are Hesham Abu Hawwash, who has been on hunger strike for over 132 days demanding his freedom, and Abdelbasit Muatan, a cancer patient who has been imprisoned since October 2021 and denied follow-up cancer treatment by the Israeli authorities for a condition he was diagnosed with prior to his arrest.

As the international community remains unable and/or unwilling to enact accountability measures for such blatant human rights violations, war crimes and crimes against humanity, the Palestinian people have been left without protection from an occupying Power that has proven to be merciless and cruel, dehumanizing our people and violating their rights without remorse and with absolute impunity. We thus reiterate our unending appeals to the international community, including the Security Council, to overcome its paralysis and to act now, in line with international law, including obligations under international humanitarian and human rights law, to ensure international protection to Palestinian civilian population under Israel's occupation and to ensure accountability for all violations being perpetrated, aimed at bringing a halt to those crimes, ending impunity and achieving the justice that has been painfully absent until now.

In closing, we share for your consideration a few words from the homily delivered on Christmas Eve in Bethlehem by Patriarch Pierbattista Pizzaballa: ***"And finally, we cannot but think of our Palestine, the country in which we find ourselves today. What can we say about this country, always waiting for a future of peace that seems never to arrive? The voice of pain of this people is really a loud, deafening cry. A people that needs to experience justice, that wants to know freedom, that is tired of waiting to be allowed to live freely and with dignity in its own land and in its own house, that does not want to live only by the permits that are now necessary to enter, leave, work or other. What is needed are not concessions, but rights, and an end to years of occupation and violence, with all their dramatic consequences on the life of each individual and the community at large, creating new relationships in which not distrust but mutual trust reigns."***

This letter is in follow-up to our 738 letters regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which constitutes the territory of the State of Palestine. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 17 December 2021 (A/ES-10/xxx-S/2021/xxx) constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, acts of State terrorism and systematic human rights violations being committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators must be brought to justice.

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

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

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Riyad Mansour". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'R'.

Dr. Riyadh Mansour  
Minister, Permanent Observer