

Middle East

The year 2015 was marked by the reconstruction of Gaza, continued breakdown in talks between the Israelis and the Palestinians, violence and diplomatic activity. On 2 January the Secretary-General accepted instruments of accession to sixteen multilateral treaties submitted by the State of Palestine. The political and security situation remained tense throughout the year. Apart from a meeting between the Israeli and Palestinian chief negotiators in Amman in late July 2015, there were no direct peace process-related talks between the Israeli and Palestinian leaderships.

In June, the Palestinian Authority and Israel reached an agreement on a new mechanism to allow Palestinians in Gaza access to needed construction material for the reconstruction of fully destroyed homes and for new construction. By December, the temporary Gaza reconstruction mechanism had achieved some success with more than 90 per cent of damaged schools and hospitals repaired. In the absence of progress on intra-Palestinian reconciliation and stronger ceasefire arrangements between Israelis and Palestinians, the situation in Gaza remained precarious.

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) continued to support Gaza reconstruction efforts. Of the \$720 million the Agency estimated to rebuild over 140,000 damaged or destroyed Palestine refugee homes, only \$247 million had been pledged by the end of 2015.

In the West Bank, UNRWA provided basic education to 48,884 children and vocational and technical training to an additional 1,773 students. In the Syrian Arab Republic 44 UNRWA schools continued to operate, down from 118 prior to the crisis, complemented by 55 afternoon-shift schools hosted in Ministry of Education facilities. In total, 45,541 students were accommodated. In Lebanon, UNRWA provided social safety net support to 61,709 poor refugees, as well as access to microcredit initiatives and vocational training opportunities for 1,100 people, while in Jordan UNRWA provided safety net support to 58,937 special hardship cases.

Israeli policies and practices related to settlements continued to be central to most violations of the human rights of Palestinians in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and put pressure on Palestinians to leave their homes and lands.

King Abdullah of Jordan and United States Secretary of State John Kerry organized separate meetings

with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Amman on 13 November where both sides announced firm commitments to maintain the status quo regarding the holy sites.

In Lebanon, the International Support Group worked to help preserve the country's stability and unity by mobilizing international assistance in a range of areas, including to the Lebanese Armed Forces and in support of Government efforts to deal with the exceptional refugee presence as a consequence of the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic. In August, the Security Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) for one year, until 31 August 2016, with no major operational changes.

In 2015, the conflict in Syria entered its fifth year. By the end of the year, 13.5 million Syrians were in need of assistance, as almost half the population had been displaced, either internally or as refugees. The United Nations continued to promote a political solution based on the 2012 Geneva communiqué and Security Council resolution 2254(2015), which noted that the only sustainable solution to the crisis in Syria was through an inclusive and Syrian-led political process that met the legitimate aspirations of the Syrian people. The mandate of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force, established to supervise the observance of the ceasefire between Israel and Syria in the Syrian Golan and to ensure the separation of their forces, was renewed twice in 2015, in June and in December, each time for a six-month period.

Peace process

Diplomatic efforts

An ever widening trust deficit between the Palestinian National Authority and Israel marked the beginning of the year. On 2 January, sixteen Palestinian instruments of accession to 18 international treaties, including the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court were accepted by the Secretary-General in deposit. In retaliation, Israel decided to freeze Palestinian tax revenues, contrary to Israel's obligations under the Paris Protocol of the Oslo Accords. By an agreement on 27 March Israel transferred more than \$470 million in tax revenues collected on behalf of the Palestinian Authority (PA).

Following consultations with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, Egypt opened the Rafah crossing from 13 to 19 June and for three additional days in the last week of June in both directions. Also, in June, the PA and Israel reached an agreement on a new mechanism to allow Palestinians in Gaza access to needed construction material for the reconstruction of fully destroyed homes and for new construction. By December, the temporary Gaza reconstruction mechanism had some success with more than 90 per cent of damaged schools and hospitals repaired.

The Middle East Quartet (Russian Federation, United States, European Union, United Nations) met at the principals level on 8 February in Munich, Germany, to examine ways to reverse the negative trend. It prioritized the urgent resumption of negotiations; regular and direct outreach to the Arab States, and called for the acceleration of reconstruction in Gaza. Through the year, the Quartet envoys consulted with Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, the League of Arab States, the Gulf Cooperation Council and key international partners on how to preserve the two-State solution and establish conditions for the parties to return to meaningful negotiations.

The Security Council discussed the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question, at meetings held on 15 January [S/PV.7360], 18 February [S/PV.7386], 26 March [S/PV.7417], 21 April [S/PV.7430], 27 March [S/PV.7419], 19 May [S/PV.7446], 24 June [S/PV.7470], 23 July [S/PV.7490], 19 August [S/PV.7506], 15 September [S/PV.7521], 16 October [S/PV.7536], 22 October [S/PV.7540], 19 November [S/PV.7562] and 16 December [S/PV.7584].

Occupied Palestinian Territory

Political and security developments

Communications. Israel and Palestine brought to the attention of the Secretary-General, the Presidents of the Security Council and the General Assembly information on attacks or violations of international law committed by either side throughout the year [A/69/711-S/2015/1; A/ES/-10/670-S/2015/4; S/2015/46; A/ES/-10/671-S/2015/68; A/ES/-10/672-S/2015/81; A/ES/-10/673-S/2015/109; S/2015/115; A/ES/-10/674-S/2015/139; A/ES/-10/675-S/2015/149; A/69/830-S/2015/196; A/ES/-10/676-S/2015/213; A/ES/-10/677-S/2015/260; A/ES/-10/678-S/2015/309; A/ES/-10/679-S/2015/327; A/ES/-10/680-S/2015/417; A/ES/-10/681-S/2015/433; S/2015/463; S/2015/466; S/2015/496; A/ES/-10/682-S/2015/505; A/ES/-10/684-S/2015/521; S/2015/552; A/ES/-10/685-S/2015/571; A/ES/-10/686-S/2015/589; S/2015/595; S/2015/597; S/2015/607; A/ES/-10/687-S/2015/616; S/2015/640; A/ES/-10/688-S/2015/649; A/69/1023-S/2015/691; A/ES/-10/689-S/2015/703; A/ES/-10/690-S/2015/707; S/2015/720; S/2015/722; A/ES/-10/691-S/2015/736; S/2015/757; A/ES/-10/692-S/2015/759; A/ES/-10/693-S/2015/769; A/ES/-10/694-S/2015/772; S/2015/773; A/ES/-10/695-S/2015/777;

S/2015/784; A/ES/-10/696-S/2015/790; A/ES/-10/697-S/2015/805; A/ES/-10/698-S/2015/807; A/ES/-10/699-S/2015/827; A/ES/-10/700-S/2015/834; S/2015/839; A/ES/-10/701-S/2015/861; S/2015/872; A/ES/-10/702-S/2015/887; S/2015/893; A/ES/-10/703-S/2015/907; A/ES/-10/704-S/2015/925; A/ES/-10/705-S/2015/948; S/2015/970; A/ES/-10/706-S/2015/989; A/ES/-10/707-S/2015/1023; S/2015/1033].

Appointment. On 30 January [S/2015/88], the Secretary-General informed the Security Council President of his intention to appoint Nikolay Mladenov (Bulgaria) as the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative to the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and the PA, succeeding Robert H. Serry (Netherlands), who would complete his assignment on 31 March 2015. On 3 February [S/2015/89], the Council took note of the Secretary-General's intention.

Security Council consideration. The Security Council was briefed throughout the year on the security and political situation in the Middle East. On 15 January [S/PV.7360], Assistant-Secretary-General for Political Affairs Jens Anders Toyberg-Frandzen reported that the likelihood of resumed talks between the Israelis and Palestinians were very low. In Gaza, the security situation showed signs of serious deterioration.

Meanwhile, violence continued in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem.

On 18 February [S/PV.7386], Under-Secretary-General (USG) for Political Affairs Jeffrey Feltman briefed the Council that the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians continued to threaten further escalation; and if that occurred it may have highly damaging and potentially irreversible consequences for both parties and for the two-State solution.

In February, the Israeli Government announced that, for a second month, it would withhold the transfer of the tax revenues it collected on behalf of the PA in retaliation for the Palestinian accession to the International Criminal Court bringing the total withheld amount to over \$200 million. The Middle East Quartet that met at the principals level on 8 February in Munich prioritized the resumption of negotiations and a strengthening of its engagement to prepare for a revival of the peace process, including through regular and direct outreach to the Arab States. The Quartet also called for the acceleration of reconstruction in Gaza, where more than 75,000 individuals had been cleared to receive construction material for shelter repairs and more than 47,000 had already procured construction material as part of the temporary Gaza reconstruction mechanism. The PA had approved 18 reconstruction projects involving housing, water networks and schools. On 12 February, the United Nations, in partnership with the Government of Palestine, launched the strategic response plan for 2015 to address the humanitarian needs of 1.6 mil-

lion Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank. The plan requested \$705 million, 75 per cent of which was for Gaza.

The Israeli authorities continued to demolish Palestinian structures in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem. As the Secretary-General had repeatedly expressed, settlement activity was illegal under international law and an obstacle to peace; it should be halted and reversed.

On 26 March [S/PV.7417], the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General, Robert Serry, briefed the Council and said that the Israelis and the Palestinians were heading towards an outcome that he could only describe as a one-State reality. Mr. Serry said that in the campaigning leading up to the 17 March general elections in Israel, he was concerned by many of the hard-line statements, raising serious doubts about Israel's commitment to the two-State solution. Israel's withholding of Palestinian tax revenues, amounted to over \$400 million deepening the financial crisis of the PA. In Gaza, an equally destructive financial crisis, related to the lack of progress on civil service reform, continued to escalate tensions.

Mr. Serry welcomed Israel's steps to ease some of its restrictions on the movement of people and goods in the West Bank and Gaza. Settlement planning and activity, however, continued.

On 21 April [S/PV.7430], Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon briefed the Council and stated that the prospect of a two-State solution continued to recede; he urged the incoming Government in Israel to reaffirm Israel's commitment to the two-State solution and to freeze settlement activity. The Secretary-General welcomed the agreement reached in April between the PA and Israel, under which Israel transferred more than \$470 million in revenues collected on behalf of the PA. Seven months since his last visit to Gaza [YUN 2014, p. 518], the Secretary-General stressed that he was concerned by the fragile security situation, the lack of progress on intra-Palestinian reconciliation and the pace of reconstruction. Gaza was facing a crushing financial crisis and its public sector employees remain unpaid. He noted that the temporary Gaza reconstruction mechanism had enabled approximately 70 per cent of households in need of shelter repairs to procure the necessary materials, while 60 of 130 projects funded by the international community and the private sector had been approved by Israel. In the West Bank, clashes between Israeli security forces and Palestinians continued, along with the destruction of Palestinian-owned structures. Both sides had to take more constructive actions, such as Israel's approval of a master plan for building 2,500 housing units and public buildings for Palestinians in East Jerusalem.

On 19 May [S/PV.7446], the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal

Representative of the Secretary-General, Nickolay Mladenov, expressed concern with the advancement of settlement activities in East Jerusalem and the West Bank. On 14 May, tenders were issued for 85 housing units in Givat Ze'ev, south of Ramallah. On 6 May, the District Planning and Building Committee approved permits for 400 new residential units in the settlement of Ramat Shlomo, and, on 27 April, 77 tenders were issued for residential units in two other East Jerusalem settlements.

In a briefing to the Council on 24 June [S/PV.7470], USG for Political Affairs Jeffrey Feltman said that the

Israeli Government's decision on 14 June to reintroduce draft legislation to permit the force-feeding of prisoners on hunger strike under certain conditions would, if approved by the Knesset, contravene international standards.

The demolition of homes and structures in the West Bank continued, and in June 52 structures, including 17 residences, were demolished.

On 23 July [S/PV.7490], the Special Coordinator, Mr. Mladenov, said that the activities of Salafi jihadists and other extremist groups were a cause for concern, not only in Gaza but also in neighbouring Sinai, where there were reports of their active support of militants on the Egyptian side of the border. Mr. Mladenov said that the Secretary-General called upon all actors in Gaza to provide information as to the possible whereabouts and conditions of two Israeli civilians who entered Gaza sometime over the past year and remain unaccounted for, as well as to take prompt action to facilitate their safe return to their families. On 12 July, Israel announced that it would seek to execute demolition orders of structures in the Palestinian village of Susiya. Against that backdrop, intra-Palestinian talks to form a national unity Government had faltered.

Communication. In a 13 August letter [A/69/1009-S/2015/632] to the Secretary-General, Kuwait, in its capacity as Chair of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (oic) Ambassadorial Group in New York, shared the concern of oic over Israel's decision to force-feed Palestinian hunger-striking prisoners, which constituted a flagrant violation of international human rights norms and standards that forbid the force-feeding of detainees.

Security Council consideration (August–October). On 19 August [S/PV.7506] the USG for Political Affairs, Jeffrey Feltman, briefed the Council and reiterated the Secretary-General's strong condemnation of the terrorist arson attack, apparently committed by extremist Jewish settlers, in the occupied West Bank village of Duma on 31 July, which resulted in the death of two members of a Palestinian family and wounded two others. The Secretary-General had welcomed the strong condemnations of the attack by Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and other

Israeli officials, as well as political and religious leaders across the spectrum.

Israel's practice of demolishing homes and structures also continued in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem. Turning to Gaza, Mr. Feltman welcomed some positive developments on reconstruction, particularly under the residential stream of the Gaza reconstruction mechanism.

In his 15 September [S/PV.7521] briefing to the Council, the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Mladenov, voiced concern over the violence and continuing clashes in and around the Old City of Jerusalem. On the morning of 13 September, the Israeli police entered the area outside the Al-Aqsa Mosque in what they said was an operation to head off attempts by extremists to disrupt visits by Jews and non-Muslim tourists. As Palestinian youth sought to barricade themselves in the Mosque, clashes ensued. Also, deeply troubling was the continuing Israeli policy of settlement construction and the demolition of Palestinian-owned structures in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.

In a 16 October [S/PV.7536] briefing to the Council, Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Tayé-Brook Zerihoun, noted another example of the escalating violence when a large group of Palestinians set fire, with no reported injuries, to the compound containing the holy site of Joseph's Tomb in the West Bank city of Nablus.

The United Nations had maintained a consistent position on collective punishment, including house demolitions, that they were counterproductive and contravened international law, and had urged Israel to cease that damaging practice.

On 22 October [S/PV.7540], the Deputy Secretary-General, Jan Eliasson, briefed the Council and said that between 1 and 21 October, 47 Palestinians and 7 Israelis had been killed, and more than 5,000 Palestinians and about 70 Israelis had been injured. Tensions at the holy sites in the Old City of Jerusalem continued; Israel's Prime Minister assured that his country had no intention of changing the historic status quo at the Haram al-Sharif/Temple Mount.

Letter of Secretary-General. In a 21 October letter [S/2015/809] to the Security Council President, the Secretary-General informed that, in reference to the July 2014 letter [YUN 2014, p. 518] from President Mahmoud Abbas who requested that "the territory of the State of Palestine be placed under an international protection system by the United Nations", the UN Secretariat had undertaken an internal review of historical precedents for regimes that had been devised to provide varying forms of protection for areas of territory and their inhabitants. In view of the enquiries that the Secretariat had received and the interest that had been generated, the Secretary-General had

decided to share the review with the Council. The internal review did not propose any particular system or systems of protection for the Occupied Palestinian Territory, but was a summary of a number of historical precedents that was compiled for the purpose of assisting and informing any future work that might take place within the Secretariat on the subject.

Security Council consideration (November–December). On 19 November [S/PV.7562], the Special Coordinator, Mr. Mladenov, in briefing the Council, noted that the epicentre of violence had moved to Hebron, which, like Jerusalem, had holy sites revered by both Muslims and Jews and had been a cause of friction for decades.

In a 16 December [S/PV.7584] briefing to the Council, Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Miroslav Jenča, said that tensions had calmed around the flashpoint of Al-Haram al-Sharif/Temple Mount. In addition, four months after members of a Palestinian family had been murdered in the West Bank village of Duma on 31 July (see above), several arrests had been made by Israeli authorities.

At the same time, demolitions against Palestinian communities in the Jordan valley were carried out by Israeli forces, while in Gaza leaders on both sides continued to ignore the underlying causes perpetuating violence and fuelling extremism on all sides.

Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine

Report of Secretary-General. In a September report [A/70/354-S/2015/677], submitted in response to General Assembly resolution 69/23 [YUN 2014, p. 521] and covering the period from September 2014 to August 2015, the Secretary-General shared the replies received by the parties concerned to the notes verbales he had sent pursuant to that resolution, and presented his observations on the state of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and on international efforts to move the peace process forward.

In a May note, the Secretary-General had sought the positions of Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria, as well as the State of Palestine, receiving replies from Israel and Palestine. Palestine stated that Assembly resolution 69/23 on the peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine continued to receive overwhelming support, calling for Israel's complete withdrawal from the Palestinian territory occupied since June 1967. Israel stated that resolution 69/23, and the numerous one-sided resolutions passed annually and automatically by the General Assembly, only served to undermine the credibility of the United Nations as an impartial agent for the advancement of peace.

The Secretary-General observed that apart from a meeting between the Israeli and Palestinian chief negotiators in Amman in late July 2015, there had been

no direct peace process-related talks between the two leaderships.

He had travelled to Cairo on 12 October 2014 for the International Conference on Palestine: Reconstructing Gaza, hosted by Egypt and supported by Norway. That event garnered \$5.4 billion in pledges from some 50 countries, with \$3.5 billion intended to support Gaza. As at 14 April, the World Bank reported that only 27.5 per cent of those pledges had been disbursed.

A number of incidents occurred during the period under review in which United Nations personnel, premises and operations were affected. In response, an internal board of inquiry to review and investigate ten of those incidents found that seven incidents in which United Nations premises were hit were attributable to Israel. The Board also reviewed three incidents involving weapons found in United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) schools. In two instances, the Board found that Palestinian armed groups might have used UNRWA school premises to launch attacks.

Unemployment in Gaza reached 43 per cent at the end of 2014. Since the establishment of the temporary Gaza reconstruction mechanism, approximately 90,000 households in Gaza had accessed construction material for partially damaged housing). Israel had lifted the eight-year ban on exports from Gaza to Israel and the West Bank, increasing quotas and expanding criteria for the exit of Palestinians from Gaza through the Erez crossing and increasing the capacity of the Kerem Shalom crossing.

Shortly after the beginning of the reporting period, Israel appeared to put on hold settlement planning and tendering in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. The so-called planning freeze was violated in July 2015 by the Government's decision to advance construction and "legalization" of hundreds of units. While settler violence had decreased since 2014, as the result of attacks by settlers two Palestinians were killed and 86 Palestinians, including 22 children, were injured during the reporting period. Meanwhile four Israeli settlers were killed and 96 Israeli settlers were injured by Palestinians. In addition, 441 structures were demolished, causing the displacement of some 632 Palestinians.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION

On 24 November [meeting 64], the General Assembly adopted **resolution 70/15** [draft: A/70/L.13 & Add.1] (**Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine**) by recorded vote (155-7-7) [agenda item 38].

RECORDED VOTE ON RESOLUTION 70/15:

In favour: Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Bru-

nei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Liberia, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Somalia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Against: Canada, Israel, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, Palau, United States.

Abstaining: Australia, Cameroon, Honduras, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, South Sudan, Tonga.

In resolution **70/141** of 17 December (see p. 000), the General Assembly reaffirmed the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, including their right to an independent State of Palestine.

Israeli settlements

The issue of Israeli settlements in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, remained central to the question of the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the peace negotiations. The Quartet road map [YUN 2003, p. 464] and the Joint Understanding [YUN 2007, p. 446] reached at the 2007 Annapolis Conference [ibid., p. 445] committed Israel to dismantle all settlement outposts erected since 2001 and to freeze, consistent with the 2001 report of the Sharm el-Sheikh Fact-Finding Committee (Mitchell Report) [YUN 2001, p. 409], all settlement activity, including "natural growth".

Report of Secretary-General. In response to Assembly resolution 69/92 [YUN 2014, p. 526], which reiterated its demand for the immediate and complete cessation of all Israeli settlement activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem and in the occupied Syrian Golan, the Secretary-General submitted an August report [A/70/351], prepared by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), covering the period from 16 May 2014 to 15 May 2015. The report provided an update on Israeli authorities' decisions and activities aimed at creating or expanding settlements including through retroactive legalization of outposts under Israeli law.

According to an Israeli non-governmental organization (NGO), a record 4,485 tenders were issued from January to December 2014, the highest number in a decade. In a significant and unprecedented positive development in March 2015, 2,200 new homes for Palestinians in Jabal al-Mukabber were approved by the Jerusalem District Planning Committee, and 300 existing homes were retroactively legalized. In parts of the West Bank, Israel's policies and practices to promote tourism and archaeology sites in the areas around Qaryut consolidated settler presence there while excluding Palestinians from the right to participate in and enjoy the area's cultural life and heritage. The creation and consolidation of unauthorized outposts in the "Shiloh corridor" was brought about through violence, intimidation and unlawful activity that had resulted in violations of the rights of Palestinian residents of the area.

The report concluded that Israel had to cease funding and supporting touristic and archaeological projects, often managed by settler organizations; fulfil its obligations under international humanitarian law to cease the transfer of its civilian population into occupied territory and had to freeze and reverse all settlement activity; and implement relevant United Nations resolutions, including Security Council resolutions pertaining to territories occupied since 1967.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION

On 9 December [meeting 70], the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Fourth (Special Political and Decolonization) Committee [A/70/497] adopted **resolution 70/89 (Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the occupied Syrian Golan)** by recorded vote (161-7-8) [agenda item 55].

RECORDED VOTE ON RESOLUTION 70/89:

In favour: Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Bhutan, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kiribati, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia,

Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Against: Canada, Israel, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, Palau, United States.

Abstaining: Australia, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Côte d'Ivoire, Honduras, Paraguay, Togo, Vanuatu.

Jerusalem

Report of Secretary-General. On 31 August [A/70/353], the Secretary-General reported that one Member State—Brazil—had replied to his request for information on steps taken or envisaged to implement Assembly resolutions 69/24 [YUN 2014, p. 528] on Jerusalem. The resolution stressed that a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the question of Jerusalem should take into account the legitimate concerns of both the Palestinian and Israeli sides, and should include internationally guaranteed provisions to ensure the freedom of religion and of conscience of its inhabitants, as well as permanent, free and unhindered access to the holy places by the people of all religions and nationalities.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION

On 24 November [meeting 64], the General Assembly adopted **resolution 70/16** [draft: A/70/L.14 & Add.1] (**Jerusalem**) by recorded vote (153-7-8) [agenda item 37].

RECORDED VOTE ON RESOLUTION 70/16:

In favour: Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Liberia, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Somalia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emir-

ates, United Kingdom, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Against: Canada, Israel, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, Palau, United States.

Abstaining: Australia, Cameroon, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, South Sudan, Togo, Tonga.

Other matters

Israeli practices affecting human rights of Palestinian people

Board of Inquiry. In an April note to the Security Council [S/2015/286], the Secretary General said that he had established a United Nations board of inquiry to review and investigate ten incidents among many more that occurred between 8 July and 26 August 2014 during the course of the conflict in the Gaza Strip and Southern Israel that affected or involved United Nations personnel, premises and operations. The board was tasked to identify any gaps in the Organization's procedures, to take any measures and put in place any arrangements to prevent a recurrence of such incidents, or at least to mitigate their effects.

The Board, headed by Patrick Cammaert (Netherlands), conducted a field visit from 26 November to 13 December 2014 and submitted its report on 5 February 2015. Regarding the seven incidents in which death or injuries occurred at, or damage was done to, United Nations premises, the Secretary-General deplored the fact that at least 44 Palestinians were killed as a result of Israeli actions and at least 227 injured at United Nations premises while they were being used as emergency shelters. United Nations premises were inviolable, and it was a matter of the utmost gravity that those who looked to them for protection and who sought and were granted shelter there had their hopes and trust denied. Concerning the discovery by the United Nations of weaponry on United Nations premises, the Secretary-General expressed dismay that Palestinian militant groups would put United Nations schools at risk by using them to hide their arms. The three schools at which weaponry was found were empty at the time and were not being used as shelters. The fact, however, that they were used by those involved in the fighting to store their weaponry and, in two cases, probably to fire from was unacceptable.

Special Committee on Israeli Practices. By an October note [A/70/406 & Corr.1], the Secretary-General submitted the forty-seventh report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories (Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices), which was established by Assembly resolution 2443(XXIII) [YUN 1968, p. 555]. In 2015, the Special Committee was composed of three Member States: Sri Lanka (Chair), Malaysia and Senegal. The report covered the period from

5 June 2014 to 10 August 2015 and was submitted pursuant to Assembly resolution 69/90 [YUN 2014, p. 534], by which the Assembly requested the Special Committee, pending complete termination of the Israeli occupation, to continue to investigate Israeli policies and practices in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, especially Israeli violations of the 1949 Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War (Fourth Geneva Convention), and to report to the Secretary-General as soon as possible. The Assembly also requested the Special Committee to continue to investigate the treatment of the thousands of prisoners and detainees, including children and women, in Israeli prisons and detention centres in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem and other Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967.

The Special Committee held its annual consultations with Member States concerned with the implementation of resolution 69/90 in Geneva on 2 August and in Amman (4–8 August). The Special Committee was unable to visit the Gaza Strip through the Rafah crossing owing to heightened insecurity. It was also unable to travel to Syria because of the prevailing security situation in the country; instead, the Special Committee convened meetings with interlocutors who travelled to Amman and heard testimonies on teleconference from witnesses who couldn't travel. The Special Committee was unable to gain access to the Occupied Palestinian Territories within its mandate or consult with the Israeli authorities due to the Government of Israel's practice of non-cooperation.

According to NGOs, an estimated 5,700 Palestinians continued to be held in Israeli detention as at July 2015, including 400 persons under administrative detention, 160 children (22 under 16 years of age), 26 female prisoners and seven members of the Palestinian Legislative Council. In most cases of arrest and detention of minors, the charge was for alleged stone-throwing during demonstrations or clashes with Israeli soldiers.

The Special Committee called upon the General Assembly to adopt measures to address Israel's long record of non-cooperation with the United Nations, particularly regarding the implementation of Assembly and Security Council resolutions; and upon the international community to apply pressure to ensure the lifting of the blockade; and called upon Israel to provide access to the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Gaza, which would enable the Special Committee to meet with victims and families of human rights violations, and with the government officials of Israel and Palestine.

Report of Secretary-General. In response to Assembly resolution 69/93 [YUN 2014, p. 531], the Secretary-General submitted an October report [A/70/421] on Israeli practices affecting the human

rights of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, covering the period 16 May 2014 to 31 May 2015. The report focused on factors that prevented Palestinians from enjoying their human rights; analysed how the blockade of Gaza was undermining reconstruction and recovery efforts; and provided an update on the situation in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.

The humanitarian crisis in Gaza resulting from the hostilities between July and August 2014 compounded an already precarious situation, further undermining the enjoyment by the inhabitants of their economic and social rights, including the rights to housing, water and health. The destruction of water and sanitation facilities and the shelling of the only power plant in Gaza in 2014 had further aggravated the electricity crisis.

The Gaza reconstruction mechanism, a temporary arrangement established under an agreement between the Palestinian and Israeli authorities brokered by the United Nations, was designed to enable the entry into Gaza of what Israel classified as “dual use” materials such as aggregate, metal bars and cement and of heavy machinery. In 2015, Israel expanded the list of items classified as dual use, adding items such as timber, claiming it was used in Gaza for the construction of military tunnels. After a slow start, use of the reconstruction mechanism by stakeholders had increased substantially, but the pace of reconstruction overall remained inadequate, partly due to limited donor funding. At sea, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) enforced a six nautical mile fishing limit along the entire Gaza coast, with a 1.5 nautical mile “no fishing zone” along the maritime boundaries between Gazan waters and Israel in the north and Egypt in the south. The vast majority of recorded incidents at sea had occurred within the six-mile limit.

During the reporting period, Bedouin in the central West Bank—the vast majority of whom were refugees registered with UNRWA—had been under renewed and imminent threat of forcible transfer by the Israeli military, in violation of international law. Impunity for violations committed in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, also remained of concern. During the reporting period, the State of Palestine became party to seven of the core international human rights treaties, the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions and the Convention respecting the Laws and Customs of War on Land.

The Secretary-General called on the the Government of Israel to fully lift the blockade of Gaza and end the collective punishment against the civilian population and ensure sustainable economic recovery and development; and ensure full compliance with the

prohibition of forcible transfer and annul any plans to relocate Bedouin and herder communities without their free and informed consent. The Secretary-General called on the State of Palestine to conduct prompt, thorough, effective, independent and impartial investigations into allegations of unlawful killing, injury or summary executions by security forces and any violations of international humanitarian law by Palestinian actors.

Report of the Special Rapporteur. By a 25 September note [A/70/392], the Secretary-General transmitted to the General Assembly the report by Special Rapporteur Makarim Wibisono on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, submitted in accordance with Human Rights Council resolution 5/1 [YUN 2007, p. 662].

(For information on the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, see p. 000, and on the human rights situation in the territories occupied by Israel, see p. 000).

UN Register of Damage. On 30 June, in accordance with General Assembly resolution ES-10/17 [YUN 2006, p. 529], the Secretary-General submitted to the Assembly a progress report of the Board of the United Nations Register of Damage Caused by the Construction of the Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory [A/ES-10/683] covering the period from 20 June 2014 to 19 June 2015. During that period, the Board held five meetings in Vienna to review 4,844 claims containing category A (agriculture) losses, 526 containing category B (commercial) losses, 176 containing category C (residential) losses and 349 containing category E (access to services) losses.

The Board also addressed and reached decisions on legacy claims and claims by heirs; loss of access to marketplace; theft of property in the Occupied Palestinian Territory between the Green Line and the Wall; rental agreements; road closures; guard towers; demolition of residence; rerouting of the Wall; late arrival of fire brigades; and peddlers.

As at 19 June, the Board had decided to include most or all of the losses set out in 18,138 claim forms and excluded 707 claim forms where none of the losses met the eligibility criteria, bringing the total number of decided claims to 18,845.

The Board expressed its appreciation for the indispensable cooperation extended by the PA and the Palestinian National Committee for the Register of Damage, as well as for the support provided by local governors, mayors and members of village councils on many practical aspects, without which outreach and claim-intake activities could not had been undertaken. The Government of Israel continued to consider that any claims in relation to damage caused by the construction of the wall should be addressed through the existing Israeli mechanism. Nonetheless, the Executive Director of the Register of Damage

continued to maintain constructive contacts with relevant Israeli authorities and, during the reporting period, the Office of the Register of Damage did not experience any problem with access, freedom of movement, security and delivery of needed materials or issuance of required visas by Israel.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION

On 9 December [meeting 70], the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Fourth Committee [A/70/497], adopted **resolution 70/90 (Israeli practices affecting the human rights of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem)** by recorded vote (158-8-10) [agenda item 55].

RECORDED VOTE ON RESOLUTION 70/90:

In favour: Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Bhutan, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kiribati, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Against: Israel.

Abstaining: Cameroon, Canada, Central African Republic, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Honduras, Liberia, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, Palau, Paraguay, Togo, Tonga, United States, Vanuatu.

Work of Special Committee

In response to Assembly resolution 69/90 [YUN 2014, p. 534], the Secretary-General issued an August report on the work of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices [A/70/341]. The Committee collected testimony and information from a number of victims, witnesses, officials and civil society representatives working on documenting and preventing violations of human rights and international humanitarian law in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

The Department of Public Information continued to cover and promote the activities of the Special Committee using a wide spectrum of traditional means of communication and various social media platforms in different languages. News stories appearing on the United Nations News Centre platform were also distributed through Facebook and Twitter, via RSS feeds and by means of the portal's e-mail news subscription. The Department's Meetings Coverage Section also produced eight press releases of the Special Committee's meetings and statements in English and French.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION

On 9 December [meeting 70], the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Fourth Committee [A/70/497], adopted **resolution 70/87 (Work of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories)** by recorded vote (92-9-75) [agenda item 55].

RECORDED VOTE ON RESOLUTION 70/87:

In favour: Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belize, Bhutan, Bolivia, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Chad, Chile, China, Comoros, Congo, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Gabon, Grenada, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kiribati, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libya, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Qatar, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uzbekistan, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Against: Australia, Canada, Israel, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, Palau, Panama, United States.

Abstaining: Albania, Andorra, Argentina, Armenia, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Bulgaria, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Latvia, Liberia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Samoa, San Marino, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tonga, Ukraine, United Kingdom, Uruguay, Vanuatu.

Economic and social situation

In May, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 2014/26 [YUN 2014, p. 537] and Assembly resolution 69/241 [ibid., p. 540], prepared

a report [A/70/82-E/2015/13] on the economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan. The report covered the period from 31 March 2014 to 28 February 2015.

The unemployment rate in the fourth quarter of 2014 stood at 42.8 per cent in the Gaza Strip and at 17.4 per cent in the West Bank (20.5 per cent among refugees). The direct damage incurred during the Israeli offensive in Gaza conflict in July and August 2014 led to more than 20 per cent of Gaza's industrial enterprises and over 4,000 commercial and trade enterprises destroyed or damaged. The total effect of the offensive on the agriculture sector was estimated at between \$450 million and \$550 million. In the West Bank, economic development remained constrained by a multilayered system of movement and access restrictions.

The situation of women in Gaza was particularly problematic, with women suffering from an unemployment rate of 59.3 per cent, reaching as high as 83.3 per cent among women between the ages of 15 and 29. In order to augment household income, many women had been forced to take unprotected, low-paying jobs close to home in the informal and unprotected sectors. During the 2014 offensive in Gaza, up to 71 per cent of the population there became food insecure, as prices of basic foodstuffs soared 40 and 179 per cent. In seven weeks, most Palestinians in Gaza could no longer meet their most basic needs and UNRWA had to effectively support the entire population of the Gaza Strip. Access to reproductive health services had also deteriorated as a result of the protracted blockade and the offensive on Gaza. During the Gaza offensive, 26 schools were completely destroyed and 122 damaged, 83 of which were UNRWA schools. In the occupied Syrian Golan, Syrian farmers had been allowed 200 cubic metres of water for every dunam, a quantity that was considerably lower than the minimum 600 cubic metres needed. Syrian farmers usually received one fourth of the allocation granted to Israeli settlers.

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL ACTION

On 20 July [meeting 50] the Economic and Social Council adopted **resolution 2015/17** [draft: E/2015/L.22] (**Economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan**) by recorded vote (44-2-2) [agenda item 16].

RECORDED VOTE ON RESOLUTION 2015/17:

In favour: Albania, Argentina, Austria, Bangladesh, Benin, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, China, Colombia, Congo, Croatia,

Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, India, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mauritania, Mauritius, Nepal, Pakistan, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, San Marino, Serbia, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland, Tunisia, Turkmenistan, Uganda, United Kingdom, Zimbabwe.

Against: Australia, United States.

Abstaining: Honduras, Panama.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION

On 22 December [meeting 81], the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Second (Economic and Financial) Committee [A/70/480], adopted **resolution 70/225 (Permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources)** by recorded vote (164-5-10) [agenda item 64].

RECORDED VOTE ON RESOLUTION 70/225:

In favour: Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Central African Republic, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Against: Canada, Israel, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, United States.

Abstaining: Australia, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Honduras, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, South Sudan, Togo, Tonga, Vanuatu.

Fourth Geneva Convention

The applicability of the 1949 Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War (Fourth Geneva Convention) to the Israeli-occupied territories was reaffirmed during the year by the General Assembly and several other United Nations bodies, including the Special Committee on Israeli Practices.

Report of Secretary General. The Secretary-General, in a July report [A/70/133], informed the General Assembly that Israel had not replied to his 27 March request for information on steps taken or envisaged to implement resolution 69/91 [YUN 2014, p. 542], which demanded that Israel accept the de jure applicability of the Fourth Geneva Convention to the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and other Arab territories occupied since 1967, and that it comply scrupulously with its provisions. The Secretary-General had also drawn the attention of the High Contracting Parties to the Convention, including Palestine, to paragraph 3 of the same resolution, which called on them to ensure Israel's respect for the Convention's provisions. Six Member States—Brazil, Cuba, Ireland, Turkey, Qatar and Switzerland—had replied to his request for information on steps taken to implement the resolution.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION

On 9 December [meeting 70], the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Fourth Committee [A/70/497], adopted **resolution 70/88 (Applicability of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, to the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the other occupied Arab territories)** by recorded vote (163-6-8) [agenda item 55].

RECORDED VOTE ON RESOLUTION 70/88:

In favour: Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Bhutan, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kiribati, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Against: Canada, Israel, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Palau, United States.

Abstaining: Australia, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, Paraguay, Togo, Vanuatu.

Issues related to Palestine

General aspects

In 2015, the General Assembly, the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (Committee on Palestinian Rights) and other UN bodies addressed issues related to Palestine, and several UN programmes and agencies continued to provide assistance to the Palestinian people.

Committee on Palestinian Rights

The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (Committee on Palestinian Rights) was established by General Assembly resolution 3376(XXX) [YUN 1975, p. 248] with the task of recommending a programme designed to enable the Palestinian people to exercise their inalienable rights. In 2015, the Committee was composed of 26 Member States and had 20 Member States as observers, in addition to the State of Palestine, the African Union, the League of Arab States and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation.

Committee report. In response to Assembly resolution 69/20 [YUN 2014, p. 544], the Committee submitted its annual report [A/70/35] covering the period from 7 October 2014 to 6 October 2015. During the reporting period, the activities of the Committee and its Bureau focused on efforts by the United Nations and the international community to support reconstruction of the Gaza Strip following the Israeli military operations in July and August 2014, which caused widespread destruction and physical and human devastation; and the submission by the State of Palestine of documents to accede to a number of international treaties and conventions, including the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. The Committee monitored the situation and the political developments on the ground, implemented its programme of international meetings and conferences and held consultations with representatives of Governments, national parliaments and interparliamentary organizations, as well as civil society. In its continued support to revitalize the peace negotiations, the Committee aligned itself with the view that the paradigm of bilateral negotiations, which after more than two decades had not yielded any success, had to be revised. There was a need to obtain a firm commitment from Israel with regard to the two-State solution on the basis of the pre-1967 borders and in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION

On 24 November [meeting 64], the General Assembly adopted **resolution 70/12** [draft: A/70/L.10 & Add.1] (**Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People**) by recorded vote (102-8-57) [agenda item 38].

RECORDED VOTE ON RESOLUTION 70/12:

In favour: Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Chad, Chile, China, Congo, Costa Rica, Cuba, Cyprus, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Fiji, Gabon, Gambia, Grenada, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Jamaica, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Libya, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Qatar, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Somalia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Against: Australia, Canada, Israel, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, Palau, United States.

Abstaining: Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Cameroon, Colombia, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Honduras, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liberia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Samoa, San Marino, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Sudan, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Tonga, Ukraine, United Kingdom.

Division for Palestinian Rights

The Division for Palestinian Rights in the UN Department of Political Affairs, in cooperation with relevant technical and library services of the Secretariat, continued to administer, maintain, expand and develop the United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine and the "Question of Palestine" website on the UN home page. That included the ongoing maintenance and upgrading of the technical components of the system and involved the expansion of the document collection to include relevant new and old United Nations and other documents. Through its Facebook and YouTube pages, as well as Twitter feeds, the Division disseminated information about the work of the Committee on Palestinian Rights, and the United Nations as a whole, on the question of Palestine; and continued to publish a periodic online bulletin on civil society initiatives. Furthermore, the Division carried out research and monitoring activities; conducted the annual training programme for four government staff of the State of

Palestine between September and November; and organized the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People (29 November). The Committee on Palestinian Rights, in its annual report [A/70/35], requested the Division to continue its work.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION

On 24 November [meeting 64], the General Assembly adopted **resolution 70/13** [draft: A/70/L.11 & Add.1] (**Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat**) by recorded vote (99-8-59) [agenda item 38].

RECORDED VOTE ON RESOLUTION 70/13:

In favour: Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Chad, Chile, China, Congo, Costa Rica, Cuba, Cyprus, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Fiji, Gabon, Gambia, Grenada, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Jamaica, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Libya, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Philippines, Qatar, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Somalia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Against: Australia, Canada, Israel, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, Palau, United States.

Abstaining: Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Cameroon, Colombia, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Honduras, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liberia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Samoa, San Marino, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Sudan, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Tonga, Ukraine, United Kingdom.

Special information programme

As requested by Assembly resolution 69/22 [YUN 2014, p. 547], the Department of Public Information continued its special information programme on the question of Palestine during the reporting period from 7 October 2014 to 6 October 2015.

The Department organized the international media seminar on peace in Astana, Kazakhstan (26 and 27 May 2015); it also organized the five-week annual training programme for Palestinian journalists (New York and Washington, D.C., 3 November to 5 December 2014).

At UN Headquarters in New York, the Department, in conjunction with UNRWA and the Division for Palestinian Rights, arranged for the

display of the “Long Journey” exhibit as part of the commemoration of Solidarity Day, from November 2014 to January 2015. The question of Palestine, the International Day and the Year of Solidarity were all promoted widely on the multilingual United Nations website, through United Nations social media accounts managed by the Department and through the Department’s traditional media platforms, including United Nations Radio, United Nations Television and the United Nations News Centre.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION

On 24 November [meeting 64], the General Assembly adopted **resolution 70/14** [draft: A/70/L.12 & Add.1] (**Special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat**) by recorded vote (155-7-7) [agenda item 38].

RECORDED VOTE ON RESOLUTION 70/14:

In favour: Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Liberia, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Somalia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Against: Australia, Canada, Israel, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Palau, United States.

Abstaining: Cameroon, Honduras, Nauru, Paraguay, South Sudan, Togo, Tonga.

Assistance to Palestinians

UN activities

In response to General Assembly resolution 69/242 [YUN 2014, p. 550], the Secretary General submitted a report covering the period from May 2014 to March 2015 [A/70/76-E/2015/57], through the Economic and

Social Council, on the implementation of assistance to the Palestinians.

During the reporting period, the Palestinian Government continued to implement the Palestinian National Development Plan 2014-2016: State-building to Sovereignty. In support of those efforts, the United Nations continued to implement the United Nations Development Assistance Framework for 2014-2016. The financial resources required for the assistance provided through the Framework were some \$1.2 billion.

The United Nations responded to humanitarian and development challenges in the context of the occupation, but placed particular focus on providing humanitarian assistance during and after the conflict in Gaza between 8 July and 26 August and support to the Palestinian Government. The United Nations also brokered a temporary agreement between Israel and Palestine to enable the entry, use and monitoring of “dual-use” material into Gaza to allow reconstruction and the rehabilitation of damaged facilities.

The 2015 Strategic Response Plan sought \$705 million to meet the most urgent humanitarian needs by enhancing the protective environment and tackling the food insecurity of the most vulnerable groups throughout the occupied Palestinian territory. To complement that programming and respond to the governance, recovery, reconstruction and structural development needs that had been compounded by the conflict in Gaza, the United Nations Support Plan for the Transformation of the Gaza Strip 2014-2016, detailed the contribution of the United Nations to the Palestinian National Early Recovery and Reconstruction Plan for Gaza for 2014-2017 and requested \$2.1 billion. Meanwhile, through the 2014 Strategic Response Plan, the United Nations and its partners continued to coordinate and deliver humanitarian and protection assistance, including food assistance, to 1.9 million vulnerable Palestinians, in particular in Gaza.

Between 1 May 2014 and 28 February 2015, 2,295 Palestinians were killed (2,245 in Gaza, including some 1,500 civilians; 50 civilians in the West Bank; overall, 569 children and 297 women) and 16,506 injured (11,233 in Gaza, including 3,436 children and 3,540 women, and 5,273 in the West Bank, including 1,011 children and 100 women) by the Israeli security forces. The vast majority of those deaths and injuries (2,219 deaths and 10,500 injuries) were a result of the conflict in Gaza. During the reporting period, 85 Israelis (5 civilians as a result of the conflict in Gaza and 12 civilians in the West Bank) were killed.

In addition, the conflict caused unprecedented displacement, with up to 500,000 Palestinians forced to flee their homes at the height of the Gaza conflict. Some 293,000 sought shelter in 85 UNRWA schools serving as designated emergency shelters. At the time

of the report, UNRWA was continuing to provide shelter and basic services to almost 10,000 internally displaced persons living in 14 UNRWA-run collective centres. An estimated 100,000 homes in Gaza were severely destroyed or damaged and severe damage was caused to public infrastructure, including the sole power plant in Gaza and critical water and sanitation infrastructure.

During the reporting period, including during the Gaza conflict, the United Nations continued to coordinate and deliver humanitarian assistance, including food assistance, to more than 1 million people, water and sanitation assistance to more than 1.5 million people and health and nutrition services to some 2.5 million people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

Nine United Nations agencies continued to support the “Education for All” package, which included supporting the Palestinian Government in the opening of 47 preschool classrooms (33 in the West Bank and 14 in Gaza) and implementing the new strategy on early childhood development. In Gaza, 86.5 per cent of the 252 UNRWA schools operated on a double- or triple-shift system. This was an increase from 71 per cent in 2013 because of a continuously growing population and using several UNRWA school buildings as shelters for 10,000 internally displaced persons.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) targeted around 3,500 families across the West Bank and Gaza and focused on income-generating activities in microenterprise and small enterprise development, housing, education, health and rehabilitation. The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), through 62 women’s centres, focused on job opportunities in food processing and marketing, which had directly benefited 761 women workers, with over 43,400 women benefitting from the overall services provided at the centres.

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) had provided intensive training to over 1,000 farmers on integrated pest management and global agricultural practices certification. A total of 1,400 people in Area C had benefited from the rehabilitation of wells irrigating 7,250 dunums of agricultural land efficiently. FAO also rehabilitated five wells, benefiting 1,400 persons, and UNDP rehabilitated another 10, benefiting 300 new farms in highly marginalized areas; it also constructed 36 kilometers of agricultural access roads and 120 water cisterns to enable supplementary irrigation.

UN-Women provided capacity-building activities for Palestinian civil police in family protection units to respond to cases of violence against women with a view to safeguarding rights and due process. It continued to support the Mehwar Centre for the Protection and Empowerment of Women and Families in the

West Bank, which provided legal advisory, consultation and representation services.

At the request of the Palestinian Government, the United Nations, the World Bank and the European Union embarked on a detailed needs assessment to provide a comprehensive assessment of the damages, losses and recovery needs in the governance, productive, infrastructure and social sectors, following the escalation of hostilities in Gaza, to inform recovery planning and prioritization of interventions.

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) continued to work with the Palestinian authorities, the Independent Commission for Human Rights and civil society to ensure that the commitments set forth in the Palestinian National Development Plan for 2014–2016: State-building to Sovereignty, were implemented in accordance with the new legal commitments stemming from the Government’s accession to various human rights treaties. The World Food Programme supported the Civil Defence in building capacity in the area of emergency preparedness and disaster risk reduction and the United Nations Office for Project Services had continued to support the Palestinian civil police, the national security forces, the Presidential Guard and other security services through training, equipment and information management. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), building upon their previous collaboration, continued to strengthen the institutional and functional capacity of the Palestinian Shippers’ Council.

Of the \$5.4 billion pledged at the Cairo International Conference on Palestine: Reconstructing Gaza [YUN 2014, p. 515], some 23 per cent had been disbursed. Of the \$705 million requested through the 2015 Strategic Response Plan, 21 per cent had been raised. United Nations agencies sought \$1.2 billion to support development programming in the context of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, of which 53 per cent had been funded. The UNRWA Emergency Appeal for 2015 sought \$414.4 million to cover the most pressing humanitarian needs of Palestine refugees and it estimated that \$720 million was needed to allow families to repair their homes and to provide ongoing rental subsidies.

On 20 July, by **decision 2015/221**, the Economic and Social Council took note of the Secretary-General’s report on assistance to the Palestinian people.

UNCTAD assistance to Palestinians

At its sixty-second session (Geneva, 14–25 September) [TD/B/62/11], the UNCTAD Trade and Development Board considered a secretariat report [TD/B/62/3] on assistance to the Palestinian people and developments in the economy of the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

The Israeli military operation in the Gaza Strip in July and August 2014, the third conflict with

full-scale military operation in six years, sent the Palestinian economy into its first recession since 2006. Given 5 per cent GDP growth in the West Bank and a drop of 15 per cent in Gaza's GDP, the economy of the Occupied Palestinian Territory contracted by 0.4 per cent and GDP per capita further shrank by 3.3 per cent in 2014. Reconstruction efforts in the Gaza Strip were extremely slow relative to the magnitude of devastation, and Gaza's local economy did not have a chance to recover. Socioeconomic conditions were at their lowest point since 1967.

The Palestinian economy was the economy of an occupied territory, and therefore—contrary to the claims of some observers—the efficacy of donor support had been undermined by the occupation, not by the inadequacy of Palestinian National Authority policies or poor donor coordination. The fiscal burden of the humanitarian crises and the occupation-related fiscal losses had diverted donor aid from development to humanitarian interventions and budget support.

UNCTAD had been supporting the Palestinian people through research, advisory services, building international consensus on the needs of the Palestinian economy and implementing technical cooperation projects.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION

On 10 December [meeting 72], the General Assembly adopted **resolution 70/108** [draft: A/70/L.18 & Add.1] (**Assistance to the Palestinian people**) without vote [agenda item 73 (b)].

UNRWA

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) continued to provide education, health, relief and social services, and microfinance to the growing refugee population in all its five fields of operation—the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, Jordan, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic.

Report of Commissioner-General. The Commissioner-General of UNRWA, in his annual report [A/71/13], noted a general deep sense of despair and insecurity that ran through the Palestine refugee community and, confronted with hopelessness and fear, amplified by the unresolved Palestinian refugee question.

In Syria, as the armed conflict entered its sixth year and intensified across multiple front lines, the widespread disregard for civilian lives had continued to result in increasing humanitarian and protection needs. The 560,000 Palestine refugees registered with UNRWA in Syria were among those worst affected, with hundreds of thousands subjected to continued and repeated displacement, and thousands in Yarmouk and Khan al-Shih exposed to active conflict and violence, in con-

ditions of unimaginable suffering. Despite the substantial burden placed on Jordan and Lebanon, those two countries had been generous in offering sanctuary to more than one million civilians fleeing Syria.

In Gaza, as a result of the nine-year Israeli blockade, almost the entire population was dependent on aid to meet basic needs, as unemployment remained among the highest in the world. Tens of thousands of homes remained in ruins after the 2014 conflict. In the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, violence and operations by Israeli security forces, access restrictions, forced displacement, demolitions and other rights violations had increased significantly since October 2015.

Regarding the financial situation, in 2015 UNRWA faced the most serious financial crisis in its 66-year-long history, which threatened the opening of some 700 schools in the Middle East. The extraordinary mobilization of partners allowed UNRWA to bridge that gap and sustained the schooling for 500,000 girls and boys.

Communication. In identical letters of 13 April [A/69/867–S/2015/253] addressed to the Secretary-General, the Presidents of the General Assembly and the Security Council, the State of Palestine conveyed its grave concern about the dire situation of Palestine refugees in Syria, in particular the humanitarian catastrophe in the Yarmouk refugee camp.

Special Report of Commissioner-General. UNRWA Commissioner-General Pierre Krähenbühl issued a special report in August [A/70/272] on the financial crisis affecting the work of the Agency.

UNRWA had a deficit of \$101 million in its core budget, the General Fund, which was largely funded by voluntary contributions. The Agency had taken measures to ensure that its essential services in health, relief and sanitation could be delivered until the end of 2015 to protect the public health and safety of Palestine refugee and host communities. As at 3 August 2015, however, UNRWA lacked the funds to open its 685 schools that provided education for some 500,000 Palestine refugee boys and girls in its five geographical fields of operation and its eight vocational training centres that provided training for some 7,000 young people. Unless the shortfall in the core General Fund budget was fully funded by the middle of August, the financial crisis could force the suspension of the landmark education programme of UNRWA.

Without secured funding, the Agency lacked the ability to pay teachers and cover the expenses associated with operating its schools. That would directly affect refugee and host communities in Jordan, Lebanon, the Syria, Gaza and the West Bank (including East Jerusalem) and some 22,000 staff members who would not be paid during the suspension, as well as the extended families whom they support.

More than 97 per cent of the income of UNRWA was voluntarily contributed through three funding por-

tals: the core General Fund, which covered the costs of direct delivery of core services to a population of 5 million registered Palestine refugees; a project budget, through which UNRWA sought to meet infrastructural requirements as well as provide technical assistance and undertake monitoring and evaluation; and emergency appeals to address the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and in Syria, Lebanon and Jordan. The Commissioner-General proposed that an emergency flash appeal be launched by the Secretary-General, calling for the full funding of the Agency's General Fund for 2015; and in order to address the chronic funding issues faced by the Agency for 2016 and beyond, the annual UNRWA pledging conference for 2016 be brought forward to October 2015 to draw attention to the scale and impact of the financial crisis.

Communication. In a 5 August letter [A/69/1000–S/2015/603] to the Secretary-General and the Presidents of the General Assembly and the Security Council, the State of Palestine drew the urgent attention of the international community to the serious financial crisis being experienced by UNRWA.

Advisory Commission. The UNRWA Advisory Commission in its comments on UNRWA's report on its 2015 activities (see above) noted that it was extremely concerned about the increasing volatility in the region and the increasing violence, marginalization and poverty that continued to affect Palestine refugees across the five geographical fields of operations; the level of threats and attacks against UNRWA personnel in conflict areas, in particular threats to and attacks on staff while delivering services; and about the Agency's lack of access to and information on its staff detained by certain authorities.

The Commission noted with alarm the conditions facing Palestine refugees in Syria and recognized the additional strain on neighbouring countries resulting from the arrival of Palestine refugees from Syria—41,000 were in Lebanon at the end of 2015 and 16,400 in Jordan. The Commission was concerned that settler violence had continued with relative impunity, resulting in death, injuries and damages to private Palestinian property, including those of Palestine refugees. The Commission remained concerned about persisting funding shortfalls, in particular for the UNRWA programme budget, which undermined the Agency's efforts to promote human development and meet refugees' needs.

Report of Conciliation Commission. In response to Assembly resolution 69/86 [YUN 2014, p. 554], the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine submitted, in its sixty-ninth report [A/70/319], covering the period from 1 September 2014 to 31 August 2015. The Commission, which was established by Assembly resolution 194(III) [YUN 1948–49, p. 203] to facilitate the repatriation, resettlement and economic and social rehabilitation of the refugees and

payment of compensation, noted that it had nothing to report since its previous submission.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION

On 9 December [meeting 70], the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Fourth Committee [A/70/496], adopted **resolution 70/83 (Assistance to Palestine refugees)** by recorded vote (167-1-11) [agenda item 54].

RECORDED VOTE ON RESOLUTION 70/83:

In favour: Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Bhutan, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kiribati, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Against: Israel.

Abstaining: Cameroon, Canada, Central African Republic, Côte d'Ivoire, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, Palau, Paraguay, United States, Vanuatu.

Financing

In 2014, UNRWA expended \$1.29 billion. Staff costs of \$651.5 million represented 50 per cent of total expenses. The General Fund, restricted funds, Microfinance Department and projects fund recorded deficits of \$30.4 million, \$15.0 million, \$0.5 million and \$18.7 million, respectively.

Education remained the largest programme funded from the general fund, accounting for \$487.5 million, followed by relief and social services at \$426.8 million, support departments at \$226.2 million; health at \$150.7 million; and infrastructure at \$39.7 million.

An addendum to the Commissioner-General's report on the work of UNRWA in 2014 [A/70/5/Add.4]

included the report of the Board of Auditors on the financial statements of UNRWA for the year ended on 31 December 2014.

Working Group. The Working Group on the Financing of UNRWA was established by Assembly resolution 2656(XXV) [YUN 1970, p. 280] to study all aspects of the financing of UNRWA. In 2013, its mandate was renewed until 30 June 2017 by Assembly resolution 68/76 [YUN 2013, p. 412]. In 2015, the Working Group consisted of nine Member States and held five meetings, on 1 July; 15 July; 6 August 2 and 17 September [A/70/379].

The Working Group expressed its serious concern at the large funding gap affecting the Agency's General Fund in 2015, and appreciated the efforts by the international community to close the projected \$101 million deficit facing the Agency, thereby enabling continued education services in 2015 to some 500,000 Palestine refugees. The Working Group encouraged the General Assembly to keep the Agency's programme budget for the biennium 2016–2017 under review to ensure that the Agency was not further affected in its ability to deliver vital services to Palestine refugees.

The Working Group urged all potential donors, whether traditional or non-traditional, to redouble their efforts to fully respond to the Agency's emergency appeal for 2015 and to the appeal for funds for reconstruction needs in Gaza resulting from the hostilities of mid-2014. The Working Group was concerned about the inadequacy of project funding in view of the Agency's urgent need to meet the needs of a growing refugee population; it also deplored the deaths of 14 UNRWA staff in Syria since the beginning of the conflict and the killing of 11 personnel in Gaza during the hostilities of mid-2014.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION

On 9 December [meeting 70], the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Fourth Committee [A/70/496], adopted **resolution 70/85 (Operations of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East)** by recorded vote (169-6-5) [agenda item 54].

RECORDED VOTE ON RESOLUTION 70/85:

In favour: Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Bhutan, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kiribati, Ku-

wait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Swaziland, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Against: Canada, Israel, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Palau, United States.

Abstaining: Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Nauru, Paraguay, Vanuatu.

Displaced persons

Pursuant to Assembly resolution 69/87 [YUN 2014, p. 559] the Secretary-General submitted an August report [A/70/308] on persons displaced as a result of the June 1967 and subsequent hostilities.

On 14 May, the Secretary-General sought information from Member States, including Israel, on action taken or envisaged to implement the provisions of Assembly resolutions 69/87 and 69/89 [YUN 2014, p. 563]. UNRWA was not involved in any arrangements for the return of unregistered refugees or displaced persons. Its information was based on requests by returning registered refugees for the transfer of their UNRWA records from Jordan, Lebanon or Syria to the areas to which they had returned. Based on information obtained from the UNRWA Commissioner-General for the period from 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2015, 300 refugees registered with the Agency had returned to the West Bank and 182 to the Gaza Strip from places outside the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Some of those may not have been displaced in 1967, but may have been displaced in earlier or later years or may be members of the family of a displaced registered refugee. The number of displaced registered refugees known by UNRWA to have returned since June 1967 amounted to approximately 36,110. The Agency was unable to estimate the total number of displaced inhabitants who had returned, although it had kept records of registered refugees.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION

On 9 December [meeting 70], the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Fourth Committee [A/70/496], adopted **resolution 70/84 (Persons displaced as a result of the June 1967 and subsequent hostilities)** by recorded vote (164-7-7) [agenda item 54].

RECORDED VOTE ON RESOLUTION 70/84:

In favour: Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Bhutan, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kiribati, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Against: Canada, Israel, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, Palau, United States.

Abstaining: Cameroon, Central African Republic, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Honduras, Liberia, Paraguay.

Palestinian women

In a report to the 2015 session of the Commission on the Status of Women [E/CN.6/2015/5], submitted in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 2014/1 [YUN 2014, p. 562], the Secretary-General highlighted the situation of Palestinian women between 1 October 2013 and 30 September 2014 and gave an overview of UN assistance in education and training; health; economic empowerment and livelihoods; the rule of law and violence against women; power and decision-making; and institutional development.

The conflict in July and August 2014 in Gaza—the third major one in six years—left an unprecedented level of loss of life and destruction and had a devastating impact on women and their families, further increasing vulnerability and insecurity. Displacement proved especially difficult for women and girls with reports of sexual harassment and gender-based violence in shelters, limited privacy, compromised dignity and reduced access to hygiene. Psychosocial distress levels, already high among the Gaza population, had worsened significantly as a result of the conflict and would require specialized support, specifically for children and women.

In the labour market, women's participation rate remained low at 16 per cent (compared to 65.8 per cent for men) in Gaza and 18 per cent (compared to 71.3 per cent for men) in the West Bank. Women's unemployment rates remained high during the reporting period at 61 per cent in Gaza and 26 per cent in the West Bank. In the Gaza, however, the situation was particularly dire with unemployment rates of 86.3 per cent for young women and 51.8 per cent for young men. Discrimination within the workplace continued to persist: the average daily wage for women represented 81.1 per cent of that for men in 2013, demonstrating an increase of the wage gap of 5.7 percentage points compared to 2012.

In Gaza, the crisis had left health-care centres damaged, without adequate medical equipment and stock, and health-care providers unable to properly attend to the needs of women and girls requiring sexual and reproductive health services. More than 45,000 pregnant women were deprived of access to basic reproductive health services, and around 5,000 deliveries took place in extremely poor conditions. The water and energy situation remained critical. Gaza's only aquifer would become unusable as early as 2016, with the damage irreversible by 2020; 95 per cent of water from the aquifer was unfit for human consumption. For drinking, people either purchased desalinated water from tankers or depended on small desalination units at home.

In terms of education, the situation showed mixed results. The adjusted net enrolment rate in primary education in Palestine was 92.74 per cent in 2012, with a gender parity index of 0.99. In the case of lower secondary education, the enrolment rate was 83.6 per cent and the index 1.06 with girls slightly outnumbering boys. For upper secondary education the rate was 71.55 and the index 1.24 in favour of girls. Prior to the crisis, Gaza faced a shortage of almost 200 schools and two-thirds of schools were operating on a double shift basis. The hostilities were expected to magnify the shortage of classrooms as roughly 258 schools (including at least 75 UNRWA schools) sustained damage and some schools were completely destroyed.

While women continued to participate in a range of roles in political life, they remained underrepresented in formal decision-making bodies. As at September 2014, women held only three out of a total of 17 ministerial level posts in the Palestinian Government. In the justice sector, women only accounted for 15 per cent of judges, 16 per cent of prosecutors and 21 per cent of lawyers, with some drops registered from the previous year when figures were 15, 19.5 and 32.5 per cent, respectively.

In terms of rule of law, the existing legal frameworks contained laws that were outdated and discriminated against women, particularly in matters of divorce and child custody. Nineteen cases of femicide were reported between January and September 2014, compared to 28

cases for the whole year of 2013. The number of cases, however, was most likely underreported.

In May 2014, the Palestinian President issued a decree that amended articles of the Penal Code by removing provisions for leniency with regard to murder in the name of so-called family honour. The Palestinian Cabinet approved the National Referral System for Women Victims of Violence (Takamol) in 2014 and the Office of the Attorney-General appointed 15 trained prosecutors to investigate violence against women cases.

The United Nations continued its efforts to respond to the range of development and humanitarian challenges. Priorities for the United Nations support to the Palestinian people were outlined in a set of key documents, including the United Nations Development Assistance Framework for the State of Palestine 2014-2016, which was aligned with the Palestinian National Development Plan 2014-2016, and the 2014 Strategic Response Plan for the occupied Palestinian territory, which outlined the humanitarian programming.

The Secretary-General noted that many observations from previous reports still stood. Restrictions on movement and access, increased settlement expansion and settler violence, demolitions of Palestinian infrastructure and displacement, the fragmentation of the territory and the closure of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, particularly the Gaza Strip, continued to had a negative gender-differentiated impact on the lives of Palestinian women and their families. He also observed that the engagement of Palestinian and Israeli women in the peace process and talks had to be supported in accordance with Security Council resolutions 1325(2000) [YUN 2000, p. 1113] and 2122(2013) [YUN 2013, p. 1109] on women, peace and security.

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL ACTION

On 10 June [meeting 36], the Economic and Social Council, on the recommendation of the Commission on the Status of Women [E/2015/27], adopted **resolution 2015/13 (Situation of and assistance to Palestinian women)** by recorded vote (16-2-20) [agenda item 19 (a)].

RECORDED VOTE ON RESOLUTION 2015/13:

In favour: Argentina, Bangladesh, Brazil, Burkina Faso, China, Guatemala, India, Kuwait, Mauritania, Mauritius, Nepal, Russian Federation, South Africa, Sudan, Uganda, Zimbabwe

Against: Australia, United States.

Abstaining: Albania, Austria, Croatia, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Honduras, Italy, Japan, Pakistan, Portugal, Republic of Korea, San Marino, Serbia, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom.

Property rights

In response to Assembly resolution 69/89 [YUN 2014, p. 563], the Secretary-General submitted an

August report [A/70/340] on Palestine refugees' properties and their revenues. Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Japan, Pakistan and the Republic of Korea had replied to his request for information from Member States on action taken or envisaged in relation to paragraph 4 of resolution 69/86 [YUN 2014, p. 554], paragraph 4 of resolution 69/87 [ibid. p. 559] and paragraphs 26 and 27 of resolution 69/88 [ibid. p. 556]. No information had been received from Member States regarding the implementation of resolution 69/89.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION

On 9 December [meeting 70], the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Fourth Committee [A/70/496], adopted **resolution 70/86 (Palestine refugees' properties and their revenues)** by recorded vote (167-7-4) [agenda item 54].

RECORDED VOTE ON RESOLUTION 70/86:

In favour: Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Bhutan, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kiribati, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Swaziland, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Against: Canada, Israel, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, Palau, United States.

Abstaining: Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Paraguay, Vanuatu.

Lebanon

By the end of 2015, Lebanon had been without a president for eighteen months. Thirty parliamentary sessions to elect a president had been inquorate owing to the continued boycott by Hizbullah and the

Free Patriotic Movement. On 30 September, the UN Secretary-General convened and chaired a ministerial meeting of the International Support Group for Lebanon in New York in the presence of Lebanese Prime Minister Tammam Salam. The participants expressed concern over the increasing difficulties faced by the Government and Parliament in taking important decisions, which limited the impact of international support to the country.

In addition, Lebanon continued to host the largest number of Syrian refugees per capita in the world with 1,078,338 registered refugees by the end of September.

Violations of Lebanese sovereignty and territorial integrity had continued along the country's eastern borders as a direct result of the conflict in Syria. No progress was made towards the delineation of the Lebanese-Syrian border, as called for in Security Council resolutions 1680(2006) [YUN 2006, p. 571] and 1701(2006) [ibid., p. 583]. The delineation of the border was crucial to extend the authority of the Government of Lebanon throughout all Lebanese territory and to enable the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) to secure borders. Further, there had been no progress on the issue of the Shab'a Farms, the disputed agricultural area where Lebanon, Syria and Israel converged.

The situation along the Blue Line and in the area of operations of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) remained relatively calm. Both parties continued to work with UNIFIL through the established liaison and coordination arrangements even as Israeli violations of Lebanese airspace continued on a daily basis. Israel also continued to occupy northern Ghajar and an adjacent area north of the Blue Line, in violation of Security Council resolutions 1559(2004) [YUN 2004, p. 506] and 1701(2006) and of Lebanese sovereignty.

During the year, LAF and Lebanese security services worked together to maintain security in the country and arrested suspects alleged to have been involved in acts of terrorism or attacks against LAF. By year's end, efforts to release the 26 soldiers and security personnel taken hostage by the Nusra Front and Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) in Aarsal in August 2014 continued, but had not yet resulted in their release. No tangible progress had been made towards the disbanding and disarming of Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias, which lay at the heart of the sovereignty and political independence of Lebanon.

In September, the first session of a parliamentary dialogue focussing on the issue of the vacuum in the Presidency and involving leaders of all political factions and co-chaired by Prime Minister Salam and Speaker of Parliament Nabih Berri was held at the Speaker's initiative. Dialogue also continued between the Future Movement—former Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri's party, led after his death by his son Saad Hariri—and Hizbullah under Speaker Nabih Berri's

auspices, contributing to calming of tensions between the Sunni and Shia communities.

The Special Tribunal for Lebanon continued to present evidence at trial of the persons accused in connection with the 2005 killing of former Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri [YUN 2005, p. 551].

Political and security developments

Security Council consideration (January–March). The Security Council considered the situation in Lebanon, UNIFIL and the implementation of Council resolutions 1559(2004), 1680(2006) and 1701(2006) in meetings held throughout the year.

On 15 January [S/PV.7360], in a briefing to the Council, Assistant-Secretary-General ad interim for Political Affairs Jens Anders Toyberg-Frandzen said that two rounds of talks, facilitated by Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri, had taken place between the Future Movement and Hizbullah, aimed at calming sectarian tensions and resolve the deadlock over the election of a new president for the country.

New procedures were formally introduced at entry points on the Lebanese border with Syria, which, as a consequence, restricted the entry of refugees, except for extreme humanitarian cases.

In an 18 February [S/PV.7386] briefing, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs Jeffrey Feltman noted that the border with Syria remained impacted by security incidents and cross-border fighting. LAF shelled positions of armed militants in the Bekaa outskirts of Aarsal, Baalbeck and Al-Qaa. Politically, the dialogue between the Future Movement and Hizbullah had led to consensus on security issues and steps to lower sectarian tensions. Meetings between the leaders of Lebanon's major Christian parties continued, but without success on the presidential stalemate.

SECURITY COUNCIL ACTION

On 19 March [meeting 7409], following consultations among Security Council members, the President made statement **S/PRST/2015/7** on behalf of the Council.

Security Council consideration (May–December). On 19 May [S/PV.7446], Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General Nickolay Mladenov said that Lebanon had been without a president for one year as at 25 May. The country had 1.2 million registered Syrian refugees, forming the highest per capita concentration of refugees in the world, while the Lebanese-Syrian border remained impacted by incidents and infiltration attempts by armed extremist groups. On 20 April, Lebanon received its first shipment of military equipment from France, financed by a \$3 billion grant from Saudi Arabia.

On 24 June [S/PV.7470], Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs Feltman informed the Council that six months after the launch of the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan, the United Nations had urged donors to fulfil existing pledges to assist the 1.2 million registered refugees and Lebanese host communities. Along Lebanon's eastern border with Syria, Hizbullah had reportedly seized a number of positions from armed extremist groups, including ISIL and the Al-Nusra Front, in the region of Qalamoun up to the outskirts of the town of Aarsal. LAF had been deployed in and around Aarsal to prevent the fighting from reaching the town. On 19 August [S/PV.7506], Mr. Feltman again informed the Council that the situation along the Blue Line and in the UNIFIL area of operations had remained calm, despite Israeli violations of Lebanese air space on an almost daily basis.

On 15 September [S/PV.7521], the Special Coordinator, Mr. Mladenov, told the Council that the United Nations welcomed the launch of a political leaders' dialogue on 9 September to address key issues, including the presidency.

In his 16 December [S/PV.7584] briefing to the Council, Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs Miroslav Jenča noted that the release of members of LAF and Lebanese security services held hostage by the Al-Nusra Front since August 2014 was a welcome development and hoped for the speedy release of the remaining hostages held by ISIL.

Communication. In a 19 May letter [S/2015/353] to the Secretary-General and the Security Council President, Iran drew attention to the provocative and aggressive statement made by the Defence Minister of Israel, Moshe Yaalon, on 5 May, at the Shurat Ha-Din Law of War Conference in Jerusalem, in which he threatened to use nuclear bombs against Iran and to continue killing civilians, including women and children, in Gaza and Lebanon.

In **resolution 70/194** of 22 December (see p. 000), the General Assembly reiterated its request to Israel to assume responsibility for compensation to Lebanon and other countries affected by the oil slick on Lebanese and Syrian shores caused by Israeli military action in 2006 [YUN 2006, p. 1215].

Implementation of resolution 1559(2004)

The Secretary-General submitted his twenty-first and twenty-second semi-annual reports on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1559(2004) [YUN 2004, p. 506], which called for strict respect of the sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity and political independence of Lebanon under the sole and exclusive authority of the Government, the withdrawal of all remaining foreign forces from Lebanon, and the disbanding and disarmament of all Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias.

Reports of Secretary-General (April and October). In April [S/2015/258], the Secretary-General, in his twenty-first semi-annual report, remarked that the conflict in Syria and its corresponding impact on Lebanon continued to limit progress in the implementation of the outstanding provisions of resolution 1559(2004) and other resolutions pertaining to Lebanon. On 19 March, the Security Council adopted a presidential statement (see p.000) in which, among other things, expressed concern at violations of Lebanon's sovereignty, the stalemate in the election of Lebanon's President, the impact of the conflict in the Syria on Lebanon's security and stability, and condemned acts of terrorism that had taken place in Lebanon.

The delineation of the Syrian-Lebanese border, which was strongly encouraged by the Council in its resolution 1680(2006), remained pending, while Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias along the border continued to pose a threat to the stability of the country and the region. There were at least 45 cross-border shooting incidents, seven incidents of cross-border shelling and 16 rocket attacks from the Syrian side of the border, including air raids by the Syrian Government in violation of Lebanese sovereignty and territorial integrity. The continued occupation by Israel of the northern part of the village of Ghajar and an adjacent area north of the Blue Line stood in violation of the sovereignty of Lebanon and resolutions 1559(2004) and 1701(2006); there was also no progress on the Shab'a Farms issue with neither Syria nor Israel had yet responded with regard to the provisional definition of the area contained in the Secretary-General's report in 2007 [YUN 2007, p. 488]. Israel also continued to make almost daily overflights over Lebanon in violation of Lebanese sovereignty.

While several groups across the political spectrum in Lebanon possessed weapons outside government control, the armed component of Hizbullah was the most significant and most heavily armed Lebanese militia in the country. The maintenance of arms by Hizbullah and other groups continued to pose a serious challenge to the State's ability to exercise full sovereignty and authority over its territory.

The situation of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon and the limited resources available to UNRWA to assist them remained a concern, particularly with the influx of 45,000 Palestinian refugees from Syria who had fled the violence there. Once again, no sessions of the National Dialogue were held during the reporting period—another tangible effect of the continued vacuum in the presidency.

In October, the Secretary-General submitted his twenty-second semi-annual report [S/2015/764] on the implementation of resolution 1559(2004).

The presidency of Lebanon had been vacant for over 16 months and while Parliament had been called

into session 28 occasions to elect a president, owing to the lack of quorum due to the boycott of the sessions by the Free Patriotic Movement and Hizbullah, the presidency remained vacant. The delineation of the Lebanese-Syrian border encouraged by Security Council resolution 1680(2006) remained pending; while the existence and activities of Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias along the border continued to pose a threat to the stability of Lebanon and the region. In August, the seventeenth dialogue between the Future Movement and Hizbullah was held and, although no solutions to various political issues had emerged from the talks, the continuation of the dialogue had contributed to a reduction of tensions between various groups in the country. There were at least 96 cross-border shooting incidents, nine incidents of cross-border-shelling, three rocket attacks from the Syrian side of the border and eight attempted incursions by militants, including air raids by the Syrian Government in violation of Lebanese sovereignty and territorial integrity. Israel continued its occupation of the northern part of the village of Ghajar and an adjacent area north of the Blue Line in violation of the sovereignty of Lebanon and resolutions 1559(2004) and 1701(2006); there was also no progress on the issue of the Shab'a Farms area and neither Syria nor Israel had yet responded to the provisional definition of the area contained in report of the Secretary-General in 2007 [YUN 2007, p. 488]. Israel's unmanned aerial vehicles and fixed-wing aircraft continued to make almost daily overflights over Lebanon in violation of Lebanese sovereignty.

While the Secretary-General repeatedly expressed deep concern to Lebanese leaders about the serious risks that armed groups posed to the stability of the country and the region, Hizbullah claimed that its military capacity was separate from that of the Lebanese State and that its arms served as a deterrent against potential aggression from Israel.

The security situation in the Palestinian refugee camps was relatively calm, with the exception of Ein El-Hilweh camp, where two people were killed on 18 June when fighting broke out between two groups—<https://www.unrwa.org/where-we-work/lebanon/ein-el-hilweh-camp>. The presence of Palestinian armed groups outside the camps, however, continued to challenge the ability of Lebanon to exercise full sovereignty over its territory. The Secretary-General noted the work of the Palestinian joint security force in preventing an even graver escalation of conflict on several occasions in Ein El-Hilweh camp and welcomed the renewed commitment of Palestinian leaders to disassociate the Palestinian camps in Lebanon from the violence in Syria and the region more broadly. The Secretary-General called upon Israel to adhere to its obligations under relevant Security Council resolutions: to withdraw its forces from the northern part of the village of Ghajar and an adjacent

area north of the Blue Line; and to cease its overflights of Lebanese airspace. He also strongly encouraged Member States, including regional donors, to fulfil their burden-sharing responsibilities by contributing generously through the crisis response plan and the other mechanisms addressed at the Third International Humanitarian Pledging Conference (Kuwait, 31 March).

Implementation of resolution 1701(2006) and UNIFIL activities

Security Council resolution 1701(2006) [YUN 2006, p. 583], which was approved by both the Lebanese and the Israeli Governments, brought about a ceasefire, effective 14 August 2006, between Israel and Hizbullah after a month-long conflict that caused hundreds of civilian deaths and major infrastructure damage throughout Lebanon. By the same resolution, the Council expanded the mandate of UNIFIL to undertake substantial new tasks, in addition to tasks mandated under resolutions 425(1978) [YUN 1978, p. 312] and 426(1978) [ibid.], and authorized an increase in UNIFIL strength from 2,000 to a maximum of 15,000 troops. The Secretary-General updated the Council on the implementation of resolution 1701(2006) in three periodic reports during the year.

UNIFIL was established by Council resolution 425(1978), following Israel's invasion of Lebanon [YUN 1978, p. 296]. The Force was originally entrusted with confirming the withdrawal of Israeli forces, restoring international peace and security, and assisting Lebanon in regaining authority in the southern part of the country. Following a second invasion in 1982 [YUN 1982, p. 425], the Council, in resolution 511(1982) [ibid., p. 450], authorized the Force to carry out the additional task of providing protection and humanitarian assistance to the local population. After the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Lebanon in 2000 [YUN 2000, p. 465], UNIFIL was reinforced in order to monitor those territories previously occupied by Israel, to prevent the recurrence of fighting and to create conditions for the restoration of Lebanese authority in the area.

Communications. Throughout the year, Lebanon reported on Israeli violations of resolution 1701(2006) by air, land and sea, which resulted in the loss of Lebanese sovereignty and territorial integrity [A/69/715-S/2015/5; A/69/714-S/2015/8; A/69/742-S/2015/50; A/69/754-S/2015/69; A/69/757-S/2015/86; A/69/803-S/2015/150; A/69/852-S/2015/226; A/69/894-S/2015/319; A/69/899-S/2015/328; A/69/933-S/2015/427; A/69/935-S/2015/428; A/69/978-S/2015/513; A/69/980-S/2015/527; A/69/997-S/2015/591; A/69/1015-S/2015/657; A/70/413-S/2015/758; A/70/449-S/2015/828; A/70/577-S/2015/912; A/70/670-S/2015/1051].

Israel, in communications sent during the year, responded to some of Lebanon's letters and reported

on Lebanese violations of Israeli sovereignty [S/2015/45; S/2015/58; S/2015/104; S/2015/304; S/2015/382; S/2015/450; S/2015/514; S/2015/1003; S/2015/1045].

Report of Secretary-General. In February, the Secretary-General submitted his report [S/2015/147] on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1701(2006), covering the period from 6 November 2014 to 27 February 2015.

A serious breach of the cessation of hostilities between Lebanon and Israel occurred on 28 January, when Hizbullah launched several anti-tank guided missiles from the UNIFIL area of operations towards an Israeli military convoy south of the Blue Line in the vicinity of the Shab'a Farms area. Two Israeli soldiers were killed and several other soldiers and civilians injured in the attack. Subsequent fire by Israel Defense Forces (IDF) into Lebanon killed a peacekeeper from UNIFIL; the Council condemned the death. Rockets were then fired from the UNIFIL area of operations and further shelling by IDF ensued before the firing ceased. In spite of the serious violation, Israel and Lebanon reaffirmed their commitment to the implementation of resolution 1701(2006) and to the stability of the Blue Line area.

There had been continued violence in and around the town of Aarsal, including car bombs and attacks on LAF, whose members continued to be held hostage near Aarsal by the Nusra Front and ISIL.

As at 1 February, there were over 1,168,000 Syrian refugees registered with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Lebanon, an increase of approximately 30,000 since November 2014 [YUN 2014, p. 571]. However, there had been an overall decline in the number of refugees being registered as a result of new restrictions on entry into Lebanon.

There had been nineteen sessions of Parliament to elect a new president, but owing to the lack of a quorum resulting from the absence of members of Parliament from the Hizbullah-led 8 March bloc, the parliamentary process had been blocked. Five sessions of dialogue initiated by Speaker Nabih Berri in December 2014 continued between the Future Movement and Hizbullah aimed at measures to lower tensions between the Sunni and Shia communities, and agreeing on a mechanism to elect a new president for Lebanon.

Air violations by Israel, mostly by unmanned aerial vehicles, continued almost daily in violation of resolution 1701(2006) and of Lebanese sovereignty. UNIFIL protested to IDF, but Israeli authorities claimed that the reconnaissance overflights were necessary security measures.

Israel also continued to occupy northern Ghajar and an adjacent area north of the Blue Line, in violation of resolution 1701(2006) and of Lebanese sovereignty. Israel was yet to respond to the UNIFIL proposal regarding security arrangements aimed at

facilitating IDF withdrawal from the area, submitted to both parties on 25 June 2011; LAF had informed UNIFIL of its approval the same year [YUN 2011, p. 463].

UNIFIL generally enjoyed full freedom of movement throughout its area of operations. There were however two serious incidents during the period in which UNIFIL patrols were assaulted by men with unauthorized weapons and UNIFIL patrols encountered four instances of aggressive behaviour. Despite those incidents, UNIFIL relations with the local population remained generally positive and the Force continued to implement and monitor quick-impact projects in support of its mandate, including projects undertaken by troop-contributing countries.

UNIFIL and LAF continued to carry out their daily coordinated activities between the Blue Line and the Litani River.

The UNIFIL Maritime Task Force continued to carry out its dual mandate of conducting maritime interdiction operations and training LAF. The maritime border between Israel and Lebanon was disputed and UNIFIL had no mandate to monitor the line of buoys, which was installed unilaterally by Israel and was not recognized by Lebanon. UNIFIL continued the process of visibly marking the Blue Line. As at 9 February, out of a total of 527 markers assessed for the entire length of the Blue Line, 313 were agreed by both parties. Of the 313 agreed points, UNIFIL had cleared access lanes to 312 points from mines and unexploded ordnance, measured 241 points, constructed 229 points and verified 208 points.

As at 9 February, the total military strength of UNIFIL was 10,171, including 366 women, supported by 59 military observers, including three women, of the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO). The civilian component consisted of 278 international and 607 national staff, including 82 and 156 women, respectively.

The Secretary-General observed that the impact of events in Syria, continued to harm Lebanon's security, political stability and economy.

Communication. In a 16 March letter [S/2015/184] to the Secretary-General and the Security Council President, Syria transmitted its comments on the Secretary-General's February report on the implementation of resolution 1701(2006) (see above) noting it was surprised that the Secretariat persisted in mentioning Syria in its reports, while 1701(2006) was adopted as a result of Israel's military aggression against Lebanon. Accordingly, reports of the Secretariat should conform to the mandate set out in the resolution, instead of deviating from its primary objective.

Reports of Secretary-General (June and November). In June, the Secretary-General submitted his second report of the year [S/2015/475] on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1701(2006), covering the period from 28 February to 26 June 2015.

In May, Lebanon marked one year without a president. Twenty-four parliamentary sessions to elect a new president had been inquorate owing to the continued boycott of the proceedings by members of Hizbullah and of the Free Patriotic Movement from the 8 March bloc. The UNIFIL area of operations remained generally calm and stable despite the tense regional context and following the serious breach of the cessation of hostilities between Lebanon and Israel on 28 January (see above). Fighting between Hizbullah and extremist armed groups from Syria, including the Nusra Front and ISIL, in the border region of Qalamoun, presented an ongoing risk for the safety of the populations living in the Beqaa, particularly the town of Arsal. LAF deployed heavily around the town and clashed with extremist armed groups, including the Nusra Front and ISIL. Security plans for the southern Beqaa valley and southern suburbs of Beirut continued to be implemented and negotiations to secure the safe release of Lebanese soldiers and security personnel seized by the Nusra Front and ISIL in August 2014 continued.

As at 4 June, there were 1,171,929 Syrian refugees registered with UNHCR in Lebanon. In May, Lebanon asked UNHCR to suspend registration of new refugees. Ground violations of the Blue Line, mainly in the areas of Shab'a Farms, and mostly by shepherds and farmers, were consistent with the seasonal pattern of the corresponding period of the previous year. The most serious ground violation of the Blue Line occurred on 10 March, when six men in civilian attire, later identified as part of LAF intelligence branch, crossed south of the Blue Line. IDF fired several warning shots before the men returned north of the Blue Line.

Israeli violations of Lebanese airspace continued almost daily. Israel also continued to occupy northern Ghajar and an adjacent area north of the Blue Line, in violation of resolution 1701(2006) and of Lebanese sovereignty. Israel had yet to respond to the UNIFIL proposal regarding security arrangements aimed at facilitating IDF withdrawal from the area, submitted to both parties on 25 June 2011; LAF had informed UNIFIL of its approval the same year.

UNIFIL relations with the local population remained largely positive; among its various initiatives UNIFIL collaborated with UNDP in organizing training for 50 municipal police officials to further good governance in southern Lebanon. UNIFIL continued to work with the parties to erect visible markers along the Blue Line.

Hizbullah continued to acknowledge publicly that it maintained a substantial and sophisticated military capacity separate from that of the Lebanese State, a capacity Hizbullah said served as a deterrent against potential aggression from Israel. There had been no progress on the dismantling of military bases maintained by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command and Fatah al-Intifada.

The situation in the Palestinian camp of Ein El-Hilweh had been tense during the reporting period following the murder of a Lebanese national affiliated with the Hizbullah Resistance Brigades on 5 April and a series of other assassination attempts.

During the reporting period, there was an increase in cross-border fire from Syria into Lebanon, with 87 incidents of shooting, 10 incidents of shelling and 10 rockets fired into Lebanon, and at least 22 air-strikes by Syrian Government aircraft on Lebanese territory. In April, the first shipment of French arms under the \$3 billion grant from Saudi Arabia arrived in Lebanon.

Conditions for refugees in Lebanon had deteriorated. Women and children constituted 80 per cent of the refugee population. Reports continued of early and forced marriage, and survival sex, particularly among refugee women and girls. Two thirds of the 53,000 children born to Syrian refugee parents since March 2011 did not have a birth certificate.

UNIFIL cleared more than 468 square metres of land contaminated with mines to provide access to Blue Line points during the period from 28 February to 10 June. In addition, 15 anti-personnel mines were located and destroyed. Furthermore, the United Nations Mine Action Service team conducted 12 validation events, 26 quality assurance visits to operational or completed sites, 6 training support events and 113 coordination meetings, briefings and demonstrations. No progress was made in delineating or demarcating the Lebanese-Syrian border, including in areas where it was uncertain or disputed, as called for in Council resolutions 1680(2006) and 1701(2006).

As at 31 May, the total military strength of UNIFIL was 10,463 including 398 women, from 39 troop-contributing countries, supported by 52 UNTSO military observers, including four women. The civilian component consisted of 272 international and 600 national staff, including 82 and 150 women, respectively.

The Secretary-General observed that it was a matter of serious concern that Israel continued to violate Lebanese airspace on an almost daily basis; while he reminded the Lebanese authorities of their primary responsibility to ensure that the area between the Litani River and the Blue Line was free of unauthorized weapons. He remained concerned about the threat posed by violent extremist groups to the Lebanese population living in eastern areas bordering Syria, and condemned the participation of Lebanese citizens in the conflict in Syria in breach of the policy of disassociation adopted by Lebanon and of the principles in the Baabda Declaration [YUN 2012, p. 422].

In November, in his third report of the year [S/2015/837] on the implementation of Council resolution 1701(2006) covering the period from 25 June to 4 November, the Secretary-General noted that the security situation along the Blue Line and in the

area of operations of UNIFIL generally remained calm, without progress, however, on the outstanding obligations of Lebanon and Israel under the resolution and no movement towards a permanent ceasefire. Lebanon had been without a president for more than five hundred days and thirty parliamentary sessions to elect a president had been inoperative owing to the continued boycott by members of Hizbullah and the Free Patriotic Movement.

During the reporting period, most ground violations of the Blue Line were carried out by Lebanese shepherds and farmers, particularly in the Shab'a Farms area (Sector East) and near Rumaysh (Sector West), respectively, and by fishermen or swimmers in the Wazzani River (Sector East). On two occasions, IDF violated the Blue Line and Israeli overflights of Lebanese airspace continued in violation of resolution 1701(2006) and of Lebanese sovereignty. Israel also continued to occupy northern Ghajar and an adjacent area north of the Blue Line and was yet to respond to the UNIFIL proposal regarding security arrangements aimed at facilitating IDF withdrawal from the area, submitted to both parties on 25 June 2011.

As at 30 September, 1,078,338 Syrian refugees were registered in Lebanon, a reduction of some 93,000 refugees since June.

Israel and Lebanon continued to engage with UNIFIL at all levels in a constructive and positive manner, however, there was no progress towards the establishment of a UNIFIL liaison office in Tel Aviv. UNIFIL made progress with the parties in establishing markers along the Blue Line. As at 20 October, the number of Blue Line points agreed upon by the parties for marking remained 313 out of a total of 527. Of the agreed points, UNIFIL demining teams had cleared access to 312, of which 249 had been measured. Additional Blue Line markers were constructed by UNIFIL and verified by the parties during the period, bringing the overall number of markers to 237 constructed and 224 verified.

As at 20 October, the total military strength of UNIFIL was 10,727 from 39 troop-contributing countries, including 423 women, supported by 53 UNTSO military observers, including three women. The civilian component consisted of 257 international and 583 national personnel including 76 and 148 women, respectively.

The Secretary-General remained deeply concerned at the vacuum in the Presidency, which was responsible for weakening the country's institutions and its ability to respond to the substantial challenges. Five years into the Syrian conflict, while the rising poverty rates and increased vulnerability among refugees and host populations was concerning, the Lebanese people had been generous in granting safety and assistance to those seeking it, in full respect of the principle of non-refoulement. The Secretary-General observed that the maintenance of arms by Hizbullah and other

groups outside the control of the State continued to pose a serious threat to Lebanese sovereignty and stability. It remained important that earlier decisions of the National Dialogue were implemented, specifically those relating to the disarmament of non-Lebanese groups and the dismantling of the bases of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command and Fatah al Intifada. The Secretary-General welcomed the continued commitment of the Palestinian leadership to disassociate the Palestinian camps in Lebanon from the violence in the region, while observing that the economic, humanitarian, social and security challenges facing Lebanon were considerable and mounting as each year of the Syrian conflict passed without resolution.

Communication. In notes verbales of 2 April [S/2015/232] and of 15 September [S/2015/721] to the Security Council President, the League of Arab States shared details of resolutions on solidarity with and support for Lebanon and developments in the situation in Syria, Yemen and Libya, it had adopted at its summit meeting (Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, 28–29 March) and at its ministerial meeting (Cairo, 13–14 September).

UNIFIL

Extension of UNIFIL mandate. On 5 August [S/2015/598], the Secretary-General requested the Security Council to consider the renewal for one year the mandate of UNIFIL, which was due to expire on 31 August. On 21 August, by resolution 2236(2015) (see below), the Council extended the mandate for one year, until 31 August 2016.

As at 24 July, unpaid assessed contributions to the Special Account for UNIFIL amounted to \$ 97.1 million and amounts owed to UNIFIL troop-contributors totalled \$26.9 million. Reimbursements of troop and contingent-owned equipment costs had been made for the periods up to 30 April and 31 March, respectively, in accordance with the quarterly payment schedule.

Letter of Secretary-General. In a 26 June letter [S/2015/494] to the President of the Security Council, the Secretary-General informed that in the absence of a demining component within the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus and on the basis of an initial risk assessment made by the United Nations Mine Action Service, he dispatched to Cyprus as a matter of urgency a small unit of Cambodian deminers serving in UNIFIL to conduct a clearance operation, under the framework of Inter-Mission Cooperation. The Council took note of the letter on 30 June [S/2015/495].

SECURITY COUNCIL ACTION

On 21 August [meeting 7509], the Security Council unanimously adopted **resolution 2236(2015)**. The

draft [S/2015/652] was submitted by France, Italy, Jordan, Lithuania, Malaysia, Spain, the United Kingdom and the United States.

Financing

The General Assembly had before it the Secretary-General's performance report on the budget of UNIFIL for the period from 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014 [A/69/606]. Expenditures amounted to \$491.9 million, representing an almost full utilization of resources, leaving an unencumbered balance of \$722,300.

In January [A/69/731], the Secretary-General submitted the budget of UNIFIL for the period from 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016, amounting to \$517,553,200. The budget provided for the deployment of 15,000 military personnel, 275 international staff and 635 national staff.

In April [A/69/839/Add.8], the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) recommended that the unencumbered balance of \$722,300 as well as other income and adjustments in the amount of \$9,302,300 be credited to Member States. It also recommended that the Assembly appropriate \$514,059,300 for the maintenance of UNIFIL for the period from 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016 should the Security Council decide to extend the mandate of UNIFIL beyond 31 August 2015.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION

On 25 June [meeting 97], the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Fifth (Administrative and Budgetary) Committee [A/69/954], adopted **resolution 69/302 (Financing of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon)** by recorded vote (137-3-0) [agenda item 161 (b)].

RECORDED VOTE ON RESOLUTION 69/302:

In favour: Afghanistan, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Liberia, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, San Marino, Senegal, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Tur-

key, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Zimbabwe.

Against: Canada, Israel, United States.

Abstaining: None.

On 23 December (**decision 70/554**), the Assembly decided that the agenda item on UNIFIL financing would remain for consideration during its seventieth (2016) session.

Special Tribunal for Lebanon

The Special Tribunal for Lebanon was established in 2007 [YUN 2007, p. 505] to investigate and prosecute the perpetrators of the terrorist bombing on 14 February 2005 [YUN 2005, p. 551] that resulted in the death of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri and 21 others as well as injuring 226 more in Beirut. It succeeded the United Nations International Independent Investigation Commission, which was established by Security Council resolution 1595(2005) [ibid., p. 553]. The Tribunal consisted of the Chambers, the Office of the Prosecutor, the Defence Office and the Registry. Since 16 January 2014, when the Special Tribunal opened the in absentia trial of the persons accused in connection with the killing of Prime Minister Hariri, 199 witnesses had given evidence and over 1,200 exhibits had been admitted. In December 2014, the Secretary-General extended the mandate of the Tribunal for a period of three years beginning 1 March 2015.

Syrian Arab Republic

In 2015, the conflict in Syria entered its fifth year with over a quarter of a million people killed, and some 6.5 million people internally displaced. Of the 4.5 million people living in hard-to-reach areas, some 393,700 remain besieged in the country, while some 13.5 million people were in need of some form of humanitarian or protection assistance, including some six million children. All parties to the conflict disregarded international humanitarian law and the obligation to protect civilians. By the end of the year, French, Russian and United States-led coalition forces operated in Syria.

Following discussions in Vienna in October and November, the International Syria Support Group—China, Egypt, France, Germany, Iran, Iraq, Italy, Jordan, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom, the United States, the European Union, the League of Arab States and the United Nations—tasked the United Nations to bring together the Syrian Government and the opposition; as well as explore modalities for a nationwide ceasefire to run in parallel

with a renewed political process along the lines of the key principles of the 2012 on the final communiqué of the Action Group for Syria, also known as the Geneva communiqué [YUN 2012, p. 448].

During the year, the Security Council issued two presidential statements and adopted four resolutions. A resolution in August recommended the establishment and operation of an

Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism; a resolution in November urged Member States to intensify efforts to prevent foreign terrorist fighters from entering Iraq and Syria and to prevent and suppress the financing of terrorism; and two more resolutions in December endorsed the Vienna Statements of 30 October and 14 November in pursuit of the full implementation of the 2012 Geneva Communiqué as the basis for a Syrian-led and Syrian-owned political transition; and demanded that all parties to the conflict comply with their obligations under international law.

Political and security developments

Communications. Throughout the year, Syria, in a series of letters [A/69/717-S/2015/7; A/69/724-S/2015/20; A/69/744-S/2015/59; S/2015/61; A/69/758-S/2015/83; A/69/770-S/2015/96, S/2015/132, S/2015/136, A/69/795-S/2015/137, A/69/804-S/2015/152, A/69/816-S/2015/171, A/69/833-S/2015/201, A/69/836-S/2015/204, A/69/835-S/2015/205, S/2015/294] brought to the attention of the Secretary-General and the Security Council President interference by Turkey, Qatar and Saudi Arabia in the Syrian crisis; the presence in Syria of terrorist groups, including the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and organizations affiliated with Al-Qaida, which carried out attacks in Damascus, Aleppo and other cities and villages; and Syria's position on the eleventh report of the Secretary-General [YUN 2014, p. 580] and the twelfth report (see below) on the implementation of Council resolutions 2139(2014), 2165(2014) and 2191(2014).

In a series of letters [S/2015/57; S/2015/94; S/2015/107; S/2015/133; S/2015/160; S/2015/181; S/2015/190 and S/2015/214] transmitted by Turkey, Qatar, the United Kingdom, Lithuania and Luxembourg to the Security Council President, the Syrian Coalition expressed its concern about the worsening humanitarian situation in Syria and the growing violence perpetrated by Syrian forces and foreign terrorist groups; the Syrian Government's systematic use of chemical weapons, barrel bombs and cluster munitions in civilian-occupied areas; and the slaughter unfolding in the Syrian suburb of Douma, eastern Ghouta and Aleppo.

On 22 February [S/2015/127], Turkey informed the Secretary-General and the Security Council President that facing an imminent threat from ISIL, the Turkish

armed forces conducted a military operation for the relocation of the Süleyman Şah Memorial Outpost, a 10-acre area of land of Turkish territory inside Syria.

On 15 March [S/2015/183], Syria informed the Secretary-General and the Security Council President that it rejected the allegation levelled by Turkey in its 22 February letter (see above)

Security Council consideration. The Council discussed the situation in Syria in meetings held on 28 January [S/PV.7369], 26 February [S/PV.7394], 26 March [S/PV.7418], 28 May [S/PV.7452], 29 June [S/PV.7476], 28 July [S/PV.7493], 29 July [S/PV.7497], 7 August [S/PV.7501], 17 August [S/PV.7504], 27 August [S/PV.7513], 16 September [S/PV.7524], 27 October [S/PV.7543], 16 November [S/PV.7560], 18 December [S/PV.7588], 21 December [S/PV.7592] and 22 December [S/PV.7595].

Implementation of resolutions 2139(2014), 2165(2014) and 2191(2014)

Report of Secretary-General. In February [S/2015/124], pursuant to Council resolutions 2139(2014) [YUN 2014, p. 578], 2165(2014) [YUN 2014, p. 583] and 2191(2014) [YUN 2014, p. 590], in which the Council requested the Secretary-General to report to it every 30 days on the implementation of the resolution by all parties in Syria, the Secretary-General provided information on the humanitarian situation in the country covering the period from 1 to 31 January 2015. The information was based on the data available to United Nations on the ground and reports from open sources and from the Syrian Government.

The Secretary-General noted that after nearly four years of fighting and one year since the adoption of 2139(2014), the situation for the people in Syria continued to deteriorate. Widespread conflict and high levels of violence continued throughout the country during the reporting period, particularly in Aleppo, Hama, Homs, Deir ez-Zor, Rif Dimashq, Damascus, Al-Hasakeh, Idlib, Dar'a, Quneitra and Raqqa. Indiscriminate aerial bombings, including the use of barrel bombs by Government forces and indiscriminate shelling by armed opposition, extremist and terrorist groups such as ISIL and the Nusra Front, resulted in deaths, injuries and displacement of civilians. Shelling and aerial bombardment, including with barrel bombs, by pro-government forces and mortar, rocket and gas canister attacks by armed opposition groups continued in Aleppo; while in opposition-controlled areas in other governorates, Government forces carried out shelling and aerial bombardment. There had been fourteen attacks with improvised explosive devices and vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices. Since the end of December 2014, an influx of some 9,000 people had been reported from several towns in the Ghouta area to collective shelters in Rif Dimashq.

Some 12.2 million people required humanitarian assistance in Syria, while some 7.6 million people were internally displaced, and more than 3.8 million Syrians had fled to neighbouring countries and North Africa. Despite the extremely challenging operating environment, United Nations and partners continued to reach millions of people in need in the month of January. Of the 4.8 million people in hard-to-reach areas, however, some 212,000 people remained besieged in the country, with Government forces besieging 185,500 people in eastern Ghouta, Darayya and Yarmouk, and non-state armed groups besieging 26,500 people in Nubul and Zahraa.

Meetings were held between opposition groups in Cairo, on 23 and 24 January, and between select members of the opposition and the Government, in Moscow, from 26 to 29 January that called for a political solution based on the Geneva communiqué [YUN 2012, p. 448].

The Secretary-General observed that the conflict had become business as usual and said that progress had to be achieved in five areas: lifting the siege on 212,000 people; ensuring access for the delivery of medical and surgical supplies to all parts of the country; ending the practice of using the denial of key services as a weapon of war; rebuilding the education system in Syria; and addressing the relentless and indiscriminate attacks on civilians, including through the use of barrel bombs.

SECURITY COUNCIL ACTION

On 12 February [meeting 7379], the Security Council unanimously adopted **resolution 2199(2015)**. The draft [S/2015/100] was submitted by 56 Member States.

Report of Secretary-General. In his March report [S/2015/206] on the implementation of Council resolutions 2139(2014), 2165(2014) and 2191(2014), the Secretary-General said that widespread conflict and high levels of violence continued throughout Syria in February. Indiscriminate aerial bombings, including the use of barrel bombs, by Government forces and indiscriminate shelling by non-State armed groups and extremist and listed terrorist groups—*ISIL* and the Nusra Front—resulted in deaths, injuries and displacement of civilians.

Tens of thousands of people were displaced by fighting in February in Al-Hasakeh governorate, Dar'a, Deir ez-Zor and Aleppo governorates. The Nusra Front and *ISIL* continued to violate international humanitarian law and commit human rights abuses in areas in which they exercised control, including executions, abductions and restrictions on fundamental freedoms.

Some 12.2 million people required humanitarian assistance in Syria, while about 7.6 million people were internally displaced, and more than 3.9 million people had fled Syria to neighbouring countries and

North Africa. The number of NGOs authorized to partner with the United Nations increased from 107 as at 1 December 2014 to 114 as at 28 February 2015. Of the 4.8 million people in hard-to-reach areas, some 212,000 people remained besieged in the country, including 185,500 people besieged by Government forces in eastern Ghouta, Darayya and Yarmouk; and 26,500 people besieged by non-State armed groups in Nubul and Zahraa. In February, no food, non-food items or medical assistance reached any besieged locations.

The Secretary-General was concerned that conditions had deteriorated for the besieged people and noted that his Special Envoy for Syria, Staffan de Mistura, continued to work to bring about a suspension of violence in Aleppo and while the proposed freeze was not an end in itself, it was meant as a confidence-building step leading to an inclusive, Syrian-led political process based on the Geneva communiqué of 2012.

Communication. In a 31 March [S/2015/221] letter, Canada informed the Security Council President that it was taking necessary and proportionate measures in Syria in support of the collective self-defence of Iraq, in accordance with Article 51 of the United Nations Charter.

Report of Secretary-General. In his April report [S/2015/264] covering the period from 1 to 31 March, on the implementation of Council resolutions 2139(2014), 2165(2014) and 2191(2014) the Secretary-General said that indiscriminate aerial bombings, including the use of barrel bombs, by Government forces and indiscriminate shelling by *ISIL* and the Nusra Front continued as part of widespread conflict in Syria.

The National Coalition of Syrian Revolution and Opposition Forces (Syrian Coalition) alleged that Government forces used a chlorine agent during attacks in Idlib governorate in March, a claim denied by the Syrian Government. Fighting and shelling between Government forces and non-State armed groups inside Aleppo city continued. Government forces continued the aerial bombardment of areas in Rif Dimashq.

Non-State armed groups continued to fire mortars and rockets on Damascus city. In particular, Jaish al-Islam, continued to attack Government positions and areas populated by civilians in Ladhqiyyah governorate, using homemade rockets, while the use of improvised explosive devices and vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices continued.

For the tenth month in a row, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) was unable to send water treatment materials to Deir ez-Zor and Raqqah governorates owing to the difficulty of delivering humanitarian supplies through areas controlled by *ISIL*. The World Food Programme continued to halt

deliveries to areas controlled by ISIL, affecting some 700,000 people in Raqqa, Deir ez-Zor, Hasakeh and Aleppo governorates. As at 31 March, 116 authorized national NGOs were operating through 174 branches under complex procedures in partnering with United Nations agencies.

The Secretary-General was appalled at the collective punishment being meted out to people in Syria who were purposefully denied water, electricity and basic services and made a special plea to the Syrian Government for protection and assistance to the especially vulnerable Palestinian refugee population in the Yarmouk camp in Damascus.

Communications. In identical letters of 1 April [A/69/855–S/2015/228] to the Secretary-General and the Security Council President, Syria noted that terrorist groups, including ISIL, the Nusra Front, the Free Army, Army of Islam and the Islamic Front, carried out an attack against the village of Mab'ujah in the countryside of Salamiyah, killing more than 60 civilians, the majority of whom were children and women, and gravely injuring dozens of others.

Germany, in a 1 April letter [S/2015/230] to the Council President, transmitted a letter from the Syrian Coalition drawing attention to a new set of chlorine gas attacks perpetrated by Syrian forces in and near the Syrian province of Idlib.

In identical letters of 2 April [A/69/862–S/2015/233] to the Secretary-General and the Council President, Syria informed that hundreds of ISIL terrorists, in coordination with terrorists from the Nusra Front, entered the Yarmouk Palestinian refugee camp in Damascus.

Jordan on 3 April [A/69/872–S/2015/236] rejected the allegation levelled against it by Syria regarding developments in the Yarmouk Palestinian refugee camp in Damascus.

On 6 April [S/2015/241], Syria called on the Security Council to take stern measures against States that supported and financed terrorism in Syria, including Turkey, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Jordan.

On 9 April [A/69/865–S/2015/244], Jordan conveyed in identical letters to the Secretary-General and the Council President that Syria had continued to repeat its futile allegations against Jordan in an attempt to distract attention from Syria's actions against its own people.

France, in a 9 April letter [S/2015/257] addressed to the Council President, transmitted a letter from the Syrian Coalition drawing attention to the humanitarian disaster unfolding in the Yarmouk Palestinian refugee camp.

On 13 April [S/2015/250], Syria transmitted to the Secretary General and the Council President the points that were agreed on at the second Moscow consultative meeting concerning the assessment of the situation in Syria.

Also on the same date [A/69/868–S/2015/251], Syria conveyed in identical letters to the Secretary General and the Council President that, on 11 April, missiles were fired at the civilian areas of Aleppo, killing 19 civilians, and injuring 90 others, including 11 children and 17 women.

In identical letters of 13 April [A/69/867–S/2015/253] to the Secretary-General and the Council President, the State of Palestine conveyed the grave concerns of the Palestinian leadership about the dire situation of Palestine refugees in Syria as a result of the armed conflict there; and called the international community's attention to the humanitarian catastrophe in the Yarmouk refugee camp.

In identical notes verbales of 14 April [A/69/873–S/2015/254] to the Secretary-General and the Council President, Jordan brought attention to the security, political and humanitarian situation in Syria that had continued to deteriorate as a result of the Syrian Government's daily acts against its own people, flagrantly and repeatedly violating the provisions of international humanitarian law and the relevant Security Council resolutions.

In letters of 17 April [S/2015/265] and 24 April [S/2015/277] to the Security Council President, the United Kingdom and Qatar transmitted letters from the Syrian Coalition drawing attention to chemical weapons attacks by Syrian aerial forces in the Syrian governorate of Idlib.

On 23 April [S/2015/276], in identical letters addressed to the Secretary-General and the Council President, Syria responded to the Secretary-General's April report (see above).

On 25 April [A/69/887–S/2015/281], in identical letters addressed to the Secretary-General and the Council President, Jordan rejected the allegations levelled against it by Syria in its letter dated 23 April (see above).

SECURITY COUNCIL ACTION

On 24 April [meeting 7433], following consultations among Security Council members, the President made statement **S/PRST/2015/10** on behalf of the Council.

Report of Secretary-General. In his May report [S/2015/368], on the implementation of Council resolution 2139(2014), covering the period from 1 to 30 April, the Secretary-General observed that widespread conflict and high levels of violence continued across Syria. Indiscriminate aerial bombardment, including the use of barrel bombs by Government forces and indiscriminate shelling by non-State armed groups and extremist and listed terrorist groups—ISIL and the Nusra Front—continued.

Fighting between the parties also moved south-west from Idlib city towards the Sahel al-Ghab valley in north-west Hama Governorate. There were reports

of an alleged chlorine attack in Saraqib, Idlib, on 2 May. Further alleged chlorine attacks were reported in Janoudieh, Kansafrak and Kafr Batiekh on 7 May. In Aleppo Governorate, indiscriminate attacks by Government forces and non-State armed groups continued to cause civilian deaths, property destruction and interruption to essential services. The Kurdish People's Protection Units and the Free Syrian Army continued joint advances in areas in Aleppo Governorate under the control of ISIL, reportedly taking over Dafiye, Arne, Qerat and some hills overlooking Serin, to the south of Kobane/Ayn al-Arab.

Some 228,000 people living in the besieged neighbourhoods of Deir ez-Zor city continued to be without electricity following deactivation by ISIL of the Tayem power plant in late March. On 5 May, the Secretary-General's Special Envoy, Mr. de Mistura, launched the Geneva Consultation—a series of separate bilateral discussions between the Special Envoy and Syrian parties, as well as regional and international actors. The consultations were aimed at exploring ways to operationalize the Geneva communiqué of 30 June 2012.

Disrespect for human life and dignity continued with OHCHR receiving allegations and cases of arbitrary detention, torture and death of persons in Government detention centres run by the Syrian security forces in Damascus and Homs. On 10 April, ISIL reportedly kidnapped around 50 civilians from Sunni and Ismaili communities after attacking the village of al-Mabouga and were taken into areas controlled by ISIL further east of Hama.

Some 12.2 million people remained in need of humanitarian assistance in the country, including more than 5 million children. About 7.6 million people were internally displaced, and nearly 4 million people had fled to neighbouring countries and North Africa. The Secretary-General observed that parties to the conflict continued to behave with impunity and total disregard for the basic tenets of humanity and international humanitarian law. The number of attacks on medical facilities in April was the highest monthly total on record in the monthly reports since the adoption of resolution 2139(2014).

The Council President issued, on 29 April, statement S/PRST/2015/11 on the threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts (see p. 000).

Communications. On 6 May [S/2015/316] and 18 May [S/2015/350], the United Kingdom and Qatar transmitted to the Council President letters from the Syrian Coalition drawing attention to proliferation of chlorine gas attacks perpetrated by Syrian forces in Idlib and Hama governorates. They also alleged that Syria misled the Security Council with respect to its initial declaration of its chemical weapons stockpiles to the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW).

In a 12 May [S/2015/332] letter to the Council President, Qatar stated that it rejected the allegations and accusations that Syria had continuously made against Qatar since the start of the revolution in Syria.

On 18 May [A/69/905–S/2015/346], Syria rejected the allegations levelled against it by Jordan in its note verbal on 14 April (see above) and in its letter on 25 April (see above).

On 20 May [A/69/911–S/2015/363], Jordan rejected the claims set out in the 18 May letter from Syria (see above).

On the same date [S/2015/352], Syria attached a list containing the names of 96 Syrian civilians, including 41 children, killed in Aleppo by terrorist groups during the period from 13 April to 7 May.

On 25 May [A/69/912–S/2015/371], 29 May [A/69/919–S/2015/392] and 12 June [A/69/937–S/2015/429] Syria stressed that the acts of terrorism in Syria would not have occurred were it not for the support that certain States had been providing for more than four years to terrorist organizations such as ISIL, the Nusra Front, the so-called Army of Conquest, the Free Army and other terrorist organizations.

On 28 May [S/2015/388], in identical letters addressed to the Secretary-General and the Council President, Syria responded to the Secretary-General's May report (see above).

In identical letters of 2 June [A/69/923–S/2015/403] and 16 June [A/69/943–S/2015/440], Jordan rejected the allegations of Syria in its 25 May and 12 June letters (see above) and called on Syria to focus on safeguarding the lives of its people.

On 5 June [S/2015/410], Syria alleged that Turkey supported terrorist groups since the outset of the crisis in Syria.

On 8 June [A/69/930–S/2015/414], Syria conveyed its position on the decisions by the United States and the European Union to extend unilateral coercive economic measures against Syria for an additional year.

On 9 June [S/2015/418], Syria rejected the false allegations made in the 12 May letter from Qatar (see above); in response, Qatar on 12 June [S/2015/430], rejected Syrian claims.

On 14 June [S/2014/434], Turkey said that in line with its open border policy, temporary protection and assistance was being provided to 260,000 Syrians in 25 shelters in Turkey, causing almost \$6 billion in financial burden while bilateral and multilateral contributions amounted to \$393 million.

Syria, on 16 June [S/2015/442], noted that Aleppo's residents had become the victims of a heinous crime the day before as the armed terrorist groups—known by the sponsors of terrorism as the “moderate armed opposition”—indiscriminately fired more than 100 rockets killing 36, including 12 children.

On 18 June [S/2015/454], Belgium, Luxembourg and the Netherlands wrote to the Security Council President on behalf of 71 countries expressing their collective outrage on the continued bloodshed and violence against civilians in Syria caused, in particular, by the systematic use of barrel bombs, and stressed the urgent need for the full implementation of relevant Council resolutions and the importance of full compliance with international humanitarian law.

Jordan, on 19 June [A/69/948–S/2015/461], rejected charges made by Syria on 16 June.

In letters of 28 May [S/2015/387] and of 2 June [S/2015/404] transmitted by Denmark and France to the Council President, the Syrian Coalition drew the attention of the Council to the worsening humanitarian crisis in Syria and the urgent need for decisive Council action to stop the killing of innocent civilians and alleviate humanitarian suffering, including through the imposition of a no-fly zone.

Report of Secretary-General. In June [S/2015/468], the Secretary-General submitted his sixteenth report on the implementation of Council resolution 2139(2014), covering the month of May, during which widespread conflict and high levels of violence continued throughout Syria.

In the city of Aleppo heavy fighting continued with indiscriminate attacks by Government forces, non-State armed groups and ISIL. Heavy fighting also continued in the city of Idlib. Following ISIL infiltration of the Yarmouk Palestinian refugee camp in Damascus in early April, the humanitarian situation in the camp deteriorated as a result of frequent armed clashes and the use of heavy weapons. Throughout the country, civilian infrastructure continued to be attacked and basic services, including electricity and water, continued to be cut. ISIL captured the ancient city of Palmyra/Tadmur on 21 May and the surrounding gas fields of al-Hail and Arak, and, according to OHCHR, ISIL reportedly carried out door-to-door searches for suspected Government agents and executed at least 14 civilians suspected of affiliation with the Government.

The Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Syria, Mr. de Mistura, continued the Geneva consultations with Syrian, regional and international delegations, with a view to developing recommendations on the operationalization of the Geneva Communiqué [YUN 2012, p. 448]. The level of funding for humanitarian activities also continued to be outpaced by the scale of needs.

Of the 4.8 million people in hard-to-reach areas, some 422,000 remained besieged in Syria, including 167,500 people besieged by Government forces in eastern Ghouta and Darayya; 26,500 people besieged by non-State armed groups in Nubul and Zahra; and 228,000 people besieged by ISIL in the Government-controlled western neighbourhoods of Deir ez-Zor city.

The Secretary-General observed that the symbols of community life —markets, bakeries, schools, hospitals, transportation hubs, mosques, churches—had been reduced to rubble and children continued to bear the brunt of the conflict.

Communications. On 25 June [S/2015/476] Lithuania transmitted to the Security Council President a letter from the Syrian Coalition drawing attention to the worsening humanitarian crisis in Syria and the violence perpetrated by Syrian forces, including through the systematic and illegal use of indiscriminate aerial weapons.

On 26 June [S/2015/480], Syria rejected the allegations made by the Syrian Coalition.

On 28 June [S/2015/488], Syria responded to the Secretary-General's June report.

Syria, on 29 June [A/69/969–S/2015/487] noted that Syrian cities and towns, had been the targets of terrorist attacks, and those attacks were a continuation of the terrorist war to which Syria had been subjected for more than four years, with direct and open support from States, including France, Israel, Jordan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Turkey and other Western States.

On 6 July [S/2015/507], Turkey refuted a series of allegations made by Syria in May and June.

On 9 July [S/2015/524], Syria drew attention to a video clip of the mass execution of a number of Syrian soldiers by child members of ISIL in the city of Palmyra.

Report of Secretary-General. In July [S/2015/561], the Secretary-General submitted his seventeenth report on the implementation of Security Council resolution 2139(2014), covering the month of June, during which the humanitarian crisis in Syria further deepened with civilians caught in between severe fighting.

The Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Syria, Mr. de Mistura, completed the initial phase of the Geneva consultations after holding more than 80 meetings with Syrian, regional and international parties, with a view to developing recommendations on the operationalization of the Geneva Communiqué. The Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic presented its oral update to the Human Rights Council covering the period from 15 March to 15 June. In its update, the Commission reiterated its earlier findings that the main cause of civilian casualties, mass displacement and destruction was the deliberate targeting of civilians, indiscriminate and disproportionate attacks, attacks on civilian and protected objects, and the punitive imposition of sieges and blockades.

Some 12.2 million people required humanitarian assistance in Syria, more than 5 million of whom were children; around 7.6 million people had been internally displaced, and more than 4 million people

had fled Syria to neighbouring countries and North Africa. Of the 4.6 million people living in hard-to-reach areas in Syria, 422,000 remained besieged whose deplorable conditions the Secretary-General highlighted in the report. The delivery of humanitarian assistance to many of the 12.2 million people remained extremely challenging in June owing to active conflict, insecurity and shifting front lines, as well as deliberate obstructions and interference by the parties, including restrictions on movement and burdensome administrative procedures. In addition, the level of funding for humanitarian activities continued to be outpaced by the scale of needs; the 2015 Syria Response Plan was only 26 per cent funded as at 15 July.

Communications. On 1 July [A/69/977–S/2015/498], Jordan rejected the allegations set out in the letters dated 28 and 29 June from Syria (see above).

In letters of 9 July [S/2015/526], 23 July [S/2015/559] and 27 July [S/2015/568] transmitted by the United Kingdom, Saudi Arabia and France, respectively, to the Security Council President, the Syrian Coalition drew the attention of the Council to the worsening humanitarian crisis in Syria and the violence perpetrated by Syrian and Hizbullah forces, including through the systematic and illegal use of indiscriminate aerial weapons. The Syrian Coalition, among other things, called on the Council to support the establishment of safe zones inside Syria to protect civilians from the Syrian Government's indiscriminate aerial bombardment and from militant extremists alike; to vigilantly monitoring the Iranian nuclear deal and Council resolution 2231(2015) (see p. 000), which, when implemented, could release billions of dollars to the Iranian regime and that, in turn, could fuel and arm the Syrian regime's killing machine; and to refer the situation in Syria to the International Criminal Court (ICC).

Turkey, on 24 July [S/2015/563], conveyed to the Security Council President that it had initiated necessary and proportionate military actions against ISIL in Syria, including in coordination with individual members of the Global Coalition, in order to counter the terrorist threat and to safeguard Turkish territory and citizens. In response, Syria, in identical letters to the Secretary-General and the Council President of 29 July [A/69/996–S/2015/574], rejected the attempt by Turkish to portray itself as a victim acting in self-defence.

On 31 July [S/2015/588], Syria responded to the Secretary-General's seventeenth report on the implementation of resolution 2139(2014). The letter summarized efforts by the Government to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance and rejected the report's endeavour to minimize the humanitarian successes achieved in Syria in coordination and cooperation with the Government.

Report of Secretary-General. In August [S/2015/651], the Secretary-General submitted his eighteenth report pursuant to Security Council resolutions 2139(2014) [YUN 2014, p. 578] and 2165(2014) [YUN 2014, p. 583], covering the period from 1 to 31 July.

Civilian infrastructure continued to be affected as water supplies were cut off eight times in July in Aleppo by fighting, at times deliberately by non-government parties to the conflict, affecting an estimated 1.7 million people. Meanwhile, following the Geneva consultations, which concluded in July and were aimed at making operational Geneva Communiqué, the Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Syria, Mr. de Mistura, announced, during a briefing to the Security Council on 29 July, that he would continue the diplomatic efforts by establishing an intra-Syrian dialogue process, focusing on four key thematic working groups, among which humanitarian access would figure prominently.

As in the previous months, the delivery of humanitarian assistance to many of the 12.2 million people in need of assistance remained extremely challenging, and access to the 4.6 million people living in hard-to-reach areas remained critical and very limited compared with the level of need. During the reporting period, the United Nations and partners reached 1.8 per cent of the 422,000 besieged population with health assistance. A new list of national NGOs authorized to partner with the United Nations was received on 12 August, increasing the number from 122 to 131.

The Secretary-General observed that there was a complete and utter absence of protection for civilians in Syria with total disregard for human life and dignity by all parties to the conflict.

Communications. On 3 August [A/69/999–S/2015/593], Jordan rejected the allegations made against it in the 28 June communication from Syria (see p.000).

Iran, on 6 August [S/2015/604], rejected all the allegations against it as contained in the 23 July letter from Saudi Arabia (see above). Also on the same date [A/69/1004–S/2015/606], Jordan rejected the allegations made by Syria on 31 July (see above).

On 11 August [S/2015/617] and 17 August [S/2015/641], Qatar and the United Kingdom transmitted to the Security Council President letters from the Syrian Coalition drawing attention to the adoption of Council resolution 2235(2015) (see p.000), which, if implemented effectively and rigorously enforced, would send a strong signal to Syria that its use of chemical weapons would not go unaccounted for; and calling for an emergency session of the Council to address the massacre of innocent civilians in Syria by aerial raids conducted by the Syrian Government. The United Kingdom also brought attention to the bombing of a popular market in Douma city, a rural suburb of Damascus, which resulted in the death of

some 100 civilians and the wounding of 300 others. That massacre was part of a bloody campaign carried out by the Syrian regime and Iranian forces around the Ghouta area near Damascus and in Idlib, which had already claimed the lives of 450 civilians, most of them women and children.

SECURITY COUNCIL ACTION

On 17 August [meeting 7504], following consultations among Security Council members, the President made statement **S/PRST/2015/15** on behalf of the Council.

Report of Secretary-General. The Secretary-General submitted his nineteenth report in September [S/2015/698] on the implementation of Security Council resolutions 2139(2014) and 2165(2014), covering the period from 1 June to 31 August.

OHCHR continued to receive allegations and to document cases of arbitrary arrest and detention, torture and other ill-treatment, as well as death in custody inside Government detention centres. Four joint inter-agency convoys, one of which was only partially completed, delivered assistance to over 200,000 people in June, however, no inter-agency convoys were completed in July and August. Continued conflict in several governorates hindered the effective delivery of humanitarian assistance, as well as people's access to essential services.

The United Nations and its partners reached an average of 9 per cent of 422,000 besieged people per month with health assistance, compared with 2 per cent in the previous three months. The number of national NGOs authorized to partner with United Nations organizations increased from 118 on 1 June to 131 on 27 August.

The deterioration in the security situation in many parts of the country had resulted in increases in the prices of medicines and pharmaceutical supplies and a shortage of medical supplies in local markets. The availability of life-saving health services, was also hampered. The Secretary-General called on all Governments in the region and beyond to stop the flow of arms and fighters to all parties in Syria.

Communications. On 25 August [S/2015/663], Saudi Arabia transmitted to the Security Council President a letter from the Syrian Coalition about the rising death toll in Syria and the wanton destruction of civilian life by Syrian forces.

On the same date [S/2015/664], Syria replied to the Secretary-General's nineteenth report (see above).

Report of Secretary-General. The Secretary-General submitted in October [S/2015/813] his twentieth report on the implementation of Council resolutions 2139(2014) and 2165(2014) covering the period from 1 to 30 September. Indiscriminate and disproportionate aerial bombings and ground attacks continued in places with a large presence of civil-

ians, including through the use of barrel bombs by Government forces and indiscriminate shelling by non-State armed opposition groups and designated terrorist groups—ISIS and the Nusra Front—that continued to kill, injure and displace civilians. On 30 September, air strikes from Russian forces commenced and were reported principally in Hama, Idlib, Homs and Ladhqiyyah; limited strikes were also reported in Raqqah, Dayr al-Zawr and Rif Dimashq governorates.

Attacks continued to be launched by ISIS in various governorates during the reporting period. In September and early October, over 80,000 people were displaced from various areas in Homs, Aleppo, Rif Dimashq, Dayr al-Zawr, Hama and Idlib governorates owing to fighting.

The scale and severity of abuses and violations of international human rights and humanitarian law remained grave. As in previous months, all UNRWA operations in the Yarmouk Palestinian refugee camp continued to remain suspended in September. The Secretary-General noted that, more progress had to be achieved in five areas: addressing the relentless and indiscriminate attacks on civilians; lifting the sieges; ensuring access for the delivery of medical and surgical supplies to all parts of the country; ending the practice of using the denial of key services as a weapon of war; and rebuilding the education system in the country.

Communications. On 1 September [S/2015/679] Syria conveyed to the Secretary-General and the Security Council President that the Syrian cities of Fu'ah and Kafraya in Idlib governorate had been under total siege by armed terrorist groups since 28 March.

On the same date [A/69/1021–S/2015/680], Jordan rejected the allegations set out in the 25 August letter from Syria (see above).

On 7 September [S/2015/688], the United Kingdom informed the Council President that it undertook military action in Syria against ISIS in accordance with Article 51 of the United Nations Charter. On the following day [S/2015/690], Syria conveyed to the Secretary-General and the Council President its position regarding the interference by the United Kingdom Government in Syria's internal affairs.

In identical letters to the Secretary-General and the Security Council President, France on 8 September [S/2015/745], and Australia, on 9 September [S/2015/693], noted that in accordance with Article 51 of the United Nations Charter, they had taken military action against ISIS in Syria in support of the self-defence of Iraq.

In a 14 September communication [S/2015/708], Syria brought to the attention of the Secretary-General and the Council President a terrorist act committed on the same day by what it defined as terrorist groups, including ISIS, the Nusra Front and the Army of Islam, against civilians in the city of Hasakah kill-

ing 20 civilians and seriously injuring 100 others, the majority of whom were women and children.

On 16 September [S/2015/714], Syria replied to the Secretary-General's nineteenth report (see p.000) on the implementation of resolutions 2139(2014), 2165(2014) and 2191(2014) [YUN 2014, p. 590].

On the same date [S/2015/717], Syria drew attention to the 312 mortar shells and rockets fired by terrorist groups on the city of Damascus and its suburbs during the period from 30 August to 14 September, which killed 41 civilians and injured 285 others, most of them women and children. In a separate communication also dated 16 September [S/2015/718], Syria noted that the previous day, armed terrorists had fired missiles and explosive shells at the city of Aleppo, killing 31 civilians, of whom 13 were children, three women and 15 men.

In identical letters of 17 September [S/2015/719], Syria informed the Secretary-General and the Council President that the United Kingdom, Australia and France had taken military measures against Syria invoking a distorted reading of the intention of Article 51 of the United Nations Charter.

On 18 September [A/70/387-S/2015/724], Jordan rejected the allegations made by Syria at the Security Council meeting on 16 September and in the 17 September identical letters of Syria (see above).

On the same date [S/2015/726], the United Kingdom transmitted to the Council President a letter from the Syrian Coalition drawing attention to the growing toll of the Syrian conflict and its impact on the global refugee crisis, and urging the Council to solve the crisis and provide protection to civilians both inside and outside of Syria.

On 21 September [A/70/385-S/2015/727], Syria called on the United Nations, its competent entities and its Member States to make a genuine and sincere commitment to fight terrorism; to fully and decisively enforce the texts adopted over the years; to hold States sponsors of terrorism to account; and to prevail on them to refrain from violating international law and the United Nations Charter.

In two letters of 24 September [S/2015/740] and [S/2015/751] to the Secretary-General, Iran rejected the allegations against it contained in the 17 August letter from the United Kingdom (see p.000) and the 27 July letter from France (see p.000).

Report of Secretary-General. In November [S/2015/862], the Secretary-General submitted his twenty-first report on the implementation of Security Council resolutions 2139(2014) and 2165(2014), covering the period from 1 to 31 October.

The conduct of hostilities by all parties continued to be characterized by a widespread disregard for international humanitarian law and the obligation of all parties to protect civilians. While the United Nations had no independent means of verification,

many sources reported a continuation of the use of barrel bombs, while non-State armed opposition groups continued to launch mortars and to shell Damascus city. Also, both Russian and United States-led coalition forces continued their operations in Syria throughout October.

Over 190,000 people remained displaced from various areas in Aleppo, Idlib, Hama, Homs, Rif Dimashq, Dayr al-Zawr, Raqqah and Dar'a governorates due to the fighting. In October, United Nations agencies and partners reached 46 of the 147 hard-to-reach locations with food assistance for around 225,000 people, health support for over 130,000 medical treatments, with water, sanitation and hygiene assistance for more than 50,000 people and with relief items for almost 20,000 people.

Following discussions in Vienna, the International Syria Support Group—China, Egypt, France, Germany, Iran, Iraq, Italy, Jordan, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom, the United Nations, the United States, the European Union and the League of Arab States—issued a joint communiqué tasking the United Nations to bring together the Syrian Government and the opposition, as well as exploring modalities for a nationwide ceasefire to run in parallel with a renewed political process. While the Secretary-General was encouraged that, on 30 October, in Vienna, the international community finally re-engaged in the process of finding a political solution to the Syrian conflict, he repeated his call that the situation in Syria be referred to the ICC.

Communications. On 1 October [S/2015/750], the United Kingdom transmitted to the Security Council President a letter of the same day from the Syrian Coalition drawing attention to the escalating military aggression by the Russian Federation in Syria and its impact on civilians.

On 5 October [S/2015/761], Syria drew attention to the mortar shells and rockets fired by terrorist groups on the city of Damascus and its suburbs during the period from 16 September to 2 October.

On 14 October [A/70/429-S/2015/789], Syria brought to the attention of the Secretary-General and the Council President that the Russian Federation had taken a number of measures in response to a request from the Syrian government to cooperate in counter-terroring terrorism and to provide military support for the counter-terrorism efforts of the Government and the Syrian army.

On 15 October [S/2015/792], the Russian Federation informed the Council President that in response to a request from the President of Syria to provide military assistance in combating ISIL and other terrorist groups operating in Syria, the Russian Federation had begun launching air and missile strikes against the assets of terrorist formations in Syria on 30 September.

On 19 October [S/2015/800] and 2 November [S/2015/831], Syria alleged that mortar shells and rockets had been launched by terrorist groups on Damascus and its suburbs during the period from 4 to 17 October 2015, and from 19 to 31 October, respectively, which left many civilians dead or injured.

In a 23 October [S/2015/816] communication transmitted by the United Kingdom to the Council President, the Syrian Coalition drew attention to the dire humanitarian situation inside Syria and the growing toll of the Russian Federation's campaign of indiscriminate military aggression, which had resulted in over 231 civilian casualties.

On 26 October [S/2015/821], Syria responded to the twentieth report (see p.000) of the Secretary-General on the implementation of resolutions 2139(2014) and 2165(2014).

On 9 November [S/2015/843] and 16 November [S/2015/882], Lithuania, on behalf of the Syrian Coalition, noted that for the discussions in Vienna to bring about an end to the violence in Syria to have any hope of success, the protection of Syrian civilians had to be guaranteed; and that the root of the crisis in Syria was indiscriminate killing, in particular aerial bombardment.

In a 9 November [S/2015/851] and 10 November [S/2015/857] letters, Syria noted that a United States aircraft had violated its sovereignty under the pretext that it was targeting ISIL, and that two terrorist attacks by the Nusra Front and the Ahrar al-Sham had occurred in the city of Ladhqiyyah killing and injuring many civilians.

On 16 November [S/2015/873], Syria conveyed its position on the twenty-first report of the Secretary-General (see above).

On 21 November [S/2015/904], Turkey informed the Council President that ongoing intense aerial bombardment by Russian Federation air forces and the land offensive by the Syrian forces, supported by Hizbullah militias, had caused heavy civilian casualties and triggered a new influx of 10,000 people towards the Turkish border, two thousand of whom had already entered Turkey; it further called upon the Secretary-General, the Security Council and the United Nations agencies to fully assume their responsibilities without further delay, and to take all necessary measures to prevent the targeting of civilians.

On 24 November [S/2015/906], the Russian Federation forwarded to the Council President the text of the remarks made by President Vladimir Putin, at his meeting on the same day with King Abdullah II of Jordan, with regard to the Russian aircraft shot down over Syrian territory by a Turkish plane.

On 30 November [S/2015/915] Syria protested the action by the United Kingdom taken as the rotating President of the Security Council for November. According to Syria, the United Kingdom had ignored

the request for a Council meeting made by Syria on 6 November and reiterated by e-mails of 9 and 12 November, as well as by a formal memorandum of 12 November.

SECURITY COUNCIL ACTION

On 20 November [meeting 7565], the Security Council unanimously adopted **resolution 2249(2015)**. The draft [S/2015/890] was submitted by France.

Report of Secretary-General. The Secretary-General submitted in December [S/2015/962] his twenty-second report on the implementation of Security Council resolutions 2139(2014) and 2165(2014), covering the period from 1 to 30 November. Indiscriminate and disproportionate aerial bombings and ground attacks in places with a large presence of civilians continued, including the use of barrel bombs by Government forces and indiscriminate shelling by non-State armed opposition groups and designated terrorist groups—ISIL and the Nusra Front—that killed, injured and displaced civilians. Non-State armed opposition groups continued to launch mortars and to shell Damascus city, while intensified fighting between the parties to the conflict continued in the northern governorates of Syria.

On 24 November, a Russian warplane was shot down by Turkey close to the Syrian-Turkish border. While Turkey asserted that the warplane was flying in Turkish airspace when it was shot down, the Russian Federation denied that and said the warplane was flying in Syrian airspace. The United Nations did not have independent means of verification to certify the claim of either Member State. The Russian Federation officially invited international experts to take part in the opening of the black box of the Russian plane.

French, Russian and United States-led coalition forces pursued their operations in the Syria throughout November. Civilian displacement continued throughout Syria in November, with over 121,500 people displaced from areas in Aleppo, Dar'a, Dayr al-Zawr, Hama, Hasakah, Homs, Idlib, Ladhqiyyah and Raqqah governorates. All UNRWA operations in Yarmouk Palestinian refugee camp in Damascus continued to remain suspended during November, with the most recent mission conducted on 28 March. The number of national NGOs authorized to partner with the United Nations increased from 131 to 138 between 1 September and 30 November.

Some 393,700 people remain besieged in the Syria. In November, 1,077 children received textbooks and 50 children were provided with winter clothes. No other assistance reached the besieged areas in November. The week before the second meeting of the International Syria Support Group, 44 non-State armed opposition groups, including Jaysh al-Islam, met in Istanbul, Turkey, and agreed to form a united military council for all of Syria. A number of the participating

groups subsequently met with the National Coalition of Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces (Syrian Coalition) umbrella group on 13 November to coordinate positions for future negotiations under the Vienna process (see p.000).

The Secretary-General observed that notwithstanding efforts to scale up the delivery of life-saving humanitarian assistance, especially for the 4.5 million people in hard-to-reach areas, access continued to be deliberately hindered by parties to the conflict. He urged the international community to continue to work together to secure a nationwide ceasefire and launch a credible political process to fully implement the Action Group for Syria, also known as the Geneva Communiqué of 30 June 2012 [YUN 2012 p. 448] and the Vienna Statements of 30 October and 14 November (see above).

Communications. On 2 December [S/2015/927], Syria drew attention to terrorist attacks, mortar shells and rockets launched by terrorist groups during the period from 2 to 29 November, which left many civilians dead or injured and resulted in damage to public and private properties.

On 3 December [S/2015/928], the United Kingdom informed the Security Council President that, in accordance with Article 51 of the United Nations Charter, it was taking necessary and proportionate measures against ISIL/Daesh in Syria, as called for by the Council in resolution 2249(2015) (see above), in exercise of the inherent right of individual and collective self-defence.

On 7 December [S/2015/933], Syria conveyed to the Secretary-General and the Council President that, on 6 December, four aircraft belonging to the coalition led by the United States fired nine missiles at a Syrian army camp in the city of Dayr al-Zawr killing three soldiers and wounding 13 others.

On 8 December [S/2015/941], the United Kingdom transmitted to the Council President a letter from the Syrian Coalition drawing attention to a major escalation of indiscriminate aerial bombardment by Russian Federation forces in the opposition-held areas of north-west Syria, in direct violation of international humanitarian law.

On 10 December [S/2015/946], Germany informed the Council President that in accordance with Article 51 of the United Nations Charter, Germany, in the exercise of the right of collective self-defence, had initiated military measures against ISIL and that the measures were not directed against Syria.

On 10 December [S/2015/949], [S/2015/950], Syria brought to the attention of the Secretary-General and the Council President that aircraft of the United States coalition attacked gas and oil installations, and had bombarded the water treatment plants of the Aleppo Water Authority.

On the same date [S/2015/951], Syria noted that on 7 and 9 December, terrorist groups affiliated with the Nusra Front and allied terrorist groups fired various types of missiles at peaceful residential neighbourhoods in the city of Aleppo, killing several civilians and injuring others.

On 11 December [S/2015/956], Saudi Arabia transmitted to the Council President a statement issued the previous day by the Syrian Coalition about an expanded meeting held in Riyadh on 9 and 10 December. The meeting was attended by armed groups and the range of Syrian opposition movements in the country and abroad, including all components of Syrian society: Arabs, Kurds, Turkmen, Assyrians, Syriac communities, Circassians and Armenians.

On 12 December [S/2015/964], Syria said that terrorists carried out bombings in several Syrian governorates, killing approximately 100 innocent civilians and causing various injuries to others.

On 16 December [S/2015/986], Qatar transmitted to the Security Council President a letter from the Syrian Coalition drawing attention to the indiscriminate attacks by a combination of Syrian military missiles and air strikes that took place in eastern Ghouta, killing at least 45 civilians and wounding at least 100 others.

In an 18 December communication [S/2015/998], Syria noted that Turkish interference in internal Syrian affairs had taken on many forms over the course of the crisis, including the direct participation of the Turkish armed forces in offensive military operations in support of terrorists waging war against Syria.

Security Council consideration. On 18 December [S/PV.7588], the Secretary-General briefed the Security Council on the situation on Syria and stated that the Syrian conflict began with peaceful popular demands for political change, but soon became defined by internal, regional and international divisions, including in the Security Council. He welcomed the draft resolution 2254(2015) (see below) that the Council was about to adopt, the first such resolution to focus on the political path to resolving the crisis. The International Syria Support Group had made two major requests of the United Nations: first, to convene formal negotiations in January 2016 between the Syrian Government and opposition representatives, with a focus on a Syrian-led transition process; and second, in parallel, to determine the requirements and modalities of a nationwide ceasefire. The United Nations stood ready to undertake those tasks.

The Secretary-General urged the International Syria Support Group to apply the necessary pressure on the Syrian parties to immediately implement the following confidence-building measures: first, to stop the indiscriminate use of weapons against civilians, including barrel bombs, which had continued despite the Government's pledge to refrain from such assaults; second, to allow unconditional and unimpeded access

for aid convoys—tens of thousands of people in besieged areas had been forced to live on grass and weeds; third, to halt attacks on medical and educational facilities and lift all restrictions on medical and surgical supplies from humanitarian convoys; and, fourth, to release all detainees—reports indicated that prisoners faced torture and atrocious conditions.

SECURITY COUNCIL ACTION

On 18 December [meeting 7588], the Security Council unanimously adopted **resolution 2254(2015)**. The draft [S/2015/996] was submitted by the United States.

Communications. In letters of 21 December [S/2015/1002] and 24 December [S/2015/1028] Denmark and Saudi Arabia transmitted to the Security Council President letters from the Syrian Coalition drawing attention to the worsening humanitarian crisis inside Syria, and to a new chemical attack by Syrian forces in the city of Moadamiyeh.

In identical letters of 22 December [A/70/654-S/2015/1014] and 27 December [A/70/671-S/2015/1043], Syria conveyed its concern about the attacks by aircraft of the coalition, led by the United States, against the oil and gas installations and the economic infrastructure of Syria, under the pretext of targeting ISIL.

Also in a 22 December communication [S/2015/1022] to the Security Council President, Lebanon forwarded a copy of a 20 December letter from its foreign minister providing comments on Council resolution 2254(2015) (see above) and on the situation in Syria.

SECURITY COUNCIL ACTION

On 22 December [meeting 7595], the Security Council unanimously adopted **resolution 2258(2015)**. The draft [S/2015/1001] was submitted by 11 Member States.

Communications. On 24 December [S/2015/1029], Turkey rejected the allegations levelled against it by the Russian Federation at the meeting of the Security Council Ministers of Finance, which was held on 17 December.

On 28 December [S/2015/1044], Syria conveyed to the Secretary-General and the Security Council President that on that same day terrorists targeted the cities of Aleppo and Homs, killing 40 civilians and injuring 83 others.

On 29 December [A/70/673-S/2015/1048], Syria conveyed to the Secretary-General and the Council President that terrorists, with international support, had turned on Syria with all of the means at their disposal, taking a heavy toll on State institutions and infrastructure and on Syrian civilians and soldiers.

Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria

During the year, Staffan de Mistura served as the Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Syria.

Financing

In September [A/70/348/Add.1], the Secretary-General proposed resource requirements for the Office of the Special Envoy of Secretary-General for Syria for 2016 in the amount of \$12,211,600 (net of staff assessment).

In December [A/70/7/Add.10], ACABQ, subject to its recommendations and observations, recommended that the General Assembly approve the resources requested by the Secretary-General.

UNSMIS

By its resolution 2059(2012) [YUN 2012, p. 449], the Security Council renewed the mandate of the United Nations Supervision Mission in Syria (UNSMIS) for a final period of 30 days and expressed its willingness to renew it again only if the Secretary-General reported, and the Council confirmed, the cessation of the use of heavy weapons and a reduction of violence by all sides sufficient to allow UNSMIS to implement its mandate. As those conditions were not met, UNSMIS mandate came to an end on 19 August 2012.

Financing

In an 18 November 2014 report [A/69/594 & Corr.1], the Secretary-General provided details on the donation of, and the final disposition of, the assets of UNSMIS with a total inventory value of \$15,718,700, that were disposed of as at 15 September. He recommended that the General Assembly take note of the report on the final disposition of the assets of UNSMIS.

In March [A/69/847], ACABQ recommended that the Assembly take note of the Secretary-General's report, subject to its comments and observations.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION

On 25 June [meeting 97], the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Fifth Committee [A/69/953], adopted **resolution 69/304 (Financing of the United Nations Supervision Mission in the Syrian Arab Republic)** without vote [agenda item 164].

By decision **70/554** of 23 December, the General Assembly decided that the agenda item on the financing of UNSMIS would remain for consideration during its seventieth (2016) session.

Use of chemical weapons

OPCW-UN joint mission for the elimination of the chemical weapons programme in Syria

On 27 September 2013, the Executive Council of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) decided to establish special procedures for the expeditious destruction of Syria's chemical weapons programme. On the same day,

the Security Council, by its resolution 2118(2013) [YUN 2013, p. 443], endorsed the OPCW Executive Council decision, authorized a United Nations advance team to provide early assistance to OPCW activities in Syria, and requested the OPCW Director-General and the Secretary-General to closely cooperate in the implementation of the Executive Council decision. In a letter of 7 October 2013 to the Council, the Secretary-General outlined the proposal for a Joint Mission of OPCW and the United Nations, which was officially authorized by the Council on 11 October.

On 23 June 2014, the Joint Mission confirmed that all declared chemical weapons materials of Syria had been removed from Syrian territory. In the immediate months following the completion and removal of declared chemical weapons, the Joint Mission re-configured its capacities, and then was formally closed on 30 September.

Letter of Secretary-General. On 6 February [S/2015/95], the Secretary-General forwarded a letter from the OPCW Director-General Ahmet Üzümcü transmitting the decision of the OPCW Executive Council regarding the reports of the OPCW fact-finding mission that looked into allegations of the use of toxic chemicals as weapons in Syria. The Council expressed serious concern regarding the findings of the fact-finding mission, made with a high degree of confidence, that chlorine had been used as a weapon in Syria in the villages of Talmenes, Al Tamanah, and Kafr Zita from April to August 2014.

OPCW reports. In monthly letters sent to the Council, the Secretary-General transmitted twelve monthly reports issued in 2015—from the sixteenth to the twenty-seventh report—by the OPCW Director-General pursuant to Security Council resolution 2118(2013). Collectively, the reports covered the period from 23 December 2014 to 21 December 2015.

In the January report [S/2015/56], the Secretary-General noted that the destruction of the remaining 12 chemical weapons production facilities in Syria were underway, beginning with the first and second tunnels, and hoped that the delays in the start of those activities could be overcome and that the anticipated completion date of 30 June could be met.

Between 23 January and 22 February [S/2015/138], the OPCW Declaration Assessment Team had carried out a visit to Syria to hold further consultations with the Syrian authorities and to continue technical-level discussions. The Secretary-General also attached the three reports of the fact-finding mission that was looking into allegations of the use of toxic chemicals as weapons in Syria.

Between 23 February and 22 March [S/2015/211], Syria continued with the destruction of the 12 remaining chemical weapons production facilities, with OPCW confirming that the third underground struc-

ture had been destroyed, and the destruction of the fourth should be completed shortly.

Transmitting the OPCW nineteenth report in April [S/2015/295] covering the period from 23 March to 22 April, the Secretary-General noted that with respect to the destruction of the remaining 12 chemical weapons production facilities in Syria, all four underground structures that were accessible had been verified by OPCW as destroyed. In addition, four of seven hangars had been prepared for destruction with explosive; and resources had been mobilized to begin drilling at the fifth hangar with one underground structure and two hangars remaining inaccessible for security reasons.

On 28 May [S/2015/391], the Secretary-General transmitted the twentieth monthly report of the OPCW covering the period from 23 April to 21 May, and noted that on the destruction of the remaining 12 chemical weapons production facilities in Syria, the export licence for the explosives required to destroy the five hangars had been issued and that the delivery of those explosives was expected to take place by mid-June. He also noted that the installation of monitoring equipment at the first of the four accessible underground structures would take place at the end of May; the security situation, however, continued to render one underground structure and two hangars inaccessible.

Between 22 May and 22 June [S/2015/485], with respect to the destruction of the 12 chemical weapons production facilities, the explosives required to destroy the hangars were expected to arrive in Syria by the end of June. Access to one additional hangar had permitted the completion of drilling operations. As a result, six of the seven hangars were ready to receive the explosives. The seventh, as before, remained inaccessible owing to security considerations.

Between 23 June and 22 July [S/2015/572], of the 12 chemical weapons production facilities, all five underground structures had been verified by OPCW as having been destroyed. One hangar had also been destroyed, using the explosives that arrived in June.

In August [S/2015/668], OPCW verified four of the seven hangars as destroyed and that all five underground structures had been verified as destroyed. The Secretary-General said he looked forward to progress in the destruction of the remaining three hangars, bearing in mind the security environment.

Between 23 August and 22 September [S/2015/737], in the twenty-fourth monthly report, the Secretary-General noted that with respect to the destruction of the 12 chemical weapons production facilities, five of the seven hangars had been verified by OPCW as having been destroyed and that all five underground structures had been verified as destroyed. He also noted the security situation that was impeding access to the final two hangars, as well as discussions between OPCW, the

United Nations Office for Project Services, the contractor and the Syrian National Authority with regard to the procurement of additional explosives required for the destruction of the two hangars.

Transmitting the twenty-fifth OPCW report in October [S/2015/820] covering the period from 23 September to 21 October, the Secretary-General noted that OPCW had verified the destruction of the sixth of the seven hangars. The verified destruction of six hangars and five underground structures left one remaining hangar to be destroyed; the final hangar continued to be inaccessible, owing to the security situation.

In the twenty-sixth report [S/2015/908], the Secretary-General noted that with respect to the destruction of the 12 chemical weapons production facilities, comprising five underground structures and seven hangars, only one hangar had yet to be destroyed. That hangar, however, remained inaccessible, owing to the security situation. The reports of the OPCW fact-finding mission, transmitted by the Secretary-General to the Council in February, contained some disturbing conclusions, including the finding of the likely use of one or more toxic chemicals as a weapon, and confirmation with “utmost confidence” of the use of sulphur mustard.

In the twenty-seventh OPCW monthly report [S/2015/1049] covering the period 24 November to 21 December, the Secretary-General noted that of the 12 chemical weapons production facilities scheduled for destruction, one hangar had yet to be destroyed, as it remained inaccessible owing to the security situation.

SECURITY COUNCIL ACTION

On 6 March [meeting 7401], the Security Council adopted **resolution 2209(2015)** by vote (14-0-1). The draft [S/2015/161] was submitted by 37 Member States.

VOTE ON RESOLUTION 2209(2015):

In favour: Angola, Chad, Chile, China, France, Jordan, Lithuania, Malaysia, New Zealand, Nigeria, Russian Federation, Spain, United Kingdom, United States.

Against: None.

Abstaining: Venezuela.

SECURITY COUNCIL ACTION

On 7 August [meeting 7501], the Security Council unanimously adopted **resolution 2235(2015)**. The draft [S/2015/602] was submitted by France, Jordan, Lithuania, Malaysia, New Zealand, Spain, the United Kingdom and the United States.

OPCW-UN Joint Investigative Mechanism

Notes of Secretary-General. In a 27 August letter [S/2015/669] to the Security Council President, the Secretary-General, in coordination with the Director-General of OPCW, submitted to the Security Council for its authorization, in accordance with resolution

2235(2015) (see above), recommendations regarding the establishment and operation of an OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism.

In a 9 September note [S/2015/696] to the Council president, the Secretary-General noted that with regard to the Mechanism, one of the steps to be taken would be to consult with Syria regarding a status of mission agreement. That was necessary for the proper implementation of the mandated activities of the Mechanism, including with respect to privileges, immunities and security. The trust fund to be established in support of the activities of the Mechanism should be administered in accordance with the administrative and financial regulations of the United Nations. Voluntary contributions to the trust fund would be used for the material and technical needs of the Mechanism.

The Council acknowledged the recommendations of the Secretary-General on 10 September [S/2015/697].

In a 9 November letter to the Council President [S/2015/854], the Secretary-General informed that the Mechanism would begin its full operations on 13 November.

Appointments. On 11 September [S/2015/709], the Secretary-General, in coordination with the Director-General of OPCW, informed the Security Council of his intention to appoint Virginia Gamba (Argentina) as head of the independent three-member panel to be set up to lead the Joint Investigative Mechanism. The Council took note of the Secretary-General's intention on 15 September [S/2015/710].

The Syrian Golan

The Golan Heights in the Syrian Arab Republic, occupied by Israel since 1967, were effectively annexed when Israel extended its laws, jurisdiction and administration to the territory in 1981 [YUN 1981, p. 309]. In 2015, the General Assembly reiterated its demand that Israel withdraw from all the occupied Syrian Golan to the line of 4 June 1967, in implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions and called upon Israel to resume talks with Syria and Lebanon. The United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) continued to supervise the ceasefire between Israel and Syria in the Golan Heights, and to ensure the separation of militaries. The Force's mandate was extended twice during the year, in June and in December.

Reports of Secretary-General. In his 12 August report [A/70/312] to the General Assembly, the Secretary-General stated that no reply had been received from Israel in response to a May note verbale addressed to it by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) on his behalf requesting information on steps taken or envisaged for the implementation of resolution 69/94

[YUN 2014, p. 598]. Replies had been received from Brazil, Cuba and Syria.

On 31 August [A/70/353], the Secretary-General reported that, as at 17 August, only Brazil had replied to his request for information on steps taken or envisaged to implement Assembly resolutions 69/24 on Jerusalem and resolution 69/25 on the Syrian Golan [ibid., p. 597].

Special Committee on Israeli Practices. The Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories, in its October report [A/70/406 & Corr.1], stated that the Committee was not able to hold meetings in Syria owing to the situation in the country, but met with civil society representatives, witnesses, representatives of Bedouin and refugee communities, Palestinian officials and United Nations representative in Amman.

The Special Committee was informed of financial incentives of up to \$12,000 offered to Israeli families that settled in the occupied Syrian Golan for a minimum of five years. The Committee was also informed of Israel's efforts to populate the occupied Syrian Golan under the "farms project", involving the establishment of 750 new farms. It was noted that 90 Israeli families had already been transferred to settle on those farms in 2015 and that the influx would continue at a rate of 150 families per year until all 750 farms were occupied. As part of the "farms project", Israel had reportedly illegally diverted water to irrigate those farms, thereby depleting water resources and depriving Syrians of their use. While there were no recent reported cases of major demolitions of property in the occupied Syrian Golan, civil society representatives indicated that demolition orders for Syrian properties issued in the past in the occupied Syrian Golan were still in place. It was also alleged that Israel had taken advantage of the instability generated by the Syrian conflict to further expand settlements and to exploit natural resources. Civil society representatives highlighted the difficulties for Syrian residents living in the occupied Syrian Golan, including in the town of Majdal Shams, which was surrounded by an Israeli military camp and in close proximity to landmines.

The Special Committee called upon Israel to comply with Security Council resolution 497(1981) [YUN 1981, p. 312], which annulled the decision of Israel on the annexation of the occupied Syrian Golan.

Communication. In identical letters of 7 May [A/69/895–S/2015/318] to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council, Syria complained about the establishment of 750 farming projects by Israel in the occupied Syrian Golan in violation of international law, the Geneva Conventions and Security Council resolution 497(1981), in which the Council deemed that the Israeli decision to impose its laws, jurisdiction and administration in the occupied

Syrian Golan Heights was null and void and without international legal effect.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION

On 24 November [meeting 64], the General Assembly adopted **resolution 70/17** [draft: A/70/L.17 & Add.1] (**The Syrian Golan**) by recorded vote (105-6-56) [agenda item 37].

RECORDED VOTE ON RESOLUTION 70/17:

In favour: Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belize, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Jamaica, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Libya, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Somalia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zimbabwe.

Against: Canada, Israel, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Palau, United States.

Abstaining: Albania, Andorra, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Cameroon, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liberia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Montenegro, Nauru, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Panama, Paraguay, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, San Marino, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Sudan, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Tonga, Ukraine, United Kingdom.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION

On 9 December [meeting 70], the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Fourth Committee [A/70/497] adopted **resolution 70/91** (**The occupied Syrian Golan**) by recorded vote (160-1-16) [agenda item 55].

RECORDED VOTE ON RESOLUTION 70/91:

In favour: Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Bhutan, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan,

Kenya, Kiribati, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Against: Israel.

Abstaining: Cameroon, Canada, Central African Republic, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Honduras, Liberia, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, Palau, Paraguay, Togo, Tonga, United States, Vanuatu.

UNDOF

The mandate of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF), established by Security Council resolution 350(1974) [YUN 1974, p. 205] to supervise the observance of the ceasefire between Israel and Syria in the Syrian Golan and to ensure the separation of their forces, was renewed twice in 2015, in June and in December, each time for a six-month period.

To carry out its mandate, UNDOF maintained an area of separation, which was over 75 kilometres long and varied in width between approximately 10 kilometres in the centre to 200 metres in the extreme south. UNDOF headquarters was located at Camp Ya-four, and an administrative office was maintained in Damascus. Logistics support to UNDOF was provided by Camp Ziouani, the alternate headquarters of the Force.

As at 13 November, UNDOF comprised 768 troops, including 23 women, from Bhutan, the Czech Republic, Fiji, India, Ireland, Nepal and the Netherlands, and 77 military observers, including three women, from the UNTSO.

Appointments. On 1 January [S/2015/29] the Secretary-General informed the Security Council of his intention to appoint Major General Purna Chandra Thapa (Nepal) as the Head of Mission and Force Commander of UNDOF, succeeding Lieutenant General Iqbal Singh Singha (India), who completed his assignment on 2 January. The Council took note of the letter on 15 January [S/2015/30].

Communications. In a 28 January letter [S/2015/65] to the Secretary-General and the Security Council President, Israel reported that it held the Syrian Government responsible for four rockets fired from Syria on 27 January that exploded in Israel's

Golan Heights, and all other attacks emanating from Syrian territory and for all violations of the 1974 separation of forces agreement.

In identical letters to the Secretary-General and the Council President on 9 February [S/2015/98], Syria drew attention to relevant United Nations resolutions, including resolution 497(1981) confirmed that the Israeli decision of 14 December 1981 to impose its laws, jurisdiction and administration in the occupied Syrian Golan was null and void and had no validity whatsoever.

In a 25 February communication [A/69/799–S/2015/143], Syria noted that on 25 February, Israel re-arrested the activist Sidqi al-Maqt, who had been released in August 2012 after being held in Israeli prisons for 27 years without legal or moral basis, raiding his family home in the village of Majdal Shams in the occupied Syrian Golan.

On 2 March [A/69/807–S/2015/154], Syria informed the Secretary-General and the Council President that Israel had detained Sheikh Atif Darwish and Fida' Majid al-Sha'ir in yet another violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949.

Report of Secretary-General. Pursuant to Security Council resolution 2192(2014) [YUN 2014, p. 604], the Secretary-General reported in March [S/2015/177] to the Council on UNDOF activities between 20 November 2014 and 3 March 2015.

The ceasefire between Israel and Syria was maintained albeit in a continuously volatile environment attributable to the ongoing conflict in Syria. The Syrian armed forces carried out military activities and security operations against armed groups, often in response to offensives carried out by the armed groups. Inside the area of separation, the presence of the Syrian armed forces and military equipment, as well as any other armed personnel and military equipment, other than that of UNDOF, was in violation of the Disengagement of Forces Agreement.

A number of incidents occurred on 7 December 2014 and 18 and 27 January 2015 across the ceasefire line UNDOF observed and reported instances of transborder movements of unidentified individuals between Lebanon and Syria in the northern part of the area of separation. Several incidents also occurred during the reporting period that jeopardized United Nations personnel and positions.

As at 22 February, UNDOF comprised 789 troops, including 32 women, from Fiji, India, Ireland, Nepal and the Netherlands, and 67 military observers from UNTSO, including one woman, who assisted the Force. On 9 February, as part of the reconfiguration of the Force, 146 troops of the Fijian contingent redeployed to the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL).

Communications. In letters dated 16 March [S/2015/182], 31 March [A/69/849–S/2015/220] and 7 May

[A/69/895–S/2015/318], Syria informed the Secretary-General and the Security Council President of its position regarding the March report (see above) of the Secretary-General on UNDOF; of the status of Syrian prisoner Sidqi al-Maqt, who was being detained by Israel; and of Israel establishing 750 new farms in the occupied Syrian Golan.

On 28 April [S/2015/293], Israel expressing its concern over four terrorists originating from Syria who had infiltrated Israeli territory and attempted to plant an improvised explosive device in the Israeli Golan Heights.

Report of Secretary-General. In his June report [S/2015/405], the Secretary-General gave an account of UNDOF activities from 3 March to 28 May.

On 26 April, IDF informed UNDOF that they had killed four terrorists carrying heavy equipment near the UN observation post 73. The following day, UNDOF initiated an investigation into the incident, though IDF gave UNDOF only until midday of the following day to conduct its investigation. Owing to the IDF deadline, UNDOF was unable to complete its investigation and could not confirm claims made by IDF that the individuals intended to place improvised explosive devices. Crossing of the ceasefire line by civilians, primarily shepherds, was also observed by United Nations personnel on an almost daily basis. Since the temporary relocation of UNDOF from a number of its positions on the Bravo side in September 2014, UNDOF, in consultation with the parties, continued to review the situation in the area of separation.

As at 20 May, UNDOF comprised 788 troops, including 31 women, from Fiji, India, Ireland, Nepal and the Netherlands, and 67 UNTSO military observers, including two women. In December 2014 and in April 2015, seven United Nations personnel based in Damascus—six UNDOF and one UNTSO personnel—were declared “unwelcome” in Syria by the Syrian Government.

Communication. In identical letters of 22 June [S/2015/465] to the Secretary-General and the Security Council President, Syria conveyed its position regarding the June report of the Secretary-General on UNDOF (see above) emphasizing the need to address the fundamental reason for the presence of UNDOF in the region, namely, the continuing Israeli occupation of the Syrian Golan.

SECURITY COUNCIL ACTION

On 29 June [meeting 7477], the Security Council unanimously adopted **resolution 2229(2015)**. The draft [S/2015/474] was submitted by the Russian Federation and the United States.

Report of Secretary-General. In September [S/2015/699], the Secretary-General reported on UNDOF activities between 29 May and 28 August.

During the reporting period, the ceasefire between Israel and Syria was maintained, albeit in a continuously volatile environment attributable to the ongoing conflict in Syria and notwithstanding a number of significant violations of the Disengagement of Forces Agreement of 1974.

In order to maintain the ceasefire and see that it was scrupulously observed, UNDOF protested all firing across the ceasefire line to the Senior Syrian Delegate and IDF. In his regular interactions with both sides, the UNDOF Force Commander continued to call upon both parties to the Disengagement Agreement to exercise utmost restraint and prevent an escalation of the situation across the ceasefire line. The Secretary-General was concerned of the alleged rocket fire into Israel on 20 August, which, if verified, would be the first such strike from Syria into Israel since the conclusion of the Agreement.

The Secretary-General observed that the increased use of heavy weapons by both the Syrian armed forces and armed groups in the continuing Syrian conflict, including the use of air power by Syrian Government forces in the area of limitation on the Bravo (Syrian) side, was disturbing. Armed opposition groups and other armed groups continued to maintain control over significant sections of the areas of separation and limitation in the southern part of the UNDOF area of operations and remained present along the section of the main road connecting the two UNDOF camps. The established crossing between the Alpha and the Bravo sides remained closed.

As at 26 August, UNDOF comprised 799 troops, including 24 women, from Bhutan, the Czech Republic, Fiji, India, Ireland, Nepal and the Netherlands, and 69 UNTSO military observers, including three women.

Communications. On 21 August [S/2015/659], Israel noted that the previous day, four rockets were fired from Syrian territory and struck the northern Galilee and the Golan Heights in Israel, which was an indiscriminate and premeditated terrorist attack against Israeli territory without any provocation from the Israeli side. According to Israel, the attack was carried out by the Palestinian Islamic Jihad and directed by the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Quds Force. On 11 September [S/2015/715], Iran rejected the allegations made by Israel.

In identical letters of 18 September [S/2015/725] to the Secretary-General and the Council President, Syria conveyed its position regarding the September report of the Secretary-General on UNDOF (see above).

Lebanon, in identical letters of 18 September [A/70/413–S/2015/758] to the Secretary-General and the Council President, transmitted a statistical summary of Israeli violations of Council resolution 1701(2006) [YUN 2006, p. 583] committed during the month of August 2015. **Report of Secretary-General.** In December [S/2015/930], the Secretary-General reported on

UNDOF activities between 29 August and 18 November. Syrian armed forces carried out military activities and security operations against armed groups, often in response to offensives carried out by those groups in the area of separation and the area of limitation on the Bravo (Syrian) side.

On seven occasions, United Nations personnel at observation post 54 observed interaction at the Israeli technical fence gate between IDF personnel and individuals from the Bravo side, some of whom were armed. On 28 October, UNDOF observed individuals from the Bravo side handing over an injured person on a stretcher to IDF personnel.

On several occasions during the reporting period, UNDOF observed armed and unarmed persons digging out and removing landmines from around United Nations observation post 54 in the vicinity of the ceasefire line.

As at 13 November, UNDOF comprised 768 troops, including 23 women, from Bhutan, the Czech Republic, Fiji, India, Ireland, Nepal and the Netherlands, and 77 UNTSO military observers, including three women.

The Secretary-General observed that there should be no military forces in the area of separation other than those of UNDOF, urged the Syrian Government to stop the use of air strikes and also urged IDF to refrain from carrying out air strikes across the ceasefire line. He recommended that the Security Council extend the mandate of UNDOF for further six months, until 30 June 2016, a decision to which both Syria and Israel agreed.

SECURITY COUNCIL ACTION

On 22 December [meeting 7594], the Security Council unanimously adopted **resolution 2257(2015)**. The draft [S/2015/1004] was submitted by the Russian Federation and the United States.

Financing

The General Assembly had before it the performance report of UNDOF from 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014 [A/69/586 & Corr.1 & 2], which showed expenditures amounting to \$59,343,200 gross (\$57,980,500 net) against an appropriation of \$60,654,500 gross (\$59,264,500 net). The budget provided for the deployment of 1,047 military contingent personnel, 48 international staff and 110 national staff.

The Assembly also considered the Secretary-General's report [A/68/732] containing the budget for the period from 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016, which amounted to \$52,301,700 gross (\$50,900,800 net) and providing for the deployment of 950 military contingent personnel, 54 international staff (including eight temporary positions) and 89 national staff.

In April [A/69/839/Add.1], ACABQ recommended that the unencumbered balance of \$1,311,300 for the period from 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014, as well as other income and adjustments in the amount of \$710,800, for the period ended 30 June 2014, be credited to Member States. It also recommended that the General Assembly appropriate an amount of \$52,261,222, a reduction of \$40,478 to the Secretary-General's proposals, for the maintenance of UNDOF for the 12-month period from 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016, should the Security Council decide to extend the mandate of UNDOF beyond 30 June 2015.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION

On 25 June [meeting 97], the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Fifth Committee [A/69/960], adopted **resolution 69/301 (Financing of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force)** without vote [agenda item 161 (a)].

By decision **70/554** of 23 December, the Assembly decided that the agenda item on the financing of UNDOF would remain for consideration during its seventieth (2016) session.

UNTSO

The United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) was the first ever peacekeeping operation established by the United Nations. It was originally set up to monitor the ceasefire called for by Security Council resolution S/801 of 29 May 1948 [YUN 1947–48, p. 427] in the newly partitioned Palestine. UNTSO continued its work through its military observers who fulfilled evolving mandates—from supervising the four armistice agreements between Israel and its neighbours (Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Syrian Arab Republic) to monitoring other ceasefires, as well as performing other tasks. During the year, UNTSO personnel also worked with the two other peacekeeping forces in the area: UNDOF and UNIFIL. In addition, UNTSO maintained liaison offices in Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, and Jerusalem for liaison with Israel and Jordan.

UNTSO operated under a UN regular budget appropriation of \$69,667,500 million for the 2014–2015 period. **Appointments.** In a 14 July letter [S/2015/541], the Secretary-General informed the Security Council of his intention to appoint Major General Arthur David Gawn (New Zealand) as Head of Mission and Chief of Staff of UNTSO. Major General Gawn would succeed Major General Michael Finn (Ireland), who would complete his assignment on 31 July. The Council took note of the Secretary-General's intention on 16 July [S/2015/542].