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Talking points on recent Israeli occupation measures in Jerusalem:

The situation on the ground

- Israel, the occupying Power, is creating facts on the ground above and under the ground in Jerusalem and across Palestine as we speak.
- In the past week alone, the Israeli occupation government has approved plans for new illegal settlement units and the Israeli press has revealed Israeli plans to construct a new settlement between Ramallah and Jerusalem.
- In the past week also, Israeli occupation forces have executed three Palestinians and detained dozens of others.
- Our objection and grave concern is not limited to the installation of electronic gates outside the holy Al Aqsa mosque compound. The situation is far more dangerous than that.
- It is important for the world to know that Palestinian Muslims and Christians have been denied their natural right to worship in the holy sites in Jerusalem because of these punitive Israeli measures.
- The Israeli government is inciting religious sentiments and acting in an irresponsible manner to turn the conflict from one about national rights to self-determination and freedom to a religious conflict.
- The Israeli government is feeding these religious tensions, which are foreign to Palestine.
- In Palestine, we are proud of the diversity of our historical heritage. We embrace with pride the fact that Palestine is home to sites holy to billions of people around the world from the three monotheistic religions.
- In Palestine, we celebrate this invaluable heritage and we nurture diversity and religious harmony because it is a reflection of who we are and who we have always been as a nation.
- Historically, Palestine was the subject of several vicious and toxic religious wars fought by non-Palestinians at the expense of our blood and rights.
- Israel, the occupying Power, is pushing the situation to the brink of religious tensions to serve its ideology and undermine Palestinian rights and heritage.
- We will resist this dangerous and intolerant policy with all available diplomatic and legal tools because we are committed to protecting the most important element of Palestinian and world heritage in Palestine: the culture of tolerance and diversity, which is under threat just like the holy sites because of these illegal Israeli measures.
- Senior members of the Israeli government declare publicly their racist views that deny the existence of a Palestinian people and deny our deep roots in our homeland.

- The Israeli government has also implicitly supported Israeli settler and other leaders who advocate the takeover of Al-Aqsa and its destruction. These are the same people and groups that fund and support the illegal digs and excavations under the Old City, including Al Aqsa which threaten the structural integrity of homes and holy sites in the sacred city.
- These irresponsible and racist positions must be confronted because they pose a threat to stability and religious coexistence worldwide, not just in Palestine.
- Israel is collectively punishing Palestinians under the misleading pretext of security. Collective punishment is a crime and a grave violation of the Fourth Geneva convention. Crimes have no justification.
- Two weeks ago, the Israeli government expressed its racist views when rejecting the UNESCO resolution that kept Jerusalem inscribed as world heritage under threat and inscribed Hebron's Old City on the same list.
- Israel objects to these inscriptions because they contain an international recognition that Jerusalem's Old City and Hebron are an integral part of the occupied Palestinian Territory.
- Israel objects to these UNESCO resolutions because they reject its illegitimate claims to exclusivity and sole control. They object because these inscriptions reject the Israeli narrative that denies diversity and tries to re-adjust historical facts to suit its extreme political and ideological views.
- What is happening on the ground in Jerusalem must be viewed in this context.
- Israel now wants to undermine international law and worldwide consensus by force. It continues to deny UN monitoring groups the right to access Jerusalem and Hebron and it is implementing policies on the ground that deny Palestinians their natural right to access and movement and worship in their own country.
- Israel is taking these measures because it does not want any witnesses. Israel wants to impose a blackout as it accelerates its violations against threatened holy sites in occupied Jerusalem and adopts laws that entrench the occupation and make the two-state solution impossible.
- While this dangerous escalation is happening on the ground, Israeli lawmakers are passing a law that would forbid any future government of respecting international law and ending the occupation of Jerusalem in order to make the two state formula viable.
- The world must not lose site of these dangerous and illegal actions.
- The Palestinian leadership will be convening emergency meetings and consultations nationally and internationally in the coming to days after it has become very clear that Israel is not interested in de-escalation and is taking measures to increase tension and danger.
- Israel continues to escalate and violate international law with impunity because the world is not holding it accountable.
- Israel takes advantage of being unaccountable by becoming more extreme and committing additional crimes.
- The lack of accountability encourages Israeli crimes and makes countries that abandon their responsibilities to enforce international law complicit in these crimes.

What does international law say?

- The international community has clear legal and moral obligations towards the situation in Palestine. These obligations apply to states individually and collectively.

- The United Nations, including the Security Council, have adopted resolutions that affirm the illegality of Israeli occupation and the obligation of all states not to recognize these measures or anything resulting from them, especially in Jerusalem.
- 13 years ago, the international Court of Justice affirmed that all states have an obligation to ensure the realization of the Palestinian people's right to self-determination.
- The Rome Statute, (for members) considers settlements a war crime. It also considers collective punishment a crime.
- States have clear legal obligations under international Humanitarian and Human rights law, including to take clear and practical steps against Israeli violations and crimes. These obligations are not optional.

What do we want from States

- States are well aware of the Israeli violations on the ground throughout the occupied territory of the State of Palestine and especially in Jerusalem. States are also very aware of how dangerous these violations are. Now, it must take steps to match this knowledge with actions.
- States must respect their own laws and hold Israel accountable.
- States must issue clear statements rejecting the ongoing Israeli violations and demanding that Israel immediately stop all these measures violating international law and the historic status quo.
- States must take concrete measures to demonstrate to Israel that its violations of international law and Palestinian rights will have consequences.
- States must protect the integrity of international system of law and accountability that it championed by making sure that Israel is not treated as a state above the law.
- States must not do business with countries and companies that abuse labor laws and the rights of children and women. This standard should be applied to Israel as well.
- Some states members have special custodial obligations on holy sites and the obligation to enforce the historic status quo. The historic status quo is being undermined and changed by force now. Custodians must rise to their obligations because the status quo is not just about protecting religious rights; it is about protecting the world heritage Jerusalem and the rest of Palestine represent.
- States must correct the dangerous positions taken by some of their members in UN organizations against resolutions defending Palestinian rights. A vote against or abstaining from supporting resolutions affirming international law and Palestinian rights is a vote that encourages crimes with impunity. It is shameful and unjustified.
- We call on Member States of the Security Council to uphold their charter duties and to protect Jerusalem and the Palestinian people from these Israeli violations, including collective punishment.

General information

- Al-Aqsa Mosque Compound represents one of the holiest Muslim sites.
- The Status Quo agreement concerning the Muslim custodianship of the Al-Aqsa Mosque Compound, has existed in one form or another since 1852. Initiated under Ottoman rule, the status quo was again confirmed during the British control in 1930.
- In 1967, during its wider occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, Israel occupation forcibly seized control of al-Buraq Wall (Western Wall) and destroyed al-Mughrabi Quarter, including two mosques and 135 homes, leaving 650 Palestinian Muslims homeless, with the objective to create a large plaza in front of the Wall for

Jewish worshippers. Since then, and despite repeated commitments to respect the status quo, consecutive Israeli governments continue to carry out armed assaults against the Compound, thus undermining the status quo.

- Since the beginning of Israeli occupation of the East Jerusalem, Israel adopted several laws, policies and practices designed to promote a dominant Jewish historical and religious narrative at the expense of other faiths in Occupied city, in many cases restricting or damaging Christian and Muslim sites and celebrations.
- Through decades of Israeli illegal policies aimed at transforming Jerusalem into “the undivided capital of the Jewish people”, Israel is actively negating and eradicating Jerusalem’s Palestinian, Christian and Muslim heritage and culture, irrevocably damaging not only the lives and social fabric of the indigenous Palestinian population, but the very spirit of the city itself.
- During the last decade, there has been an escalation of Israeli violations of the sanctity of Al-Aqsa Mosque Compound. Following a campaign of incitement led by members of the current extremist Israeli Government and funded by both the State of Israel and a number of foreign non-governmental organizations, thousands of extremists have attempted to change the status quo of Al-Aqsa Mosque Compound.
- With an extremist Israeli government focusing on turning a political question into a religious conflict, the attacks on the sanctity of Al-Aqsa Mosque Compound occur hand in hand with calls are being made for recognition of Israel as a Jewish State.
- Deliberate conflation of the issue of sovereignty with religious claims to Holy sites, on the part of the Israeli government, further exacerbates an already severely tense situation.
- Israel, the occupying power, justifies the recent measures as a reaction to an attack carried out in East Jerusalem on Friday 14 July 2017 and resulted in the death of two Israeli occupation soldiers. However, such a justification is null and void, as such measures amount to collective punishment targeting groups and individuals who were not involved in the said attack in any way whatsoever. In fact, the density of these measures and the brutality by which they are being applied indicate that the Israeli occupation authorities are acting according to a pre-planned agenda that aims to reinforce Israel’s efforts to alter the demographic and historic identity of the Old City of Jerusalem.