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Replies of the State of Palestine to the list of issues in relation to its initial report*

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Replies of the State of Palestine in relation to the initial report on civil and political rights

1. The constitutional and legal framework within which the Covenant is implemented

1. The Supreme Constitutional Court adopted, in its explanatory decision, a dualist system with respect to the enforcement of international treaties in the Palestinian legal system. The Court underscored the need to incorporate the provisions of international treaties into the domestic legislation of the State of Palestine in order to ensure their national enforcement. The Constitutional Court also stressed the need to review relevant domestic laws with a view to ensuring their conformity with international mechanisms for the protection of human rights and dignity.

2. The State of Palestine is taking vigorous action to supervise the implementation of treaties at the national level by introducing domestic procedures for monitoring compliance with obligations arising from its ratification of treaties and from the recommendations of human rights treaty bodies, as stated in its initial report. The high-level ministerial committee concluded that the basic requirement for the enforcement of provisions of international treaties in the Palestinian legal system consists in the incorporation of such provisions into domestic legislation. Accordingly, it decided to establish a technical committee to review the legislation currently in force in the State of Palestine and to align it with international norms and with the conventions and protocols to which the State of Palestine has acceded. The Legislative Harmonization Committee is mandated to repeal or amend legal texts that are inconsistent with the provisions of such treaties, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to insert new articles into existing legislation, or to introduce new laws aimed at guaranteeing the implementation of treaty provisions.

3. Accordingly, the Constitutional Court's statement regarding the need to take people's national, religious and cultural identity into account is not deemed to impose restrictions on the implementation of the provisions of the International Covenant or to prevent them from taking precedence over national legislation. The intention was, in fact, to ensure that the national judiciary, when applying the provisions of international treaties, takes into account fundamental values associated with national and religious identity, since these are characteristics attributable to all peoples. The Court did not intend to impede the implementation of treaty provisions, to exclude them, to annul any of the fundamental rights contained therein, or to impose any restrictions conducive to the loss of basic rights, since the State of Palestine seeks to promote public welfare in a democratic society, in accordance with the provisions of the Covenant.

4. With regard to the invocation of the provisions of the Covenant before domestic courts, although they have not been incorporated into the Palestinian legal system because they have not yet been published in the Official Gazette, the provisions of human rights treaties and other international instruments to which the State of Palestine has acceded can nonetheless be invoked before judicial bodies prior to the completion of the formal stages leading to their publication in the Official Gazette. Human rights become mandatory and acquire legal status not only because they are enshrined in a legal instrument but also because they are fundamental rights guaranteed by the Palestinian Constitution. The provisions of human rights instruments have already been invoked before the domestic courts, and many Palestinian judges have issued judicial rulings based on such instruments. In addition, the rights enshrined in the Covenant are applicable pursuant to domestic laws and other international instruments that have been published in the Official Gazette and that enshrine the same rights, such as those relating to fair trial guarantees, freedom of opinion and expression, equal access to public employment, an increase in the marriageable age for males and females, the rights of the child, and other rights.

2. Anti-corruption measures

5. The State of Palestine has adopted numerous measures aimed at promoting the prosecution of persons charged with crimes of corruption and of fugitives from justice, including the enactment of legislation and the introduction of mechanisms and regulations that help to reduce and prevent corruption and to ensure that its perpetrators are prosecuted and brought to justice.

6. The Palestinian legal system has addressed crimes of corruption in Anti-Corruption Act No. 1 of 2005, as amended. The Act identifies persons who are accountable and defines crimes that are deemed to constitute corruption, including all criminal activities that affect, obstruct or influence public funds or the public interest. It is applicable to all persons who perpetrate such acts, particularly those occupying a public office or position, and no persons are excluded or granted immunity on account of their official or political status. In addition, integrity and transparency is promoted by secondary legislation, including Disclosure of Conflict of Interest Regulation No. 1 of 2020 and Gifts Regulation No. 10 of 2019.

7. The Anti-Corruption Act entrusts the Public Prosecution Service, which addresses corruption crimes, with the authority to investigate, file charges and institute public prosecutions. A body that specializes in corruption crimes was established pursuant to a decision by the Supreme Judicial Council. It is composed of regular judges and conducts the legal proceedings, examining cases on the basis of special procedural rules that guarantee a balance between the right to defence and the right to a fair trial. It also ensures speedy adjudication. The Act provides for shorter periods than those generally imposed for criminal proceedings and for special procedures that facilitate the conduct of the legal proceedings and the provision of evidence. It prescribes penalties and identifies crimes entailing harsher penalties, and specifies cases in which the funds may be confiscated and perpetrators may be required to return the proceeds of their crimes.

8. Anti-corruption activists are covered by the provisions of Council of Ministers Decree No. 7 of 2019 concerning the protection of whistle-blowers, witnesses and experts in corruption cases as well as their relatives and persons close to them. In addition, article 18 of the Anti-Corruption Act provides legal protection for whistle-blowers in corruption cases, guaranteeing protection in their workplaces and immunity from any arbitrary measures.

9. The third National Cross-Sectoral Strategy for Integrity and Anti-Corruption (2020-2022), which was approved in 2022 and extended until 2023 on account of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, and the Anti-Corruption Media Strategy are designed to prevent and to provide safeguards against corruption from the preparatory stage through to the implementation and monitoring stages. The procedures are concluded with an assessment in cooperation and partnership with civil society. In addition, the Anti-Corruption Commission has implemented almost 70 bilateral plans together with its partners in the Strategy and has organized many activities and events aimed at raising awareness of the impact of corruption. The activities have encompassed all sectors of society.

10. The State of Palestine has adopted a set of measures aimed at limiting nepotism and patronage, in accordance with article 9 of the Basic Law and with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Anti-Corruption Act No. 1 of 2005, as amended, criminalizes nepotism and patronage. The penalties prescribed for the perpetrators are a term of imprisonment of between one and three years and a fine of between 500 and 5,000 Jordanian dinars. They are also required to return any funds obtained from the crime. The Anti-Corruption Commission receives complaints, communications and reports concerning suspicions of corruption and appointments and promotions based on nepotism or patronage undertaken in person or electronically.

11. The Anti-Corruption Commission was established in 2010 as a legal oversight body responsible for the prosecution of crimes of corruption, pursuant to article 3 of Decree-Law No. 7 of 2010 amending Illicit Gains Act No. 1 of 2005. Its establishment formed part of a series of legislative and institutional reforms undertaken by the State of Palestine in order to combat corruption. Action to prevent corruption and to guarantee law enforcement included the establishment of the Anti-Corruption Commission, a special prosecutor's office and the Anti-Corruption Court to investigate corruption crimes. This clearly demonstrates the State's

political will to combat corruption and to hold its perpetrators accountable, and it was described as one of the best practices in the report on the implementation by the State of Palestine of the provisions of chapters III and IV of the United Nations Convention against Corruption.

12. With regard to the arrest of 22 anti-corruption protestors in July 2020, eight of the protestors were detained and the remainder were released on the same day. They were referred to the Ramallah Magistrates' Court on 28 July 2020 on the charge of participation in an illegal gathering in violation of article 165 (1) of the Criminal Code No. 16 of 1960. Their cases were registered in Ramallah Magistrates' Court as No. 2632/2020, No. 2633/2020 and No. 2642/2020, and the requisite legal measures were taken in accordance with the applicable rules. It was decided in one of the three cases involving two protestors to declare the case inadmissible. The legal proceedings are ongoing in the other two cases.

3. State of emergency

13. A state of emergency was declared on 5 March 2020 by Presidential Decree No. 1 of 2020 in order to confront the threat and prevent the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Decree met all the conditions for the declaration of a state of emergency specified in article 110 of the Basic Law as follows:

1. The Decree stated that the aim of the declaration of a state of emergency was to confront the threat posed by the coronavirus, to prevent it from spreading, to address the risks arising from it, to protect public health and to guarantee security and stability.

2. The Decree proclaimed that the state of emergency was applicable to the entire Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem.

3. The Decree specified the period of time for the state of emergency, namely 30 days from the date of promulgation of the Decree.

14. The Decree was issued following the adoption of Decree-Law No. 7 of 2020 concerning the state of emergency, which specified the procedures, the authorities responsible for their implementation, the penalties to be imposed for any violations and the possible extension of the state of emergency for the same purpose.

15. The protective measures adopted during the state of emergency imposed restrictions on a number of rights, primarily the rights to movement, travel, employment and education, and were imposed partially in a number of sectors. The measures began to be alleviated and life began to return to normal, while some restrictions such as social distancing and public safety instructions were maintained. The Prime Minister was authorized by the Decree on the declaration of a state of emergency to issue a set of emergency decisions, in accordance with the provisions of the Basic Law and Decree-Law No. 7 of 2020 concerning the state of emergency. The measures were designed to protect citizens from the COVID-19 pandemic, to provide treatment for infected persons, and to safeguard the daily lives of citizens. The decisions were based on recommendations by the Palestinian Ministry of Health and the World Health Organization (WHO), without prejudice to the principle of equality before the law.

16. The State of Palestine undertook to notify the States parties to the Covenant, through the United Nations Secretary-General, of the declaration of a state of emergency, specifying the grounds for the declaration, associated measures and procedures, and the applicable time period. It stated, in its notification, that restrictions had been imposed on the right to freedom of movement and the right of peaceful assembly enshrined in articles 12 and 21 of the Covenant in order to combat the COVID-19 pandemic, in accordance with the aim of the declaration of a state of emergency.

17. As the risks associated with the COVID-19 pandemic were no longer prevalent by the end of 2022, the State of Palestine refrained from issuing any further decrees aimed at extending the state of emergency. Accordingly, the final Presidential Decree declaring a state of emergency was issued on 25 September 2022.

4. Non-discrimination

18. The Palestinian Constitution enshrines the principle of full equality of all Palestinians, without discrimination, in the exercise of public rights and freedoms. It also guarantees them full equality before the law and the judiciary. These principles are also enshrined in the Declaration of Independence and in the provisions of the Basic Law, as stated in the initial report.

19. The State of Palestine established a Committee on the harmonization of its legislation with international treaties in order to meet the obligations it had incurred following their ratification, and in order to incorporate the treaties into domestic legislation by harmonizing existing laws or adopting new laws that were consistent with their provisions. The Committee studied the concluding observations issued by the treaty bodies, in particular those issued by the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, and the Committee on the Rights of the Child. It decided to accord priority to the treaty bodies' observations and to include them in its action plans.

20. The State of Palestine published the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination in the Official Gazette pursuant to Act No. 14 of 2021, and it published the Convention on the Rights of the Child pursuant to Act No. 25 of 2021. The State of Palestine is also drafting a decree-law on combating all forms of racial discrimination, which will define and criminalize all such acts.

21. A national team has been formed to review the draft criminal code, and an action plan has been developed based on international norms, treaties that have been ratified by the State of Palestine, and recommendations issued by human rights treaty bodies, especially those concerning the criminalization of discrimination in all areas of life, and the incorporation of a comprehensive definition thereof.

22. A definition of discrimination, in line with human rights treaties, has been included in the draft decree-law on protection of the family from violence. A definition of discrimination in the area of employment has also been included among the recommendations by the Legislative Harmonization Committee following its review of the Labour Code. A policy paper has been prepared on aspects of the existing labour legislation that should be amended with a view to incorporating a definition of discrimination, specifying evidentiary and litigation procedures, and eliminating all exceptions. Steps are being taken to amend the Civil Service Code with a view to including a provision that prohibits and criminalizes discrimination in the workplace.

23. Article 9 of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act No. 4 of 1999, as amended, provides for the adoption of rules and regulations that guarantee protection for persons with disabilities from all forms of violence, exploitation and discrimination. The State of Palestine is also drafting a decree-law on the rights of persons with disabilities that is consistent with the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. A final review of the draft is currently under way.

24. The State of Palestine has introduced an individual complaints mechanism, in accordance with article 14 of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. The Independent Commission for Human Rights is the body responsible for receiving and considering petitions submitted by individuals and groups who claim to be victims of racial discrimination. Training courses on the provisions of the Convention were held for the Commission's staff so that specialized staff members can investigate complaints of racial discrimination.

25. The State of Palestine regularly organizes awareness-raising campaigns on international human rights treaties as well as training courses for judges and prosecutors on international treaties, so that they make invoke them when handing down judgments, regulating cases of discrimination and conducting relevant legal proceedings.

26. The State of Palestine participated with the League of Arab States in preparing the Arab guiding law aimed at preventing, combating and criminalizing hate speech and at promoting dialogue and tolerance among all segments of society.

27. The provisions of the Palestinian Constitution and the legislation in force also guarantee the right to redress for human rights violations, including discrimination. Article 32 requires the State to guarantee a fair remedy for all persons who have suffered harm as a result of an assault on their personal freedoms, the sanctity of their private life or any of the rights and liberties guaranteed by the Basic Law or other legislation.

28. Table No. 1 presents statistics concerning cases of discrimination heard in the ordinary courts, disaggregated according to the type of crime, age, gender, religion and the judgment handed down in the case. No victims have filed claims for compensation.

29. Israel, the illegal occupying power, exercises discrimination against the Palestinian people and promotes a system of apartheid in the State of Palestine, as stated in many United Nations reports, by implementing systematic and widespread discriminatory policies against the Palestinian people and by enforcing racist laws.

5. Violence against women and domestic violence

30. The draft law on protection of the family from violence defines domestic violence as follows: "Any act or failure to act by a family member that causes physical or psychological harm to another family member, including physical, psychological or sexual ill-treatment, sexual or economic exploitation, or the threat of such acts, regardless of whether the act or threat occurs within or outside the family home." The draft does not contain a definition of marital rape because it was subjected to many amendments due to resistance on the part of society. In any case, domestic violence comprises sexual, physical, economic and verbal violence, and all types of violence are included in the draft. The draft law also criminalizes all types of sexual violence and provides for deterrent penalties, in addition to many preventive and punitive measures, as well as measures to protect victims and witnesses.

31. The Palestinian draft criminal code also includes crimes of domestic violence. It contains no articles concerning so-called honour crimes, but persons who commit such crimes are not exempted from punishment.

5 (a) and (c) Underreporting of gender-based violence, informing victims of their rights and ensuring their access to justice, including during the COVID-19 pandemic

32. The Council of Ministers issued the amended National Referral System for Women Victims of Violence in November 2022 in order to guarantee access to national referral mechanisms, especially for women with disabilities, and to rectify the legal and procedural gaps under the previous system. Steps are taken to protect women victims of violence, to promote their reintegration into their families through an effective multisectoral network, and to provide health-care, social and legal services to support victims of gender-based violence. The Ministry of Women's Affairs has established a National Online Observatory of Gender-Based Violence, which is run by a group of national, governmental and civil society institutions operating in the field of violence against women.

33. Free telephone lines for the receipt of complaints of violence have been allocated to the police (Family Protection Department), the Centre for the Protection of Women Victims of Violence (the Mehwar Centre) and civil society institutions. In addition, continuous action is taken to provide shelter, support and protection services, legal assistance, counselling, psychological and vocational rehabilitation services, health-care and education services, as well as nurseries for children accompanying women victims of violence.

34. A total of 396 cases were handled by women's counsellors during 2019 in all areas of the West Bank, and 138 cases were handled during the first half of 2020. Social, legal, health-care and psychological services as well as empowerment and reintegration services were provided in various protection centres in the West Bank for 177 women and children in 2019, including seven women with disabilities, and for 48 women and children in 2020, including three women with disabilities. In the Gaza Strip, 326 women survivors benefited from the services of the Hayat Centre for the Protection and Empowerment of Women and Families in 2019, and 117 women benefited from its services in the first six months of 2020. The

services include shelters, psychological and social support, counselling and child case management.

35. Awareness-raising campaigns were conducted through audiovisual media programmes aimed at raising citizens' awareness of protection mechanisms and promoting access for women, girls and persons with disabilities to protective resources and mechanisms for reporting cases of violence.

36. On 27 April 2020, the Council of Ministers, responding to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the state of emergency and deteriorating health conditions, issued a decree at its weekly session No. 18/54 introducing the following procedures for the transfer and protection of women victims of violence:

- The Government was required to include procedures for the protection for women and girls who are victims of violence among its priorities in the emergency plan.
- All governmental and non-governmental institutions were required to undertake transfer procedures that were approved and agreed in line with the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The Ministry of Health was required to undertake COVID-19 examinations on behalf of all women victims of violence and their children before referring them to protection centres, in cooperation with the Ministry of Social Development and family protection units in the police, with a view to ensuring that they remained in a safe location until the results of the examination were issued, and that they were placed in quarantine in a safe location if they were infected with the virus.
- The Ministry of Health was required to grant full approval for the transfer of beneficiaries to protection centres after receiving the results of the examination, ensuring their safety and producing an epidemiological map of the persons with whom they had been in contact, with a view to ensuring the safety of beneficiaries in the protection centres. An additional examination was to be conducted 14 days later in order to ensure the safety of beneficiaries before they were hosted in the protection centres.
- The number of officers in family protection units and the number of women development counsellors were to be increased, and they were to be equipped with the skills that they required to work with women victims of violence in order to enhance the speed and quality of the services provided, to respect the principles of privacy and confidentiality in each case, and to safeguard the women's health.
- Following the beneficiaries' full recovery, they were to be transferred to protection centres and placed in isolation once again, in coordination with the Ministry of Health.
- The names and telephone numbers of the designated persons were to be circulated by the various entities with a view to facilitating continuous communication and expediting the provision of services, in cooperation with relevant civil society organizations.
- Competent governmental and non-governmental bodies were required to train protection centre staff to deal with the COVID-19 epidemic, especially when women were placed in quarantine or in isolation in the centres. They were also required to provide training on the procedures and precautions to be observed during the quarantine period.
- Facilities, sterilization materials, masks and gloves were to be continuously provided to protection centres, family protection units in the police and other service-providing institutions with a view to limiting the spread of the virus.

37. With a view to empowering women and involving them in decision-making during the COVID-19 pandemic, almost 300 guidance, steering and support committees were established in various local bodies, composed of about 1,500 women and girls, in order to train women leaders, to support and assist institutions in providing awareness-raising, care and protection services, and to monitor women's needs in the different governorates.

38. The Public Prosecution Service developed a risk assessment form for cases of violence, in line with the declaration of a state of emergency, and provided the teams with all necessary means of protection and prevention. The Prosecutor General issued a number of decisions, giving priority to investigations of cases of violence against women and children, while providing public prosecution services without disruption, in line with the state of emergency plan.

(b) Preventing women and girls from committing suicide

39. The Council of Ministers issued Decree No. 8/90/18/MW/MA of 2021 establishing a National Committee to prevent cases of attempted suicide and to upgrade the system of mental and social health-care services in the State of Palestine. The National Strategy for the Prevention of Suicide (2021-2026) was adopted, and the National Committee for the Prevention of Suicide was established to implement the Strategy. The National Committee has developed a special protocol for dealing with cases of suicide and attempted suicide, for inter-partner transfer procedures, and for the provision of continuous support, assistance and oversight.

40. The Public Prosecution Service, on receiving a report of attempted suicide, undertakes detailed investigations to rule out any suspicion of a crime and to ascertain whether somebody has provided instructions, assistance or incitement for an attempted suicide so that the person may be duly prosecuted. If the attempted suicide was the result of violence, specific measures are taken in accordance with the amended 2022 National Referral System for Women Victims of Violence in order to guarantee appropriate referral procedures for such women, especially those with disabilities. In the event that a child who has attempted suicide is denied a safe environment, steps are taken in coordination with the juvenile prosecutor's office to adopt the legally required protective measures.

41. The Ministry of Social Development deals with suicide cases referred to it by partner agencies (the Public Prosecution Service, the police, hospitals and health centres) and instructs a competent counsellor of the Ministry to take vigorous supervisory action if the person who has attempted suicide is a child, in coordination with the School Counselling Department. Persons who have attempted suicide also undergo a psychological assessment to ascertain whether there is a risk of repetition, and to develop a treatment plan and a plan for their reintegration. It is also necessary to engage with family members to ascertain the circumstances that led to the incident and to ensure that a similar act is not committed by family members.

42. The Ministry of Health has organized anti-suicide awareness-raising campaigns, which include meetings and workshops on the phenomenon of suicide, its causes and consequences, and how it can be prevented. The Ministry of Health issued a decree in 2017 exempting suicide attempts from fees for treatment, psychological care, oversight and counselling, and providing for due process.

6. Voluntary termination of pregnancy and sexual and reproductive rights

43. Public Health Act No. 20 of 2004 permits abortion under specific conditions, for instance if the pregnancy poses a threat to the woman's health or if continuation of the pregnancy entails pain and suffering. Article 8 prohibits any type of abortion unless such action is necessary to save the life of a pregnant woman. The following conditions must be met:

1. The need to save the life of the pregnant woman;
2. Performance of the abortion with the testimony of two physicians, at least one of whom must be a gynaecologist;
3. The woman's written consent or that of her husband or guardian;
4. Performance of the abortion in a health-care institution and in accordance with specific conditions.

44. The Public Prosecution Service has adopted a number of measures concerning safe abortions for pregnancies resulting from rape or incest, based on the procedures set out below.

45. A meeting must be held to discuss the plan to be implemented and to agree on the abortion after conducting a psychological and health assessment of the pregnant woman, and after ascertaining that the duration of the pregnancy has not exceeded 120 days.

46. The Fatwa Board must be contacted to obtain a legal opinion authorizing the abortion.

47. The procedure is overseen by the Ministry of Health in order to ensure that the pregnancy is safely terminated and that the victim is provided with psychological support and treatment.

48. A risk assessment must be conducted to ensure that the mother's life is not at risk following her integration into the family, and steps must be taken to ensure that the offender who caused the pregnancy in a case of sexual assault is held accountable.

49. With regard to women's access to the services required for a safe termination of pregnancy, the primary health-care system run by the Ministry of Health provides family planning services in 263 centres in the West Bank. A total of 43,770 visits to family planning centres by persons wishing to benefit from their diverse services were recorded in 2021. The number of new beneficiaries of family planning methods in the centres run by the Ministry of Health totalled 16,759 in 2021, of whom 12,129 were in the West Bank and 4,630 in the Gaza Strip.

50. The number of visits in 2021 to primary health-care centres run by the Minister of Health totalled 82,900 in the West Bank and 98,507 in the Gaza Strip. High-risk pregnancy clinics deal with issues relating to the mother and foetus during a pregnancy that is deemed to pose risks, and help to protect women from problems that may affect the course of their pregnancy or their general health status. A total of 10,932 pregnant women, of whom 5,577 were from the West Bank and 5,355 from the Gaza Strip, were referred to high-risk pregnancy clinics in 2021.

51. The National Health Strategy (2021-2023) focuses on providing, improving and expanding community and reproductive health-care services, introducing psychological counselling services for pregnant and postpartum women and women who have undergone an abortion, and improving the detection of and response to imminent life-threatening maternal complications by means of effective monitoring systems.

52. With regard to women who have faced criminal charges for seeking or providing abortion services, the Public Prosecution Service on protection of the family from violence states that there are no data on women who have faced criminal charges for seeking abortion services because such requests are not criminalized. Furthermore, an attempt to perform an abortion is not deemed to constitute a criminal offence provided that it is limited to the intention to do so or preparations therefor. Article 69 of the 1960 Criminal Code stipulates that: "The mere intention to commit a crime or the preparations for doing so are not deemed to constitute an attempt. Whoever attempts to carry out an act and voluntarily refrains from committing criminal acts shall be punishable solely for the act or acts committed, if they themselves constitute a crime."

53. Article 321 of the 1960 Criminal Code stipulates that: "Any woman who uses specific means to bring about an abortion, or who allows somebody else to use such means on her behalf, shall be punishable with a term of imprisonment of between six months and three years." With regard to the accountability of a woman who performs her own abortion, the Public Prosecution Service bases the charge in some cases on the provisions of article 149 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, namely if the act was intended to preserve her life in a case of grave danger and if the procedure was in her best interest. Article 149 stipulates that: "If, upon conclusion of the investigation, the Deputy Prosecutor considers that the circumstances of the case demand that it be dismissed for lack of importance, he shall send a memorandum containing his opinion to the Public Prosecutor for further action."

54. The draft Palestinian criminal code states that abortion shall not be considered a crime if it is undertaken in response to the need to save a pregnant woman whose life is at risk, or if it has been demonstrated that she is exposed to excruciating and intolerable pain. The draft

code also exonerates a woman who resorts to abortion in response to a sexual assault, and the exoneration is applicable to all relatives up to the fourth degree who offer her assistance.

The right to life

7. The death penalty

55. On 22 June 2005, President Mahmoud Abbas issued a decree requesting that all death sentences handed down by the State security courts should be reviewed by the civilian courts. In addition, President Abbas has never endorsed a death sentence since assuming office in 2005.

56. The death penalties executed in the Gaza Strip are illegal, since they violate the provisions of the Palestinian Basic Law and are inconsistent with the obligations of the State of Palestine under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Optional Protocol on the abolition of the death penalty. In addition, there are no safeguards governing the issuance of judgments and their implementation in an objective manner.

57. The draft Palestinian criminal code does not prescribe the death penalty, in line with the international treaties that have been ratified by the State of Palestine. The draft code is currently being reviewed in the light of international norms and treaties by the above-mentioned national team, which will submit its observations to the Council of Ministers later this year.

8. The legal framework governing the use of force and firearms

58. The Code of Conduct on the Use of Force and Firearms by Members of the Palestinian Security Forces constitutes the legal and procedural reference document, and all members of the security forces must abide by its provisions. The Code enshrines the principles of proportionality, legality and moderation. In addition, the Code of Ethics and General Code of Conduct for Members of the Palestinian Security Forces was issued after several sessions of national consultations between the Ministry of the Interior, the security forces and civil society institutions, and its provisions are applicable to all members of the security forces, who are liable to criminal and administrative penalties for failing to abide by its provisions. The Code is based on legal sources and on relevant international treaties, and the values that it enshrines include respect for the humanity of all persons without discrimination, bearing in mind that all rights guaranteed by national laws and by regional and international treaties are inalienable and universal. Note should also be taken of the following circulars and perennial instructions:

- Minister of the Interior Decree No. 211/2011 reaffirming adherence to the Code of Conduct on the Use of Force and Firearms by Members of the Palestinian Security Forces;
- Circular No. 07/2017 issued by the Director-General of the Palestinian police on adherence to the instructions and rules governing the use of force and firearms;
- Minister of the Interior Decree No. 187 of 2020 concerning instructions and procedures for the use of force and firearms by police officers, which aims to protect citizens' human rights and freedoms, to ensure that the law is enforced in accordance with the foremost international norms and principles regulating the use of force and firearms, and to ensure that the necessary legal measures are taken and that every incident in which force and firearms are used is duly investigated;
- Circular No. 07 of 2020 issued by the Director-General of the Palestinian police, which underscores the need for all members of the police force to abide fully by the provisions of the laws, regulations and instructions governing the use of force and firearms, to respect relevant procedures, means used and the principle of proportionality, especially when establishing barriers and checkpoints, and to comply

with applicable procedures and instructions during the restrictions imposed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

- In addition, law enforcement officers belonging to all security forces receive training on the Code of Conduct for the sustainable use of force and firearms. The Ministry of the Interior has organized many training courses and workshops with a view to raising awareness among security personnel of human rights and action to combat torture, based on the two above-mentioned codes, the general code of conduct of the security forces and other documents.

Table No. 2 shows the results of investigations and legal proceedings conducted by the Justice Commission of the Security Forces.

Table No. 3 shows the number of deaths of reform and rehabilitation centre inmates during the period from 2018 to 2022.

9. Medical referrals

59. The Palestinian Government has established a system of medical referrals to compensate for the shortage of governmental health institutions, medical expertise, devices and equipment. Medical services are purchased from local medical authorities outside the Ministry of Health system. Medical services may also be purchased from other countries if they are not available locally.

60. However, the illegal blockade and closure policy imposed by Israel, the occupying power, undermines the functioning of the health-care system and impedes citizens' access to health-care services. It also prevents Palestinian patients from travelling abroad for treatment and limits the freedom of movement of persons requiring treatment between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and between Jerusalem and the other governorates. Patients from the Gaza Strip face major obstacles when seeking access to treatment, since they are unable to reach hospitals in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, or within the Green Line or in Jordan. They must therefore leave the Gaza Strip through the so-called Erez Crossing after acquiring permits from the Israeli occupation authorities, but the rate of approval of applications for permits does not exceed 65 per cent.

61. According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), patients referred for medical treatment to the West Bank or to Israel, the occupying power, and the persons accompanying them accounted for about 6 per cent of departures from the Gaza Strip in July 2022. A total of 1,619 applications were submitted for exit permits to attend medical appointments scheduled for July 2022, and only 36 per cent of the applications were approved in a timely manner by the Israeli authorities. Patients referred for treatment to the West Bank or to Israel, the occupying power, and the persons accompanying them accounted for about 7 per cent of departures from the Strip in August 2022. A total of 2,067 applications were submitted for exit permits to attend medical appointments scheduled for August, but only 42 per cent of the applications were approved in a timely manner. Table No. 4 shows patient referral rates from the Gaza Strip for the period from 2020 to 2022.

10. Prohibition of torture and other ill-treatment

62. As already stated, a national team has been established by a Decree of the Council of Ministers to review and update the draft criminal code and to ensure its consistency with international treaties. The final version of the draft code will be submitted to the Council of Ministers as soon as it has been completed.

63. Article 208 of the draft criminal code contains a definition of torture that is based on the United Nations Convention against Torture. The crime of torture is also punishable pursuant to article 208 (1), (3) and (4) of the draft code, which stipulates that: "Anyone who subjects a person to any form of torture with a view to obtaining a confession to an offence or information pertaining thereto shall be liable to a term of imprisonment of between one and three years. If the torture results in illness or a severe injury, the penalty shall be a fixed

term of imprisonment.” The draft also stipulates that a court may not halt the enforcement of a sentence imposed for the crime of torture, nor may it consider extenuating circumstances.

64. The crime of torture is also defined in Decree-Law No. 25 of 2022 concerning the National Commission against Torture with a view to meeting the obligations of the State of Palestine under the Convention against Torture and its Optional Protocol and filling the legal vacuum.

65. The Decree-Law defines the crime of torture as follows:

1. Any act or omission whereby severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted on a person for the purpose of obtaining from him or another person information or a confession, punishing him for an act that he or another person has committed or is suspected of having committed, or intimidating or coercing him or another person;

2. The infliction of such pain or suffering for any reason based on discrimination of any kind, when it is inflicted by, at the instigation of or with the consent or acquiescence of a public official or another person acting in an official capacity. Torture does not include pain or suffering arising from, inherent in or incidental to lawful penalties.

66. Following a review of the legislation in force concerning the offences of torture and ill-treatment, steps are being taken to adopt a specific and uniform law aimed at defining, criminalizing and combating torture and cruel and inhuman treatment in order to develop a unified legal framework for the relevant legislation.

11. The right to liberty and security of person

67. Article 11 of the amended Palestinian Basic Law and article 29 of the Code of Criminal Procedure guarantee the right of all persons to protection from unlawful arrest or imprisonment, and from exposure to any restrictions on their freedom except pursuant to an order issued by the competent authority, in accordance with the law. Members of the Public Prosecution Service must also verify the legality and necessity of such measures and procedures.

68. Article 12 of the amended Palestinian Basic Law guarantees the fundamental rights of arrested persons and detainees pending investigation, including the right to be tried before a court without delay. It is essential to expedite the investigation of an arrested person and to limit the period of detention to the investigation of matters of prime importance.

69. According to article 119 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, the Public Prosecutor may request the court to extend the period of detention of the accused if, in accordance with the clear criteria defined in the Code, the ongoing investigations so require. Accordingly, detention pending investigations in such cases must be based on standard procedures. The detention must serve as a means of facilitating the investigation, ensuring that accused persons are present for additional investigations or confronting them with witnesses.

70. Detention is not extended unless there is sufficient evidence to charge the arrested person with the crime under investigation, and no less harmful means and measures are available to reduce the risks. The extension must also be based on factual evidence. The Public Prosecution Service must request access to the criminal record of the accused, and it may request the judicial police to provide it with additional information, such as a police report on the possible impact of the release of the accused in order to determine whether a further period of detention is necessary.

71. Detention pending investigation is not permissible unless an ongoing investigation is taking place. The Public Prosecution Service must take speedy action and complete the investigation in a timely manner. Once the investigation has been completed, the Service must either issue an indictment or recommend that the case should be promptly dismissed. When submitting requests to the competent court for the detention of accused persons pending investigations, the Public Prosecution Service must report on the investigation procedures that have been completed and on those that are still necessary and the period

required for their completion. When any subsequent requests are submitted, the court must be informed of the progress made since it granted the previous extension. The court may refuse to extend the detention of the accused pending investigations if it finds that such an extension is unjustifiable due to the lack of progress.

72. Detention pending investigations may not be used as a punitive measure or as a tactic aimed at extorting a confession from the accused. Furthermore, it may not be used as a measure to protect accused persons unless they themselves agree to the detention, since it would unlawfully violate their right to liberty.

73. According to article 120 (4) of the Code of Criminal Procedure, the total period of detention pending investigation may not exceed six months or the period of imprisonment prescribed for the offence in respect of which the accused person is detained. If an indictment is not served prior to the expiry of this period, the person must be promptly released from custody.

74. It should be noted that the Juvenile Protection Act No. 4 of 2016 contains special provisions governing the detention of arrested juvenile suspects pending investigations. It provides for the following alternatives to detention: (a) The alternatives for children under 15 years of age are as follows: a reprimand, delivery into the custody of a third party, enrolment in vocational training, the imposition of specific obligations, judicial probation, placement under social supervision, placement in a social welfare institution, or placement in a specialized hospital. (b) The alternatives for juveniles over 15 years of age are as follows: if juveniles commit a minor offence for which a custodial sentence is prescribed, they are placed in a social welfare institution for a period that may not exceed one third of the penalty. They may also choose, as an alternative to confinement, any of the above-mentioned measures. Table No. 5 shows the number of detainees and convicted persons in reform and rehabilitation centres in the State of Palestine in 2021, classified by the type of criminal offence and by gender.

12. Measures taken to guarantee fundamental legal safeguards for detained persons

75. There is no specific law regulating legal aid in the State of Palestine. However, a bill on a Palestinian legal aid fund drafted in 2014 provides for the right to request legal aid for disadvantaged persons at all stages of legal proceedings, in accordance with the same conditions. As women, children and persons with disabilities are given top priority, it will provide an effective strategic tool for guaranteeing access to justice, particularly for women.

76. Legal aid provisions are contained in a number of laws that are currently in force. Thus, article 14 of the amended Basic Law stipulates that an accused person shall be considered innocent until proven guilty in a court of law that guarantees the accused the right to a defence. All persons charged in a criminal case shall be represented by a lawyer.

77. Article 12 of Act No. 3 of 1999 regulating the legal profession specifies the objectives of the Bar Association, including the provision of legal aid to disadvantaged citizens. Article 12 (6) stipulates that: "The Association shall conduct its activities in order to achieve the following objectives: organization of cooperation in practising the profession and provision of legal aid to disadvantaged citizens."

78. In addition, article 2 of Act No. 5 of 1999 amending the Act regulating the legal profession stipulates that it is inadmissible to hear cases before a court of law without a practising lawyer, and that it is inadmissible to accept a bill of indictment or a bill of response before a court of first instance unless it is signed by a practising lawyer.

79. Article 44 (2) (a) (7) of the same Act authorizes the Bar Association to assign a lawyer to provide legal services free of charge once a year. The free services include defence of a person whose poverty and inability to pay lawyers' fees has been ascertained by the Bar Association.

80. The Bar Association's authority in this regard is recognized as one of the most important means of providing legal aid to needy and marginalized groups, especially since

the terms of the article are not restricted to a particular type of case. The Association is entitled to assign a lawyer to represent a needy person in all types of cases involving civil, criminal or administrative proceedings. The main point in providing such assistance is the Association's verification that applicants are unable to pay the lawyer's fees.

81. In addition, article 61 of the 2001 Code of Civil and Commercial Procedure requires that litigants should be represented by a lawyer in first instance and appeal proceedings as well as before the Court of Cassation. The grounds for compelling litigants to hire a lawyer to represent them before the courts include their inability to understand the legal proceedings and the need to expedite the proceedings.

82. Article 123 of the Code of Criminal Procedure stipulates that detainees are entitled to seek the assistance of a lawyer, but it does not recognize their right to seek the assistance of a lawyer before a magistrates' court. The provisions of articles 244 and 245 are applicable solely to courts of first instance and are confined to criminal cases. According to articles 244 and 245, if accused persons attend a trial before a court of first instance without the presence of a lawyer, or if they have failed to appoint a lawyer owing to their weakness or lack of financial resources and the court is convinced thereof, the court shall take steps to appoint a defence counsel. The court shall estimate the lawyer's fees at the end of the trial and shall disburse them from the court's fund.

83. Article 10 of the Juvenile Protection Act stipulates that juveniles shall have a lawyer to defend them in cases concerning minor and serious offences, both during the preliminary investigations and during the legal proceedings. If the person's guardian fails to appoint a lawyer, the Public Prosecution Service or the court, as the case may be, shall assign a lawyer at its own expense.

84. With regard to administrative or "governor-ordered" detention, the Supreme Constitutional Court ruled on 2 February 2023 that the provisions of article 5 of the Jordanian Crime Prevention Act were unconstitutional and that articles 4, 5, 6 and 7 of the same Act were invalid. The governors (administrative arbiters) relied on the provisions to impose what is known as administrative detention or detention at the discretion of the governor. The ruling of the Constitutional Court was based on a challenge submitted by the Independent Commission for Human Rights, which claimed that the articles violated the amended Basic Law, particularly the provisions of articles 10, 11, 14 and 15, which guarantee personal freedom, the right to a fair trial, the basic principle of innocence and the principle of legality in criminal proceedings. According to the Constitutional Court's ruling, governor-ordered detention is unconstitutional and a human rights violation. It is therefore no longer implemented.

13. Treatment of persons deprived of their liberty

85. A Committee established by the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of the Interior has completed the first draft amendments to the Reform and Rehabilitation Centres Act No. 6 of 1988 with a view to aligning it with international norms and treaties and introducing a modern reformist approach to the management of penitentiaries. Consultations on the bill have been held with all relevant national institutions and civil society organizations.

86. A Ministerial Committee was established by the Council of Ministers, composed of the Minister of the Interior (rapporteur), the Minister of Justice and the Minister of Public Works and Housing. It created a technical team to study and monitor the status of the reform and rehabilitation centres and conditions in the cells, and to submit recommendations to the Ministerial Committee with a view to improving and developing the management of the centres in line with relevant legislation.

87. With regard to the mechanisms for monitoring conditions in places of detention, the Reform and Rehabilitation Centres Act requires the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of the Interior, the Public Prosecution Service and the Supreme Judicial Council, each according to its fields of competence, to inspect reform and rehabilitation centres and to ascertain the most serious problems and obstacles that they face. In addition, many local and international non-governmental organization (NGOs) visit and inspect the reform and rehabilitation centres

and detention cells, including the Independent Commission for Human Rights and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

88. Military reform and rehabilitation centres are visited each month by the Independent Commission for Human Rights. The visits are announced and conducted in accordance with the applicable and obligatory procedures. They are also visited by the Military Prosecutor, his representative or a deputy appointed by the Military Prosecution Service.

89. The inmates in the centres are treated in accordance with the applicable laws and regulations. All persons who have been arrested are taken forthwith to the military medical services, and their health condition is recorded in a certified medical report, in accordance with Circular No. 18 of 2022. Steps are taken, in coordination with court presidents and public prosecutors' offices, to present detainees to the Mental Health Department in order to conduct a preliminary assessment of each inmate's condition and to determine whether any treatment is necessary. Provision is also made for coordination with governmental hospitals in order to provide inmates with mental health services, in accordance with Circular No. 09 of 2021. The reform and rehabilitation centres provide educational and rehabilitation services for all inmates, bearing in mind the needs of specific groups. Steps are taken to ensure that detained women, pregnant women and women with children have access to adequate health-care facilities and services and are detained in gender-sensitive conditions.

90. The Palestinian Child Act No. 7 of 2004 and Decree-Law No. 4 of 2016 concerning the protection of juveniles are the legal instruments applicable to the detention of children. Children are detained in child protection and social care institutions, and are provided with psychological, social and rehabilitation services. Provision is made for regular visits by the Childhood Protection Department and child protection counsellors to review the progress of child inmates in the centres, to assess occupational intervention plans, and to investigate the extent to which care, protection, health-care and nutritional services are provided. Steps are taken, in coordination with the Global Movement for Children, to provide psychological and social support for the children, to listen to their complaints and to monitor the outcome. Monitoring and documentation procedures are conducted in the centres without prior coordination or notification. Table No. 6 presents statistical data concerning the inmates of reform and rehabilitation centres. Table No. 7 lists the number of female and juvenile inmates in reform and rehabilitation centres.

14. Elimination of slavery, servitude and trafficking in persons

91. A legal committee composed of representatives of ministries and competent authorities was established to draft a bill on action to combat human trafficking. The draft was completed and submitted to the Council of Ministers for consideration. Human trafficking crimes have been addressed in Palestinian legislation, for instance in articles 91 and 92 of Decree-Law No. 39 of 2022 on combating money laundering and the financing of terrorism. Article 93 prescribes penalties for crimes of human trafficking.

92. The Child Act was amended by Decree-Law No. 43 of 2022 concerning the amendment of the Palestinian Child Act and its amendments. It defines child trafficking and exploitation, including sexual exploitation, and criminalizes such acts, prescribing deterrent penalties for perpetrators, accomplices and abettors. Children's consent or the consent of persons responsible for them or their guardians may not be taken into account in any of the crimes mentioned in the Decree-Law. The Decree-Law also requires the State, through its competent institutions, to fully reintegrate child victims into their families and communities, and to assume responsibility for their treatment and full recovery, in both physical and psychological terms.

93. Table No. 8 lists the number of cases of exploitation of women and the classification of such cases by the Ministry of Social Development. Table No. 9 lists the number of cases of exploitation of children and the classification of such cases by the Ministry of Social Development.

94. Measures to protect children from exploitation, abuse and neglect are taken at three levels. The first level involves protection of the child within his or her family. The second

level involves the provision of protection within substitute families. The third level involves the admission of the child to protection and social care institutions, and the provision of psychological, social and rehabilitation services with a view to his or her reintegration into society.

95. The social protection provided for children focuses on emergency protection and on permanent protection in care institutions depending on the needs of each case and the type of care institution. Protective homes have been established for women and girls who are victims of violence in both the West Bank and the Gaza Strip (three in the West Bank and two in the Gaza Strip).

96. The State of Palestine has taken action to combat and reduce child labour and to regulate the employment of juveniles under the age of 18 years by organizing intensive establishment inspection campaigns. While child labour unfortunately still exists, it is gradually declining. According to the data for 2021 compiled by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, the percentage of working children (with or without pay) amounted to about 2.5 per cent of the total number of children in the 10 to 17 age group (3.8 per cent in the West Bank and 0.9 per cent in the Gaza Strip). The percentage of working schoolchildren totalled 0.9 per cent (1.5 per cent in the West Bank and 0.2 per cent in the Gaza Strip). The percentages in terms of gender were 1.7 per cent for males and 0.1 per cent for females. In addition, 41.6 per cent of working children (in the 10 to 17 age group) were paid employees, and 47.2 per cent were working as unpaid family members.

97. According to reports and data from the Ministry of Social Development, cases of child labour, whether in the West Bank or within the Green Line, are conducted through an employer who sends children to beg in return for a small fee paid by the child's guardian. Children may be employed for a low wage in agreement with the owners of commercial or industrial enterprises on the pretext of vocational training or the inability of their guardian to finance the family due to illness or the high cost of living.

98. The following measures have been taken to reduce child labour:

- Organization by child protection networks of awareness-raising meetings for parents and children in all governorates;
- Targeting needy families through the cash assistance and emergency aid programme in order to reduce child labour;
- Conduct of continuous inspection campaigns by the coordinators of the child protection networks;
- Creation of a central task force to implement a campaign aimed at protecting children at risk and juveniles at risk of delinquency, and creation of a field work team in the governorates to implement campaigns aimed at locating children involved in beggary, vagrancy and child labour.

15. Right to freedom of movement

99. Article 20 of the Basic Law, as amended, states that "freedom of residence and movement is guaranteed subject to the limits laid down by law". Article 11 stipulates that "no one shall be subject to a prohibition on movement except by a lawful court order". The legislation in force establishes certain restrictions on travel and lists the grounds for issuing decisions to impose travel bans. These decisions are subject to legal controls; a travel ban can only be issued for reasons having to do with national security or evasion from financial obligations. The law furthermore states that travel bans are subject to oversight by the Supreme Court of Justice.

100. According to article 11 of the General Intelligence Service Act, the Head of the Intelligence Service is legally entitled to apply to the Attorney General to issue travel bans to citizens on national security grounds. A court may issue a travel ban, pursuant to article 277 of the Code of Civil and Commercial Procedure, if it is of the view that a defendant intends to travel in order to evade the fulfilment of a financial obligation for which no security is provided.

101. As for reports that women in the Gaza Strip are subjected to discriminatory restrictions on their freedom of movement and a judicial circular from the Sharia court in the Gaza Strip stating that women are not allowed to travel without a male guardian, the Court of the Chief Justice of Palestine has confirmed that citizens in the Gaza Strip are not bound by the conditions set out in the circular. The circular was issued outside of the proper jurisdiction. The Court affirms that it respects the rights of Palestinian citizens in keeping with the Sharia and the Basic Law. Citizens are not bound by the circular, and Sharia court judges must disregard it when issuing decisions and judgments.

102. Israel, the illegitimate occupying power, denies our people their right to freedom of movement, and some of our people have died because they were not able to leave in order to receive medical treatment in the West Bank, including occupied Jerusalem, or abroad.

16. Treatment of refugees and internally displaced persons

103. There is no difference between Palestinians who are refugees and those who are not when it comes to their established rights to education, health and ownership of property. That being said, the Department of Refugee Affairs of the Palestine Liberation Organization protects the rights of refugees and liaises with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) on the management of living conditions and services in the camps.

104. In the educational domain, there are schools run by UNRWA that provide educational services free of charge, subject to the supervision of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education. UNRWA provides primary and intermediate education, and high school students must enrol in national schools. UNRWA runs two centres that provide training in commercial and industrial skills to thousands of students.

105. Israel, the illegitimate occupying power, imposes a fabricated curriculum in occupied Jerusalem, prohibiting the teaching of the Palestinian curriculum and denying the Palestinian people their national stories and memory.

106. Every year, the State of Palestine, through the Department of Refugee Affairs, provides \$30,000 in grants to over 17,000 gifted refugee children at UNRWA schools under the Gifted Student Grant Programme. It also provides one-off grants to around 2,400 refugee students at Palestinian universities.

107. Health services for refugees are provided by the Ministry of Health and UNRWA health centres. The UNRWA Health Programme is designed to provide comprehensive primary and preventive health-care services and treatment to refugees.

108. There is no difference between Palestinians who are refugees and those who are not when it comes to participation in the labour market. Competition for jobs is based not on discrimination but on merit. The Micro-Financing Department of UNRWA provides supplementary financial services and loans to families and owners of small enterprises, including women and young persons.

109. In order to improve living conditions and standards for Palestinian refugees, the ministries and institutions of the State of Palestine work with UNRWA to ensure continuity of emergency relief support (cash and food) for refugee families living below the poverty line. They serve an estimated 1.2 million Palestinian refugees (300,000 families) in the Gaza Strip, 78,598 refugees (13,130 families) in the West Bank and 38,350 Bedouin and rural groups that were evicted from their land after it had been expropriated for settlements and their homes were destroyed by the Israeli occupation authorities in what is known as “Area C”.

110. In order to alleviate the burden of poverty and unemployment, action is being taken, in coordination with UNRWA, to expand the categories of persons entitled to benefit from the UNRWA Cash-for-Work Programme. The Programme currently benefits 50,000 refugees a year. The Palestinian Government, through the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Social Development, runs a (three-month) temporary employment programme, and financing is provided for small, income-generating projects with a view to empowering impoverished families.

111. The Palestinian Government has worked with the German Development Agency, the Japanese International Development Agency and Arab funds to carry out projects involving infrastructure development, street paving, the development of water and sanitation networks, illumination of streets using solar power sources and the development of service centres. In order to deal with overcrowding in the camps, the Department of Refugee Affairs of the State of Palestine has widened the perimeters of camps and used vertical construction methods, which have helped to reduce the problem of overcrowding.

112. The Israeli occupation and the system that it entails frequently prevent Palestinian refugees from exercising their rights. Palestinian refugees are suffering from worsening living conditions, rising rates of poverty and unemployment, and a lack of food security. This is the result of the arbitrary attacks and measures undertaken by the Israeli occupation authorities as well as the system of closures, military checkpoints and forcible expulsions, the destruction of homes, expansion of settlements and restrictions on movement, settler violence, racist ethnic-cleansing policies, particularly in Bedouin communities in the so-called “Area C”, the illegal embargo imposed on the Gaza Strip and repeated attacks against the Gaza Strip, which have resulted in thousands of deaths and injuries.

17. Access to justice, independence of the judiciary and fair trials

113. Decree-Law No. 40 of 2020 was issued to amend the Judicial Authority Act No. 1 of 2002. The Decree-Law states that the judiciary is independent and that interference in judicial matters or matters of justice is prohibited. It also states that judges are independent and deliver their decisions subject to no authority other than the law (art. 4). The criteria for appointing judges were updated under the Decree-Law. Article 5 states that no person may be appointed as a judge unless that person is shown to have the competence and aptitude for the role. Candidates for vacant judicial posts must be selected through a competitive process. Judges on an initial appointment must undergo a probationary period lasting three years from the date of appointment. The Council may terminate a judge’s appointment during this period if the judge is not competent to perform the role. A judge will be confirmed in the judicial post at the end of this period unless the Council decides otherwise. According to article 6, occupation of judicial posts is determined by a decision of the President of the State upon nomination by the High Judicial Council in the following cases: an initial appointment; appointment from the Public Prosecution Service and from among legal officers of State institutions; secondment from a fraternal statement; promotions. Article 7 states that the Council determines the length and nature of additional experience for appointments at each level of the judiciary. Judges cannot be dismissed, relieved or their duties or demoted, except according to the conditions and processes set out in article 11 of the Decree-Law.

114. In line with recommendations issued by the National Committee for the Development of Justice under the chairmanship of the Chief of the High Court, the President of the Judicial Council, Decree-Law No. 17 of 2019 was issued, providing for the establishment of the Transitional High Judicial Council. The Council was tasked to reform and develop the judiciary and the Public Prosecution Service so as to guarantee the rule of law, the independence of the judiciary, the right to a fair hearing, and the separation of powers, and to draft bills to amend the Judicial Authority Act No. 1 of 2002 and the amendments thereto, and any other laws pertaining to the judiciary to enable it to respond to the requirements for development and reform, to cut down on the length of judicial proceedings and to improve access to justice.

115. Decree-Law No. 42 of 2022 was issued to repeal the following decree-laws: Decree-Law No. 7 of 2002, amending the Code of Criminal Procedure No. 3 of 2001, as amended; Decree-Law No. 8 of 2022, amending the Code of Civil Procedure No. 2 of 2001, as amended; Decree-Law No. 12 of 2022, amending the Enforcement Act No. 23 of 2005. These repeal measures were taken on the recommendation of the Transitional High Judicial Council in view of controversies surrounding the application of these laws. The amendments to the Evidence Act No. 4 of 2001 and Decree-Law No. 39 of 2020 concerning the composition of the regular courts, are still in effect and are intended to reflect the specificities of the Palestinian legal system.

116. The right of access to justice is protected by the Constitution and is guaranteed to all Palestinian citizens without distinction. Article 9 of the amended Basic Law states that all Palestinian citizens are equal before the law without any distinction between them. Article 30 states that the right to a hearing is safeguarded and guaranteed to all persons. All Palestinians have the right of recourse to due process.

117. According to the results of a survey run by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics in 2021, most adults (aged 18 and over) believe that the courts are the only authority empowered to resolve conflicts or future disputes. Some 88 per cent of men and 88.9 per cent of women said that they would turn to the courts if they were to face a conflict or dispute in the future, as the courts are the only authority with the legitimacy to resolve such matters. At the same time, 25.8 per cent of men and 26.6 per cent of women said that they did not consider the informal or tribal courts to be effective. The respondents said that the main reason why people would not turn to the official courts is the length of time that it takes to obtain a court ruling and the costs of proceedings, including lawyers' fees, which respondents cannot afford to pay.

118. A further obstacle to the right to due process and access to justice is the Israeli occupation, the associated arbitrary measures and practices on the ground, the restrictions imposed on several rights, including the right of citizens to move from one district to the other, the control by the Israeli occupation over borders and crossing points, and the lack of legal jurisdiction in certain areas, notably so-called "Area C".

119. The State of Palestine is working to overcome the obstacles that prevent citizens from enjoying access to justice and the right to due process. Presidential Decree No. 7 of 2019 was issued to provide for the establishment of the High Coordinating Council of the Justice Sector. The Council's goals are as follows: to consolidate the principle of the separation of powers; to strengthen the rule of law; to protect citizens' right of access to justice and due process; to build confidence in the justice system; to remove obstacles and undue complexity; and to formulate a vision, strategies and plans to develop the sector and its component parts.

120. The Sectoral Strategy for the Justice System and the Rule of Law (2021-2023) includes the goal of strengthening fair access to justice services and improving the integrated delivery of such services, especially for women and young persons, in keeping with objective 16 of the Sustainable Development Agenda for 2030. The current plan focuses on mobilizing cooperation so as to introduce the legislative amendments needed to improve access to justice sector services for citizens, to strengthen human rights legislation and to implement it so as to ensure the effectiveness of the judicial system and better enforcement of court decisions.

121. In order to enable the justice sector to carry out and develop its functions and responsibilities, the strategy focuses on development of human resources, infrastructure and institutions in the sector; improvement of procedures and reduction of the time taken for judicial processes to run their course; facilitation of access to justice for all sectors of society in all areas, notably marginalized groups and areas; development of technological and IT infrastructure so as to improve electronic communication and delivery of integrated e-services to citizens; greater transparency in dealings with the public via the media in order to raise awareness of the functions and duties of the justice sector institutions and the specialized services provided; increases in the number of courts, prosecutors' offices and judicial staff; and the employment of advanced techniques that allow for the use of alternative solutions in the delivery of justice; and the use of legal alternatives for the resolution of conflicts.

122. During the period 2017-2020, justice institutions proposed a set of solutions, the most important being the establishment of courts in areas surrounding Jerusalem and in the so-called "Area C" where there are large resident populations.

123. A national panel was set up to deliver on the objectives set out in Goal 16 and to bring together all relevant stakeholders operating under the national law. The panel issued reports, together with recommendations on the realization of the goals and policies associated with Goal 16.

124. Presidential Decree No. 12 of 2023 was issued recently to provide for the establishment of a national committee for the development of the justice sector. The

committee's task will be to conduct a study of the sector and the links between its component parts so as to improve relations between them and its overall performance.

18. Right to privacy

125. Article 32 of the amended Basic Law serves as the constitutional basis for protection of the right to privacy. In addition, the provisions of articles 11, 16 and 17 of the Basic Law are applicable to all other cases of interference with a person's privacy. Any interference with privacy must be based on a reasoned judicial order issued in accordance with applicable legal provisions.

126. Article 22 of Decree-Law No. 10 of 2018 regarding cybercrime and crimes relating to information and communications technology, as amended by Decree-Law No. 28 of 2020 and Decree-Law No. 38 of 2021, stipulates that: "1. Arbitrary or illegal interference with the privacy of any person or with the affairs of his or her family, home or correspondence is prohibited. 2. Anyone who creates an electronic website, application or account or who disseminates information on the electronic network or by means of information technology, with the intention of disseminating live or recorded news, images, or audio or visual recordings in a manner that constitutes illegal interference with individuals' private or family life, even if the content is true, shall be liable to a term of imprisonment of not less than one year and/or a fine of between 1,000 and 3,000 Jordanian dinars."

127. Article 4 (6) of Decree-Law No. 37 of 2021 regarding communications and information technology specifies the functions of the Telecommunications Sector Authority when it comes to protecting the privacy of subscribers to telecommunications services. Article 54 states that subscribers' information and data are deemed to be confidential and prohibits the licensee from disclosing or publishing them without the subscriber's written consent. The licensee is also prohibited from cooperating with any person, authority or entity with a view to obtaining information or data pertaining to the subscriber, except in cases specified by the legislation in force or with the written consent of the subscriber.

128. The Code of Criminal Procedure (Act No. 3 of 2001), as amended, prohibits the disclosure of the procedures, secrets and results of investigations, an act which is deemed to be a crime punishable by law. Article 51 of the Code imposes numerous controls on the monitoring of telephone and wireless communications, which must be authorized by the judge presiding over conciliation proceedings. The Code also grants such authority to the Prosecutor-General or one of his assistants.

129. The Ministry of the Interior has drafted a bill on personal data processing that meets the constitutional guarantees of an individual's right to privacy. It is viewed as a legislative measure that the State of Palestine must adopt in order to fulfil its obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

130. The aim of the bill is to guarantee respect for privacy through legislation regarding personal data protection or processing that is based on clear, specific and well-known provisions so that individuals are aware of such provisions in advance and can anticipate their implementation. The bill specifies the authority that is permitted to authorize the intervention, its procedures, objective and duration, and other regulatory provisions. In addition, it prevents data and information obtained for a specific purpose from being used for another purpose.

19. Freedom of expression

131. With regard to the steps taken to address concerns relating to the criminalization of speech and expression under the Jordanian Criminal Code of 1960, the Council of Ministers, as already stated, decided to establish a national team to review the draft criminal code, and an action plan has been developed based on international norms, treaties that have been ratified by the State of Palestine, and recommendations issued by human rights treaty bodies. Such action enhances freedom of opinion and expression and is consistent with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The team will submit its observations to the Council of Ministers later this year.

132. The Ministry of the Interior, in partnership with the Journalists' Syndicate and the Independent Commission for Human Rights, prepared guidelines on procedures for regulating the relationship between the security forces and journalists in the field. The guidelines produced by the Ministry of the Interior are designed to serve as a reference basis for both the security forces and journalists in the event of joint action and to enhance trust between the two parties. They are also designed to build the capacity of the Palestinian security forces to understand procedures for protecting and preserving freedom of opinion and expression and the right to peaceful assembly, and to understand the role and function of journalists in democratic societies.

133. The guidelines also seek to enhance the expertise of the security forces and journalists so that their professional performance clarifies the procedures for interaction between the two parties based on strategies for peaceful communication, promotion of a positive atmosphere and adherence to safety procedures for journalists. The Ministry of the Interior is fully aware of its vital role in consolidating the foundations of the democratic system, and the Minister of the Interior issued a recommendation concerning the immediate dissemination of a clear and comprehensible circular among all members of the security services on respect for journalists in the field, on how to interact with them and to facilitate their work, and on the need to refrain from doing them any harm, even in the event of an illegal gathering, without prejudice to the right of the security forces in the field to take action or to issue instructions to journalists to guarantee their safety. The Ministry of the Interior established a national committee, composed of members of the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Information, the Palestinian Journalists' Syndicate and the Independent Commission for Human Rights, to provide a safe environment for all, to clarify the legal boundaries applicable to journalists' work, to provide them with protection, and to prevent violations of the rights of journalists by the security forces.

134. A television programme entitled "The situation of freedoms, the right to peaceful assembly and freedom of opinion and expression" was produced in partnership with the Arab World Democracy and Electoral Monitor and the Horizon Freedom Centre for Studies and Research, and in cooperation with the Ministry of the Interior, the Independent Commission for Human Rights and civil society institutions. In addition, a series of awareness-raising meetings were held in a number of governorates on the right to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly. Table No. 10 contains a list of the awareness-raising meetings.

20. The right to peaceful assembly

135. Article 26 of the amended Basic Law guarantees the right to peaceful assembly. In addition, Public Meetings Act No.12 of 1998 regulates the right to hold meetings and marches. Article 2 stipulates that: "Citizens shall have the right to hold public meetings, assemblies and marches, and such events shall not be infringed upon or restricted except pursuant to the provisions of this Act." The organizers of peaceful assemblies are required to notify the governor or the director-general of the police, who then regulates and controls the duration and route of the assembly.

136. In addition, the above-mentioned guidelines and circulars specify the procedures for dealing with peaceful assemblies. Furthermore, training courses have been organized on the guidelines concerning procedures for regulating the relationship between the security forces and journalists in the field, including procedures for dealing with peaceful assemblies. The Ministry of the Interior provides continuous training courses for law enforcement officers and the security forces on the right to peaceful assembly and all rights enshrined in international human rights treaties.

137. On 30 November 2021, the Ramallah Magistrates' Court acquitted seven activists of the charge of participating in an illegal assembly owing to the inadequacy of the evidence submitted by the Public Prosecution Service. They had participated in the demonstrations against the killing of Nizar Banat.

138. In January 2022, the Ramallah Magistrates' Court acquitted 15 activists who had participated in demonstrations against the killing of Nizar Banat. They were acquitted of the charges of participating in an illegal assembly, slandering the authority, and failure to

disperse except through the use of force. The Court ruled that freedom of opinion and expression is guaranteed and that the judiciary guarantees such freedoms.

21. Freedom of association

139. Article 6 of the Charitable Associations and Civil Society Organizations Act No. 1 of 2000, as amended, states that the competent Ministry is responsible for overseeing the activities of associations and organizations. It may also oversee the activities of an association or organization to ensure that its funds are being expended for the purposes for which they were allocated. Article 13 of the Act requires the association or organization to submit a financial report providing detailed information on all revenues and expenditures, based on applicable accounting principles.

140. The Supreme Court of Justice ruled in case No. 2015/1 that the Union of Civil Servants had failed to complete all the legal procedures required for its registration. As it was not officially registered and therefore had no legal certificate of its existence and had not been established in accordance with the law in force, the Union could not exist legally unless its official registration was approved, and the registration was conducted.

141. Decree-Law No. 18 of 2021 repealed Decree-Law No. 7 of 2021 amending the Charitable Associations and Civil Society Organizations Act No. 1 of 2000.

22. Participation in public affairs

142. The Supreme Constitutional Court is responsible for monitoring the constitutionality of laws and regulations. It considered a request for interpretation of certain articles of the amended Basic Law with a view to ascertaining whether the Legislative Council's work was regular and orderly or whether it was out of order, and whether the members of the Legislative Council were entitled to salaries under the current circumstances.

143. The Supreme Constitutional Court stated on 12 December 2018, in response to the request for interpretation registered as No. 10/2018 in the Court's schedule No. 10 for Judicial Year 3, that the Legislative Council was in a state of disruption, that its members were absent, that it had not been convened since 5 July 2007, that its mandate had ended in constitutional terms on 25 January 2010 and that its suspension and absence persisted. As a result, it had lost its capacity as a legislative authority. Its persistent failure to convene meetings violated the Basic Law and related legislation, and undermined the public interest, the interest of the nation, and the supreme national interest of the Palestinian people. Legislative and oversight procedures had been disrupted and many fundamental constitutional and legal rights had been relinquished, primarily the right to participate in political life.

144. The Supreme Constitutional Court urged the head of State to announce the holding of legislative elections within six months from the date of publication of the Supreme Constitutional Court's ruling in the Official Gazette. Presidential Decree No. 3 of 2021 called for legislative and presidential elections and elections to the National Council. However, Israel, the occupying power, has sought to impede the holding of elections by denying permission to hold them in the city of Jerusalem and by refusing to lift the siege on the Gaza Strip, the aim being to perpetuate the geographical division between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and to promote its colonial interests. As a result, the legislative and presidential elections and the elections to the National Council were postponed, pursuant to Presidential Decree No. 12 of 2021, until the requisite conditions were met.

145. With a view to ensuring that elections are free, reliable and transparent, the Elections Commission took steps to register voters for free and fair general (legislative and presidential) elections in 2021. Facilities for local and online voter registration were available during the period from 15 January to 16 February 2021. A total of 2,546,449 citizens were found to be eligible to vote in the legislative elections, of whom 48.95 per cent were females and 51.05 per cent were males. The Commission also announced its willingness to receive requests for international and local monitoring, and the Central Elections Commission signed a memorandum of understanding with the Independent Commission for Human Rights and the

Civic Coalition for Election Support and Monitoring. The Commission was also willing to receive requests for the accreditation of journalists and media institutions to provide coverage of the elections.

Annex 1

Tables contained in the replies of the State of Palestine to the list of issues relating to the initial report on the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

Table No. 1

Statistics concerning cases of discrimination heard in the ordinary courts, disaggregated according to the type of crime, age, gender, religion and the judgment handed down in the case. No victims have filed claims for compensation.

No.	Type of crime/applicable article	Total number of cases	Number of finalized cases	Number of cases pending	Average age	Gender	Religion	Trial results: acquittal/conviction/penalities imposed
1	Incitement of sectarian or racial strife, or membership of such a group Articles 150 and 151 of the Criminal Code	201	97	104	19 to 69 years	197 males 4 females	199 Muslims 2 Christians	90 acquittals 7 convictions Penalties ranging from a prison term of three months to a fine of 45 Jordanian dinars
2	Creation of a mobile application or website for incitement to hatred, racism and racial discrimination	57	36	21	21 to 60 years	58 males 1 female	55 Muslims 3 Christians	29 acquittals 7 convictions Penalties ranging from a prison term of three months to a fine of 400 Jordanian dinars
3	Displaying contempt for other people's religious feelings Article 278 of the Criminal Code	1 195	864	331	18 to 79 years	1 134 males 61 females	1 184 Muslims 11 Christians	327 acquittals 537 convictions Penalties ranging from a prison term of three months to a fine of 20 Jordanian dinars
4	Sexual exploitation in the context of human trafficking Article 310 of the Criminal Code	12	2	11	32 to 53 years	3 females 9 males	Muslims	1 acquittal 1 conviction Penalties of three months' imprisonment

Table No. 2

**Results of investigations and legal proceedings conducted by the Justice Commission
of the Security Forces**

N.B.

The investigations by the Public Prosecution Service and the Military Prosecution Service were initiated on 24 June 2021.

The accused were referred to the Special Military Tribunal on 6 September 2021.

The Special Military Tribunal held its first session on 14 September 2021.

Defence counsel presented his evidence on 15 December 2021.

The legal proceedings are ongoing, since defence counsel is still presenting evidence.

Kh. Sh.

The investigations were initiated by the Military Prosecution Service on 5 August 2020.

The accused were referred to the Standing Military Tribunal on 9 September 2020.

The Military Tribunal held its first session on 21 September 2020.

The prosecution concluded its submission of evidence on 9 June 2021.

The Standing Military Tribunal handed down a judgment convicting the defendants on 21 September 2022.

An appeal was filed by the first, second and third accused persons, and the Military Prosecution Service also filed an appeal.

The appeal proceedings are ongoing.

A. A.: A death occurred during the seizure by the customs police of smuggled fuel, which led to an armed clash. During the exchange of fire, the person concerned was wounded by a gunshot from an unknown source and died on Friday, 10 August 2018.

The casefile is with the Military Prosecutor.

H. T.: On 4 August 2019, the Military Prosecution Service received information about his death from a gunshot wound received two weeks previously in Balata Camp.

The suspects are members of the National Security Forces who were present at the scene due to a family quarrel. According to the investigations conducted by the Prosecution Service, it was not possible to ascertain who had injured the deceased, because the National Security Forces had come under fire from gunmen and there was an exchange of fire.

The investigations are ongoing.

Table No. 3
Deaths of reform and rehabilitation centre inmates during the period from 2018 to 2022

<i>Name of the inmate</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Date of entry</i>	<i>Date of decease</i>	<i>Cause of death</i>	<i>Centre</i>
M. A.	Nablus/Gaza	18/3/2019	27/3/2019	Pneumonia	Ramallah
M. Kh.	Baytuniya	21/3/2012	22/12/2019	Deep vein thrombosis	Ramallah
Y. A.	Tulkarm	18/12/2017	11/1/2020	Deep vein thrombosis	Ramallah
H. S.	Bethlehem	14/5/2004	26/11/2020	Disease	Jericho
M. Kh.	Bethlehem	31/10/2017	16/1/2021	Acute heart attack	Bethlehem
H. M.	Ramallah	10/2/2019	17/2/2021	COVID-19	Ramallah
A. N.	Bethlehem	8/3/2021	20/3/2021	Disease	Bethlehem

Table No. 4
According to the Ministry of Health and the Ministry's annual reports, the patient referral rates from the Gaza Strip for the period from 2020 to 2022 were as follows:

<i>Year</i>	<i>Referrals</i>
2018	30 869
2019	31 225
2020	18 168
2021	23 648
2022	22 389

Table No. 5

The number of detainees and convicted persons in reform and rehabilitation centres in 2021, classified by the type of criminal offence and by gender

<i>Type of criminal offence</i>	<i>Detainees</i>		<i>Convicted persons</i>	
	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>
Murder	104	3	31	3
Attempted murder	58	0	12	0
Kidnapping and robbery	2	0	2	0
Assault/threat	117	14	45	3
Fighting/infliction of harm	73	12	22	1
Immorality	45	11	18	1
Theft/burglary	192	15	117	9
Fraud/counterfeiting	60	8	40	2
Issuance of worthless cheques	65	10	117	7
Drugs	479	9	234	1
Breach of security/resistance to officers	71	8	49	0
Breach of confidence/corruption	7	0	8	0
Arrest of a governor	0	0	0	0
Traffic-related issues	9	1	18	2
Financial liability	0	0	536	53
Other offences	104	17	57	2
Total	1 386	108	1 306	84

Note: The data do not cover the Gaza Strip and the part of the Jerusalem governorate that was annexed by force by the Israeli occupation authorities following its occupation of the West Bank in 1967.

Source: The General Directorate of the Palestinian Police.

Table No. 6

Statistical data concerning the inmates of reform and rehabilitation centres on 9 January 2023, according to data from the Ministry of the Interior

No.	Centre	Persons currently in the centres			Capacity/according to the number of beds			Number exceeding the capacity/males
		Detainees	Convicted persons	Total	Males	Females	Juveniles	
1	Hebron	71	72	143	96	0	0	96
2	Bethlehem	33	22	55	52	4	0	56
3	Jericho	80	90	170	158	18	0	176
4	Ramallah	126	84	210	214	18	0	232
5	Nablus	126	111	237	224	18	20	262
6	Tulkarm	35	38	73	60	0	0	60
7	Janin	63	85	148	140	12	0	152
Total		534	502	1 036	944	70	20	1 034

Table No. 7

The number of female and juvenile inmates in reform and rehabilitation centres

No.	Centre	Number of female inmates	Number of juvenile inmates
1	Hebron	0	0
2	Bethlehem	2	0
3	Jericho	11	0
4	Ramallah	5	0
5	Nablus	11	9
6	Tulkarm	0	0
7	Janin	11	0
Total		40	9

Table No. 8

The number of cases of exploitation of women and classification of the types of exploitation by the Ministry of Social Development during the period from 2017 to 2022

Type of exploitation	Forced marriage	Rape	Incitement to prostitution	Psychological violence	Physical violence	Economic violence and forced labour	High risk to life	Sexual harassment	Electronic violence	Deprivation of liberty	Human trafficking
2017	10	18	9	220	173	44	36	46	13	41	1
2018	5	15	3	182	153	39	29	43	9	24	
2019	6	13	4	166	118	19	15	20	9	26	
2020	4	8	2	143	108	20	10	21	10	26	1
2021	25	8	14	173	185	57	64	41	87	43	
2022	33	17	9	448	404	203		46	87	68	

Table No. 9

The number of cases of exploitation of children and classification of the types of exploitation by the Ministry of Social Development during the period from 2017 to 2022; the Ministry monitored 4,600 cases of violence, abuse and exploitation that were referred to it by the competent authorities (the police, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Education and the Public Prosecution Service) and they were classified as follows:

<i>Type of violence</i>	<i>Total</i>
Sexual assault/full	170
Sexual assault/harassment	300
Physical assault	420
Economic exploitation	370
Sexual exploitation	110
Neglect and ill-treatment	3 230
Total	4 600

They were provided with the following services:

<i>Type of intervention/protective measures</i>	<i>Total</i>
Protection within the family	3 330
Protection in a substitute family	420
Protection in an institution	850
Total	4 600

Table No 10

The following series of awareness-raising meetings were held in the governorates on the right to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly:

Janin: 17 law enforcement officers and 10 representatives of civil society	Tulkarm: 23 law enforcement officers and 17 representatives of civil society
Nablus: 22 law enforcement officers and 10 representatives of civil society	Salfit: 16 law enforcement officers and 18 representatives of civil society
Hebron: 27 law enforcement officers and 33 representatives of civil society	Bethlehem: 25 law enforcement officers and 20 representatives of civil society