MEDIA STATEMENT

UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER
Occupied Palestinian Territory

UN Human Rights in Occupied Palestinian Territory
Ramallah
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Against the backdrop of the escalation between Israel and Iran, West Bank situation further deteriorates

Since the wide-scale attacks by Israel across Iran, and the missile and drone strikes launched in response by Iran began on Friday 13 June, the situation in the occupied West Bank has rapidly deteriorated, as the Israeli authorities continue to take actions that further erode the rights of the Palestinian population.

Israeli security forces declared a state of emergency and imposed an almost complete closure of all checkpoints and metal barriers at the entrances to Palestinian communities across the West Bank, and between East Jerusalem and the rest of the West Bank. Israeli security forces also intensified violent raids on homes, evicting families and conducting mass arrests and detention. In contrast, no movement restrictions have been placed on Israelis including settlers, who remain free to move around the occupied West Bank. Settlers continue their relentless attacks, killing and injuring Palestinians and destroying their property, often in the presence of, or assisted by Israeli security forces which continue to reckless use of unwarranted and disproportionate force against Palestinian civilians.

Despite the reopening of checkpoints on 15 June, movement of Palestinians remains seriously restricted, due to limited and unpredictable opening hours, intensive searches at checkpoints, and continued closure of many metal barriers at the entrance to Palestinian communities. This has severely affected access to health services including emergency treatment, the possibility of getting food and other supplies, access to work and education, including upcoming high school exams.

Since 14 June Israeli forces deployed in large numbers within the West Bank, stormed through several cities and refugee camps, vandalizing dozens of Palestinian homes or expelling them from their homes and using them as military posts. They took over 14 homes in Hebron at least three in Ramallah area (Silwad, Al-Mughayyir, and Birzeit–Atara), 18 homes in New Askar refugee camp and 16 homes in Balata refugee camp in Nablus, and 15-20 homes in Azzun village in Qalqilya. While some Palestinian residents were permitted subsequently to return to their homes, they found their homes had been damaged and their contents vandalised.

On 17 and 18 June, Israeli security forces raided the towns of Jaba and Maithalun in Jenin, expelling and displacing residents from 35 homes in Jaba and two in Maithalun. Meanwhile, they continue mass demolitions of Palestinian homes in the Jenin and Tulkarem refugee camps. Following the Israeli Government's decision to re-establish the settlement of Sa-Nur, and given the installation of a range of military equipment in and around the area of the houses affected, there are concerns that relocating settlers to the area may trigger the displacement of Palestinians.

During one home raid in Al Walajeh, Bethlehem, that took place during the night of 17 and 18 June, an unarmed 21-year-old Palestinian man was shot three times at point-blank range and killed by Israeli forces. According to information gathered by the UN Human Rights office in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, the man had engaged in a verbal altercation with soldiers, protesting the arrest and ill-treatment of Palestinians. The Israeli security forces stated that the man had tried to snatch a weapon from soldiers, although this is contradicted by witnesses' statements. In another case, on 17 June in At-Tur, occupied East Jerusalem, an Israel sniper positioned on the rooftop of a house, shot and injured an unarmed 13-year-old Palestinian boy and 22-year-old man who were standing at the doorsteps of their home without posing any threat.

The discriminatory measures escalated by Israel in the recent days do not comply with its obligations under the law of occupation, especially the obligation to restore and maintain civil life and public order. Israel's actions in the West Bank have instilled fear and uncertainty among the local population, subjecting Palestinians to increased settler and state violence, and resulting in their forcible displacement and destruction of their homes and livelihoods.

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