

## Ongoing settlement activities undermining Israeli-Palestinian peace efforts, warns UN envoy

25 September 2017 – Continuing settlement expansion, most notably in occupied East Jerusalem, is making the two-State solution increasingly unattainable and undermining Palestinian belief in the international peace efforts, a senior United Nations official told the Security Council today.

“In addition to illegal settlements, the practice of demolishing Palestinian structures in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and displacing Palestinians undermines the prospects of peace,” [said](#) Nickolay Mladenov, Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process.

Briefing the 15-member body on the latest developments, Mr. Mladenov reported that since June, Israel’s illegal settlement activities have continued at a “high rate,” a consistent pattern over the course of this year. Activity during this period was concentrated primarily in occupied East Jerusalem, where plans were advanced for over 2,300 housing units in July, 30 per cent more than for the whole of 2016.

The reporting period witnessed the eviction of a Palestinian family in Sheikh Jarrah, residents for over 50 years, after a protracted legal battle. The building is located in a section of the neighbourhood in which several settlement plans were among those promoted in July.

“The United Nations considers all settlement activities to be illegal under international law and an impediment to peace,” the Special Coordinator stated.

He went on to note that violence persisted as one of the main obstacles to resolving the conflict. Although the reporting period was characterized by relatively low levels of fatalities, a number of incidents occurred, resulting in the deaths of 19 Palestinians and eight Israelis. Settler-related violence and punitive demolitions of Palestinians homes by the Israeli authorities also continued.

“Continued violence against civilians and incitement perpetuate mutual fear and suspicion, while impeding any efforts to bridge the gaps between the two sides,” said Mr. Mladenov.

“I once again urge both Palestinians and Israelis to demonstrate their commitment to rejecting violence, inflammatory rhetoric and provocative actions.”

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## [United Nations ‘backbone’ of global order, stresses Norway at Assembly](#)

25 September 2017 – Underscoring that the “unprecedented” progress achieved by human kind over the last decades cannot be taken for granted, Norway called for continued international cooperation to safeguard the achievements and to ensure that they remain sustainable.

“Protectionism and isolationism will reverse our common development. We need more trade and cooperation – not less,” said Tore Hattrem, the Chairperson of the Delegation of Norway at the 72nd annual general debate of the United Nations General Assembly.

The world cannot afford to “shake the very foundations” that its open, global economic order is based on, he added.

In his remarks, Mr. Hattrem stressed that the United Nations is the “backbone” of the global order, noting, in his words that a strong and healthy back is needed to address and resolve the challenges the world is facing today.

“But we know that we can do it together.”

He also urged continued commitment for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)), in particular Goal 4, on inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all.

Norway’s head of delegation also noted that the country has actively supported the UN since it was founded, and expressed his support to [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres’ vision for the Organization.

[Full statement available here](#)

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## [Allow people to be ‘dignified agents of their own destiny,’ Holy See tells UN debate](#)

25 September 2017 – The Observer of the Holy See, Archbishop Paul Richard Gallagher, Secretary of Relations with States, speaking on the final day of the United Nations General Assembly’s annual debate praised this year’s theme – ‘Focusing on People: Striving for peace and a decent life on a sustainable planet’– saying that Pope Francis “never tires of insisting on people first,

especially those who suffer, those who are excluded, marginalized and left behind.”

The Archbishop underscored the importance of protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms as the foundation of peace, security and integral human development. The Holy See sees reforming the UN development system as an additional opportunity to place people at the centre of its actions, recounting the Pope’s message to ‘allow them to be dignified agents of their own destiny.’

Turning to the [2030 Agenda](#) for Sustainable Development and the [Paris Agreement](#) on climate change, he said that while Pope Francis defined the Agenda as an “important sign of hope,” he warned against “assuaged consciences,” saying: “We must not rest until the legal commitments have been truly accomplished and the political promises have been fulfilled in the lives of people.”

The duty to prevent wars and violent conflicts is an essential component of the ‘responsibility to protect,’ he continued. Against that backdrop, the Archbishop stressed the need for an environment of trust saying that “prevention requires, first of all, restoring faith in the capacity of humankind for dialogue.” He encouraged all countries to take urgent steps back from military preparations, exhorting that “all the diplomatic and political means of mediation should be engaged to avoid the unspeakable.”

Another great challenge facing the international community is trafficking in persons. The Archbishop pointed to conflicts, extreme poverty, underdevelopment and exclusion along with the lack of education and employment as being at the root of this and other contemporary forms of slavery.

“Pope Francis calls on all, in particular the competent authorities, to address such a heinous crime through effective juridical instruments, to punish those who profit from it, to assist the healing and the reintegration of its victims, and to eradicate its root causes,” he stated, adding “our response must be commensurate to this great evil of our time.”

[Full statement available here](#)

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## **[At General Assembly, Mozambique calls for reformed UN, greater aid from wealthy States](#)**

25 September 2017 – Only a reformed United Nations and a greater commitment from wealthier countries to help the developing world can confront “the

overwhelming challenges of our times,” Mozambique told the General Assembly on the last day of its 72nd annual general debate today.

“We live in a world confronted by challenges that demand global responses,” Delegation Chairman Antonio Gumande said. “The relevance of the UN, the lodestar of multilateralism, over the last 72 years of its existence has always rested in its ability to reform and re-invent itself to respond more suitably to the challenges of continuously changing world it serves.”

He warned that “multiple and complex challenges threaten to constrain gains already made in fostering global peace and stability, stall and reverse advances made in fostering social and economic wellbeing, and cause irreversible damages to our planet.

“The experiences we gained and the challenges we faced in the implementation of other globally agreed development goals in the past underline the need for a greater commitment of our development partners to scale-up and honour their assistance and for funding pledges made for climate resilience, mitigation and adaptation, as well as for disaster prevention efforts,” he stressed.

“This support is of paramount importance to mitigate the effects of climate variability whose devastating effects have been laid bare in several Member States of this august body in the last two months,” he said.

[Full statement available here](#)

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## **New Zealand, at General Assembly, urges reformed UN to ‘do better’ to solve global problems**

25 September 2017 – The United Nations is crucial to tackling the plethora of problems confronting the world – from the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea’s (DPRK) nuclear programme to global development and climate change – but it can and must do better, New Zealand told the General Assembly’s 72nd annual general debate today.

“The United Nations is unique in its ability to convene the world in order to tackle problems that require collective action,” the Head of Delegation Craig Hawke said. “Widely recognized rules, buttressed by an effective United Nations, are the best guarantors of our security and our economic well-being, particularly for small States.”

Guarantees are also the best means of ensuring decent treatment and decent conditions for the world’s citizens, thereby reducing conditions that lead to unrest, conflict and misery, he added. “But we all recognize that the United

Nations can do better, and to do so must be more relevant, effective and fit for purpose,” he declared, noting that [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres’s reform agenda provides an opportunity to make this a reality.

“Important work lies ahead for us to reform the development and peace and security pillars. The United Nations needs to invest a much greater proportion of its resources and effort in preventing conflict, rather than focusing primarily on the consequences of conflict,” he concluded, calling for management reform.

“It is our sincere hope that reform can achieve our collective goal of better reflecting the ideals of the UN Charter and, ultimately, ensuring that the UN delivers better outcomes for our generation and those to come.”

[Full statement available here](#)