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**REPORT ON THE SITUATION IN PALESTINE
AND MIDDLE EAST**

REPORT ON PALESTINE AND THE MIDDLE EAST FOR THE PERIOD, JANUARY-DECEMBER 2020

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The African Union reaffirms its unflinching solidarity with the Palestinian people in their struggle for their legitimate right to total self-determination and political independence. The Union continues to monitor closely developments in the occupied Palestinian territories. The Union is concerned about the stalled peace process, and the escalation of Israeli violence and violations of the rights of the Palestinians. There has been a divergence in the proposals between the two sides, which was deepened by the American plan called (the Deal of the Century). The latter illustrated absolute bias of the US in favour of the Israeli side, in an attempt to impose a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in contradiction with international human rights and humanitarian law, the United Nations decisions as well as the relevant decisions of the African Union.

2. The ultimate mission of the African Union to find a lasting solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and end the occupation. At the heart of this solution lies the attainment by the Palestinian people of their legitimate rights to establish the Palestinian state on the borders of June 4, 1967, with East Jerusalem as its capital, and to return Palestinian refugees to their homes in line with the UN Resolution 194. The AU is convinced that no deal or settlement will succeed in achieving permanent and comprehensive peace in the Middle East, if all the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people are not taken into consideration, foremost among which is their right to self-determination.

3. The Palestinian people are currently enduring the most intransigent colonial Israeli policy, which seeks to Judaize the Palestinian land and human beings and their sanctities, with an acceleration not witnessed before, in an attempt to implement an Israeli annexation plan, seize the occupied Palestinian lands, and impose what is called the Israeli sovereignty on the occupied Palestinian territories in 1967. Israel is taking advantage of the global preoccupation with the fight against the Coronavirus Disease (commonly known as COVID-19) pandemic, as well as the preoccupation of some Arab countries with their own internal problems.

4. The racist Israeli regime treats the Palestinians in occupied territories in an unequal manner. It constantly and systematically narrows the means of livelihood for the Palestinians. It confiscates their land in favor of illegal settlement. It restricts East Jerusalem residents with racist laws targeting their presence in their city. In entrenching its racially segregationist policies, it grants benefits and grants to Israeli settlers and provides them with protection to confiscate Palestinian homes and lands.

5. The absolute support of the current US administration for Israel and its encouragement to implement its colonial policy, unleashed Israel, the occupying power, by infringing upon the legitimate rights of the Palestinians. In blatant violation of

international law and various decisions of the United Nations and relevant decisions of the African Union, the United States has recognised Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and has transferred its embassy to Jerusalem. It has frozen aid to the Palestinians and attempted to restrict the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA). It has attempted to redefine the Palestinian refugee in a narrow sense dropping their right of return. It has closed the office of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) in Washington. It has recognised the occupied Syrian Golan as Israeli lands and more recently, the Israeli settlements in the occupied territories of the State of Palestine

6. International law does not authorize the forcible seizure of the land and rights of others. It does not allow the Israeli blockade and its continuation on the Gaza Strip. It does not allow the seizure of the bodies of martyrs. It does not allow the desecration of sacred things and cultural heritage. International law also prohibits settlement expansion in the West Bank, racial annexation in Jerusalem and the Jordan Valley, provocative practices in the Haram al-Sharif, attacks and permissibility of Islamic and Christian sanctities. It also forbids the piracy of the Palestinian people's money and property in an attempt to bolster Israeli colonial policies.

II. THE POLITICAL SITUATION, THE PEACE PROCESS

7. Israel is intensifying its illegal occupation of the Palestinian land. This illegal occupation impedes the achievement of a political and peaceful solution of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and the destabilisation of the entire region. There is no alternative to establishing two states on the 1967 borders in line with international law and relevant United Nations resolutions and relevant decisions of the African Union in this regard and in accordance with the principles of Madrid, the Arab Peace Initiative and its roadmap, the International Quartet and the initiative presented by President Mahmoud Abbas to the Security Council in 2018.

8. Failure to achieve a peaceful resolution of the conflict will reinforce the existence of an apartheid state that controls the fate of millions who will be deprived and oppressed, with their basic rights and their right to live freely and in equality denied. Under the state of Israel, the occupying power is carrying out daily practices and procedures aimed at changing the nature of the final status issues, and attempts to bring the Palestinian people to their knees, obliterate their leadership and blackmail their government, and disavow all the signed bilateral agreements.

9. The Palestinian leadership adopts the solution based on achieving peace through negotiation, and the Palestinian President presented an initiative in the UN Security Council in 2018 in this regard. President Abbas also proposed the activation of this initiative to the Security Council on 26/10/2020. He requested for the convening of an international peace conference, under the auspices of multilateralism, so that all concerned Arab and international parties participate fully. Participants to this conference should include the permanent members of the Security Council and the International Quartet, in order for a plan to be approved. It is based on international consensus and

United Nations resolutions, and includes specific time frames to end the occupation, achieve the independence of the Palestinian state, and end the conflict.

10. The Israeli government ignores these calls for peace, and at the same time unleashes settler groups with continuous attacks on the Palestinians, their property and holy sites, especially in the city of Jerusalem. The Israeli government has taken advantage of the stalled peace process. It also exploits the support of the American administration for these policies, in an attempt to seize and displace Palestinian lands and impose a fait accompli policy. The intransigence of the Israeli government has made it impossible to implement the two-state solution, in accordance with international consensus as the basis for resolving the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

11. The American initiative called the Deal of the Century complicated the political situation in the Palestinian territories and narrowed the horizon, and the subsequent US statements and considerations confronting Palestinian rights. It met Palestinian and international rejection. In the face of these successive measures, the Palestinian leadership maintained its decision to suspend communication with the American administration, and to reject any initiative or solution within the framework of the so-called Deal of the Century. Palestinians rejected the role of unilateral US mediation in managing the conflict, in a biased manner that favours the Israeli occupationist force. The Palestinian leadership refuses to treat the Palestinian issue as a humanitarian and economic issue, but rather an issue of colonial occupation, which in turn constitutes the core of the conflict.

12. The Israeli government announced its intention in May 2020, during the formation of a national unity government in Israel, to announce the annexation of the occupied Palestinian territories in the Jordan Valley and the northern Dead Sea area to Israeli sovereignty, officially, in early July. This came shortly after Trump announced the "Deal of the Century" on January 28, 2020, which includes a vision for the establishment of a Palestinian state in the form of islands interconnected by bridges and tunnels, and keeping Jerusalem as the undivided capital of Israel, and the Jordan Valley under Israeli control.

13. In response to the Israeli declaration of intentions to annex the Palestinian territories, and to Trump's peace plan, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas announced during a meeting of the PLO leadership in Ramallah on May 19, 2020, that the State of Palestine has become "a solution of all agreements and understandings with the American governments."

14. As a result, Israel withheld Palestinian tax revenues for six months, which it collects on behalf of the Palestinian authorities, under the Paris Economic Agreement. Relations between the two sides were resumed and Palestinian recognition of agreements with Israel was resumed on November 17, 2020, after the Palestinian leadership received a letter from the Israeli side confirming Israel's commitment to

previously signed agreements and canceling the annexation plan, and this was the result of international mediation by the European Union countries.

III. THE POLICY OF ISRAELI ANNEXATION OF THE PALESTINIAN LANDS

15. Despite the retreat from announcing the annexation plan, Israel continues to move forward with illegal measures to annex the Palestinian territories occupied in 1967. This annexation takes various forms. These include the illegal settlements; orders to displace Palestinian citizens from their homes; destruction of Palestinian homes and properties; and forcible displacement of civilians in areas designated for annexation. This directly affects more than 200,000 Palestinians, and a third of the Palestinian lands occupied in 1967.

16. The acceleration of the expansionist colonial war of occupation, and the widespread ethnic cleansing operations against the Palestinian presence in the Jordan Valley in all forms. This has included the targeting of Bedouin communities, their schools and health centers, and the demolition of homes, especially in the area east of occupied Jerusalem, down to the Jordan Valley. The Israeli decisions on annexation of Palestine they enjoys massive American support.

17. In the face of all these US-backed policies, the Palestinian people are still steadfast in their struggle to end this illegal occupation. The Palestinians stand firmly in defense of their inalienable rights, including their right to live as a free people in safety and dignity in their lands. This is evidenced by the thousands of Palestinians who filled the streets of Jericho on June 22, 2020 in protest against the Israeli annexation and the occupation, accompanied by dozens of international officials who represented States and international and regional organizations.

18. The international reactions to the Israeli annexation plans are nothing but an expression of a real international consensus rejecting any decisions to annex parts of the Palestinian land. As many countries and UN officials, including international and regional organizations, issued statements and positions rejecting and warning the occupying power against taking this step.

19. The Israeli government targets occupied East Jerusalem and its environs, with a systematic policy of expediting the implementation of pre-prepared plans that were prohibited during the previous American administrations, as is the case in the plan to build the East Gate "E1", and the announcement of tenders to build 1,600 new settlement units at the end of November 2020 southeast of Jerusalem, and work to implement the plan to build a huge settlement complex at Jerusalem Airport and the technology zone in Wadi Al-Joz, with the aim of completely isolating Jerusalem from its Palestinian surroundings, dividing the West Bank into areas isolated from each other, and dividing them to undermine any opportunity to establish a viable, geographically connected, sovereign Palestinian state.

20. These Israeli plans to annex parts of the West Bank, formally or by de facto policy, if implemented, will create conditions for apartheid in Israel and Palestine. It will establish a discriminatory legal and administrative system against the Palestinian population, who will come to live in the form of islands of separate lands, completely surrounded by Israel and without contiguous lands connected to the outside world. Then the apartheid system that is manifested in two peoples living in the same geographical region, governing from the same state, but with unequal rights for the population on the basis of race and religion.

21. The de facto annexation of the Palestinian territories, in part or in full, is a serious violation of international law. All states have an obligation not to recognize the legitimacy of the situation arising from these violations, and to cooperate to end these violations. And that would permanently prevent any opportunity to achieve peace on the basis of the two-state solution, and terminate the remaining agreements signed between the two sides.

22. That international morals and the values of justice and fairness are called to end the culture of impunity that has prolonged the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, and the international community must work to impose deterrent sanctions on Israel. The threat of annexation is only one crime in an endless series of crimes for which Israel, the occupying Power, has not been held accountable. Starting with the denial of the Palestinians' right to self-determination, the confiscation and colonization of their lands, the plunder of their natural resources, the demolition of their homes, the forced displacement of civilians, the arbitrary detention of thousands, including children and women, and collective punishment of all residents of the Gaza Strip.

23. On 23 June 2020, more than 1,000 European parliamentarians from 25 European countries sent a letter to European governments and leaders against Israel's annexation of the West Bank and demanded legal accountability for Israel for these grave transgressions, stressing that "the seizure of land by force has no place in 2020 and failure to respond adequately would encourage other states to ignore basic principles of international law". The peremptory global order is essential to long-term stability and security in Europe, and we have a deep interest and responsibility in protecting that.

IV. HOME DEMOLITION POLICY, FORCED DISPLACEMENT AND ARBITRARY MEASURES

24. The demolition of homes and facilities by the occupation forces is a crime that requires legal accountability, in accordance with the Geneva Conventions, international law and international humanitarian law. It constitutes a flagrant violation of United Nations resolutions that affirm that the Occupied Palestinian Territories, including Jerusalem, are Palestinian lands under Occupation. These territories are subject to protection in accordance with relevant international laws and treaties. Accordingly, Israel's policy is in complete contradiction to the responsibilities imposed on the occupying power. Israel, continues to impose the colonial policy based on restrictions on the lives of Palestinian citizens forcing them to emigrate and leave their homeland.

25. The monthly report of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) for the month of January 2020 indicated that the occupation authorities demolished or confiscated 617 buildings in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, during the past year 2019. This resulted in the displacement of 898 Palestinians. Israel, the occupying power in Palestine, continues to violate its duties towards the Palestinian citizens under occupation. International law affirms the necessity of the occupying power's commitment to providing all necessary services to citizens, including infrastructure, facilitating ways of life and providing the necessary licenses for building within the need and normal growth of the population.

26. The crimes of demolishing Palestinian homes and establishments are considered an occupation approach that is arbitrarily practiced on the Palestinian presence in occupied East Jerusalem and its environs, in the Jordan Valley areas, and throughout the occupied Palestinian territories classified "C", as the occupation forces carried out in January 2020. These demolitions have taken place following direct instructions from the Israeli Minister of War (Naftali Bennett) to demolish seventy homes and facilities in Ras al-Auja in the Jordan Valley, and confiscate hundreds of dunams of Qalqilya governorate with the aim of building a settlement road.

27. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) documented the demolition and confiscation of 389 buildings owned by Palestinians during the six months between March - August of 2020, an average of 65 buildings per month, representing the highest average rate of demolitions during the past four years. 442 Palestinians were displaced during this period. In August alone, 205 Palestinian citizens were displaced.

28. Israel is planning to demolish the entire Palestinian neighborhood in (Wadi Yasul) in the east of Jerusalem, which would cause 550 people to be displaced. Demolition orders were issued for all Palestinian homes in the neighborhood, while at the same time a group of extremist settlers agreed to build a taller (cable car) entertainment in Israel over the remaining homes. This plan, in Wadi Yasul, sheds light on the policy of displacement and replacement that Israel pursues against the Palestinian people, and this is but the latest in a long series of ethnic cleansing measures against the Palestinian people. Since 1967, Israel has destroyed more than 19,000 Palestinian homes in Jerusalem alone.

29. As Israel demolishes Palestinian property in occupied Jerusalem, it is working to accelerate the construction of illegal settlements, and to establish a major "bypass" road, called the "American Road", which will run along the outer side of East Jerusalem to connect Israeli settlements between north and south Jerusalem. This road will completely cut off the Palestinian neighborhoods inside the city from each other, and it is designed to further isolate occupied East Jerusalem from the rest of the occupied West Bank cities.

30. The continuation of Israel to deepen its grave violations against the Palestinian people leads to forcible displacement, in violation of international law, and the failure of

Israel to comply with the legal standards evident in the Geneva Convention on the protection of civilians in time of war, and international humanitarian law. International human rights law, including the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, is in line with the expansionist colonial goals aimed at the ethnic cleansing of the Palestinian people from their land, specifically in its capital, Jerusalem.

31. In early April, a group of extremist settlers from the terrorist group "Youth of the Hills" attacked Palestinian citizens in the Jordan Valley, where they set fire to a number of Palestinian vehicles, threw stones at unarmed Palestinian citizens, and threw tear gas at them. These attacks escalated dramatically. Noticeable in light of the outbreak of the Coronavirus, to be added to the crimes of the occupation state and its various arms against the Palestinian people, in an attempt to obstruct the Palestinian efforts exerted officially to limit the spread of this epidemic.

32. In the same month (April 2020), the occupation authorities imposed a policy of harassment and arrests, raids and repression, arbitrary isolation operations, and restrictions on everyone who participates in a humanitarian initiative to preserve the health and safety of the citizens of Jerusalem. In an attempt to obstruct the movement of all components of the Jerusalemite community to contain the spread of the Coronavirus. Especially since they are undertaking humanitarian initiatives to preserve their health and safety amid the deliberate negligence of the occupation authorities towards the spread of the pandemic in the towns, neighborhoods and camps of Jerusalem.

33. The occupation forces also razed near the Yusufiya cemetery, and demolished the wall of the martyrs' cemetery in the occupied city of Jerusalem to implement the (Biblical Garden Path) plan, and the settlement (City Center Project) plan targeting Arab neighborhoods. This includes the Al-Misrara neighborhood, one of the neighborhoods of the Jerusalem city, which is located outside the city walls. The Old City, the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood, which is located in the center of East Jerusalem, and vital centers in East Jerusalem form the nerve center of the city.

34. With the start of the olive harvest season, many incidents that led to the destruction of olive trees and fruits by settler gangs, with the support and protection of the occupation forces, were reported in more than one area in the West Bank. This was the case in the south of Bethlehem, the central West Bank, and the southern regions, West of Nablus and elsewhere, with the aim of striking the season, which is an important pillar of the economy of Palestine and the symbolism of the olive tree for the Palestinian identity.

35. On October 3, 2020, the occupying power committed a crime against the village of Hamsa Al-Baqi'ah in the northern Jordan Valley, as it completely destroyed the village, which includes more than 76 buildings, including residential facilities owned by 11 Palestinian families housing 73 People have 41 children. What amounts this crime to a crime of ethnic cleansing reflects the size of the expansionist colonial targeting of the occupied Palestinian Jordan Valley.

36. On 28 of the same month (October), the Israeli authorities removed part of a network funded by international donors providing water to eight communities in "Masafreta". The demolition resulted in a complete interruption of water distribution to more than 1,000 people, including 630 children.

37. There were numerous violations and assaults against Palestinian citizens, targeting them and using excessive and lethal force through implementing the policy of field execution at checkpoints, and targeting peaceful demonstrators with bullets, including minor children. The Israeli warplanes also targeted the Gaza Strip with several air strikes that hit civilian sites during the year 2020.

V. JERUSALEM, THE POLICY OF JUDAIZATION, THE VIOLATION OF THE SANCTITY OF MUSLIM AND CHRISTIAN HOLY SITES.

38. The occupation authorities and settlers continue to target the blessed Al Aqsa Mosque with all its components, and the continuous attacks on its guards, preachers, and worshipers, and on the men of the Islamic endowments, in addition to the escalation in the incursions of Jewish settlers into the Al Aqsa Mosque and its courtyards under the protection of the occupation forces and police.

39. The increase in settlers' attacks against mosques, foremost of which is the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque, with the protection and support of the occupation army, constitutes a dangerous escalation and an attempt to draw the region into a religious war. There are also continuous and systematic Israeli attempts to change the demographic and geographic composition of the city of Jerusalem since June 1967, which are illegal and unacceptable attempts, and will not change the legal status of the Palestinian land as occupied land, and it will not confer any legal status on the Israeli occupation of the land of the State of Palestine.

40. Israel's policy in East Jerusalem aims at restricting the lives of the Palestinian residents in order to push them to leave the city and create a demographic and geographic reality that will frustrate any future attempt to undermine Israel's sovereignty in East Jerusalem. Palestinians who leave the city due to this policy or any other reason risk losing their residency status and the social security rights associated with it. In this way, since 1967, Israel has stripped the status of a "permanent resident" of some 14,500 Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem.

41. On 02 January 2020, settlers set fire to the Badriya Mosque in the village of Sharafat, south of occupied Jerusalem, and wrote racist and inciting anti-Muslim slogans, coinciding with the occupation police's attacks on worshipers at the Al-Aqsa Mosque during dawn prayers, and stormed Al-Aqsa and expelled worshipers from it. And they were assaulted.

42. On 09 March 2020, a group of indecent Jewish extremist "Women for the Temple" raised a painting of the alleged structure inside the courtyards of the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque, and public Talmudic prayers were performed near the Gate of Mercy without the slightest respect for the sanctity of the place, with the presence and protection of the occupation police, in a way that contradicts the legal and historical status quo of the Al-Aqsa Mosque. And it affects the feelings of Muslims in a deliberate and provocative manner.

43. On 21 April 2020, the attorney general of the occupation government decided to annex and confiscate the lands of the Tomb of the Patriarchs to be allocated for the purposes of colonial settlement expansion.

44. Recently, on 03 December 2020, an extremist Jewish settler stormed the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in occupied Jerusalem and began burning it, which is supposed to be subject to the protection of the occupying power. This event demonstrates the complicity of the occupying power with the continuous and repeated terror of its settlers, and justifies the urgent need for international protection of the holy sites, especially since the Christian and Muslim sanctities are in a state of constant danger.

45. Violations of mosques, places of worship and residences of Jerusalemites continue to be violated in the city of Jerusalem, from the bottom of the land, during the excavation carried out by the Israeli occupation at the bottom of the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque and the Old City of Jerusalem. The occupation authorities carry out large-scale excavations in that area without revealing its nature, and its catastrophic results often emerge through large cracks in the homes and shops of citizens, in addition to cracks in roads and walls, as it was evident in the Bab al-Silsila neighborhood in the old city of Occupied Jerusalem. Amid widespread and deliberate neglect by the occupation municipality's personnel.

46. The Israeli authorities resort to blackmail of the citizens to evacuate their homes under the pretext of these collapses and cracks as a result of these excavations, with the aim of implementing Judaizing settlement projects in the areas adjacent to the Al-Aqsa Mosque, where historical and archaeological buildings are spread. These actions, and other violations, aim to change the historical and legal reality existing in the city of Jerusalem, in an attempt to falsify the archaeological monuments on and in the ground.

47. In support of annexation plans in Jerusalem, Israel continues to use demographic engineering, including renewing the ban on Palestinian family unification in Jerusalem for the eighteenth year, with the aim of tearing apart Palestinian families and imposing the impossible choice on thousands of Jerusalemites to stay with their families outside the city, Jerusalem, or their right to live in the birthplace of their ancestors without their families. In addition, the occupation forces continue to prevent worshipers, prominent Palestinian figures, activists, and journalists from entering Al-Aqsa and the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, in a clear violation of their freedom of worship.

48. The Palestinian authorities, in coordination with the brothers in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, which have Hashemite patronage over the holy sites in the city of Jerusalem, continue to coordinate political, diplomatic and legal efforts to stop these Israeli violations against the holy sites in the city. Faced with this, the international community and its specialized organizations and institutions, foremost of which is UNESCO, are called upon to assume responsibility and force the occupation authorities to immediately stop these excavations, which constitute a crime in accordance with international law.

VI. SETTLEMENT AND CONFISCATION OF LAND AND PROPERTY

49. The occupying power is moving forward in resolving final status negotiating issues based on the American proposals contained in the so-called (deal of the century) unilaterally and by force of occupation, away from any negotiations, peace conferences, international positions and decisions. These proposals focus in their content on one item, "annexation". This is reflected in the new, old settlement project, which was announced by the Israeli Ministry of Housing on 15 February 2020 as part of a plan to build 9,000 new settlement units on the lands of Jerusalem International Airport, which will lead to the confiscation of about 120 hectares of Palestinian land. The number of settlements in the West Bank and Jerusalem is now about 200 Zionist settlements, inhabited by about 700 thousand settlers.

50. The American administration's view that the settlements established in the Palestinian territories occupied in 1967 are legitimate in absolute and blind support for Israel, the occupying power, is completely inconsistent with the UN Security Council resolution and decisions of the African Union in this regard. Resolution No. (2334) came in the culmination of a series of similar resolutions issued by the Security Council, including: (446) of 1979, (452) 1979, (465) 1980, (476) 1980, 2008) 1850), (2003) 1515. Accordingly, the US position is contrary to the Fourth Geneva Convention, specifically Article 49 thereof, that it is not permissible to establish civilian settlements in occupied land, and that the occupying power is not permitted to deport or transfer part of its civilian population to the lands it occupies.

51. In December 2020, the Israeli government decided to pave 4 huge settlement roads and build a bridge over the town of Qalandia, and allocated the necessary budgets for their implementation at a cost of about \$110 million, as part of the occupation state's plan, which it calls "imposing sovereignty" on the occupied West Bank. And that the implementation of the expansionist colonial plan at Jerusalem airport, and the construction of these huge settlement roads is a measure within the framework of a plan aimed at separating occupied Jerusalem from its Palestinian surroundings from all sides and achieves what the occupying state calls "Greater Jerusalem."

52. This project aims to completely isolate Jerusalem from its Palestinian extension from the northern side, just as the settlement of Jabal Abu Ghneim al-Quds separated from its surroundings from the southeastern side. It also aims to link all the settlements

north of Jerusalem to each other and turn them into a huge settlement complex interconnected by a network of settlement roads, and to be linked in the depths of Israel from the west side, and the valleys from the east, in a way that leads to the elimination of any opportunity or possibility to establish a viable Palestinian state connected Geographically and sovereign.

53. On 22 February 2020, the Prime Minister of the Occupation Government, Benjamin Netanyahu, announced the construction of 3,500 settlement housing units in Area (E1), located east of occupied Jerusalem. Netanyahu had previously announced settlement plans in the north and south of occupied Jerusalem. On April 22, 2020, the Minister of the Extremist Occupation Army (Bienet) announced the construction of 7,000 new settlement units in the colony of Efrat. All of these decisions are aimed at isolating occupied East Jerusalem from its Palestinian surroundings, with the aim of imposing a new reality on the ground under the cover of the current, outgoing US administration, and undermining any chances for the establishment of a geographically contiguous Palestinian state on the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital. In violation of all international resolutions, foremost of which is Security Council Resolution 2334 regarding settlement activity in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

54. On 25 May 2020, the so-called "Israeli Planning and Building Committee" decided to demolish and evacuate about 200 establishments, especially in the (Wadi al-Joz) neighborhood of occupied Jerusalem, which means Israeli control of the only industrial zone for the Palestinians. This is at a time when the occupation authorities are stepping up the construction of many industrial zones for settlers and Israelis, as part of a colonial scheme aimed at changing the features and identity of the Holy City.

55. The month of May 2020 witnessed a noticeable escalation in settler attacks on citizens' lands in more than one area in the occupied West Bank from its north to its south, as settlers used a new racist method to violate Palestinian land, especially in the Jordan Valley, and they released livestock to destroy Palestinian crops. An iron fence was placed as a symbol of the confiscation, wherever these livestock were standing, while the occupation army's drones were guarding them.

56. In August 2020, the occupation escalated its expansionist colonial measures and measures in the occupied West Bank in general, and in East Jerusalem and its environs in particular, as mechanisms belonging to the occupation municipality in the city of Jerusalem demolished 3 homes and a commercial facility in Silwan, and forced a citizen to demolish his home. In Beit Hanina, in addition to the confiscation of 32 hectares in the vicinity of the village of Keysan, east of Bethlehem, with the aim of expanding settlements, as part of the Israeli Housing Ministry's plan to build thousands of new settlement units in and around occupied Jerusalem.

57. In the same month, the Civil Administration of the Occupation Army approved settlement projects in the West Bank, including occupied East Jerusalem. These settlement projects aim to establish 980 new settlement units in "Efrat" settlement built on

citizens' lands, south of Bethlehem. And linking the settlement bloc "Binyamin", located in the Ramallah area with occupied Jerusalem, and constructing a highway between the industrial zone (Binyamin) and the industrial zone (Atarot) in northern Jerusalem.

58. During the month of October 2020, the Israeli government approved the construction of 2,166 new settlement units in separate parts of the occupied West Bank, and the Higher Council for Planning and Building of the Israeli Civil Administration expressed its intention to approve the construction of thousands of other units in most of the settlements in the West Bank Occupied West.

59. In November 2020, the Israeli authorities began implementing the plan named (E1), after they issued a tender to build 1,600 new settlement units to expand the settlement of "Givat Hamatos" to separate Jerusalem from its Palestinian surroundings from the south and southwest, after the occupation authorities besieging it from the east. A tender was also announced to build 1257 new settlement units southeast of occupied Jerusalem, with the aim of expanding the settlements in that area, linking them with each other, and linking them to the Israeli depth, leading to the separation of Jerusalem from its Palestinian surroundings, especially in the south of the occupied West Bank, which is impossible. Under its terms, the principle of the two-state solution and the opportunities for its implementation are preserved, and any opportunity to establish a geographically connected Palestinian state is undermined.

60. On December 3, 2020, the occupation authorities approved a massive plan to establish 8,300 (eight thousand and three hundred) new settlement units in the area extending from the lands of (Beit Safafa, al-Maliha, and al-Baqa'a to the village of al-Walaja) in occupied Jerusalem, which would change the city's borders in exchange for expanding the boundaries of the area. Israeli settlement industrial sector (Talpiot), and this plan comes within the framework of implementing the (Greater Jerusalem Project), which aims to bring about a fundamental change in the demographic composition of occupied Jerusalem, and to transform the Palestinian citizens, who today constitute 37% of the total population, into a marginal minority in the city of Jerusalem. The plan includes raising the percentage of settlement activity within the estimated area by about 5 kilometers through the construction of high-rise towers that will include residential and commercial settlement units spanning an area of about 1298 hectares.

61. This acceleration in the pace of settlement activity constitutes a new violation that adds to the series of escalating Israeli violations and crimes, and is considered part of the gradual annexation of the occupied Palestinian land. It is a new evidence that Israel, the occupying power, continues to implement annexation plans and impose Israeli control over the occupied Palestinian territories, in implementation of the so-called (deal of the century) aimed at settling the Palestinian issue politically and in a manner that is accompanied by imposing new facts on the ground in an attempt to end the principle of the two-state solution.

62. The African Union and the international community have rejected all of these policies, and in this regard we reaffirm that settlement, as a form of illegal colonialism in accordance with United Nations resolutions, decisions of the African Union, and the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the wall in the occupied Palestinian territory, is a violation of the United Nations Charter. It is a flagrant violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention, and a war crime under the Rome Statute. Israeli settlement in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. It remains a flagrant violation of international law and a major obstacle to ending the Israeli occupation and achieving peace in accordance with the two-state solution on the 1967 borders.

VII. THE PALESTINIAN REFUGEES AND THE UNRWA

63. The African Union has affirmed its rejection of attempts to liquidate the refugee issue and wiped it off the international agenda, and called on the international community to fulfill its responsibilities towards Palestinian refugees and their host countries. It has called for the provision of the necessary support to the UNRWA to carry out the responsibilities entrusted to it by Resolution No. 302 of the General Assembly of the United Nations. The African Union commends the efforts of the international community whose contributions reduced the budget deficit of the Agency.

64. In 2019, the international community renewed the mandate to (UNRWA) for a period of three years, with an overwhelming majority. This confirms the justice of the Palestinian refugee issue, as well as the support for the noble humanitarian work undertaken by the Agency. This agency plays a vital role in providing relief and employment for more than 5.5 million Palestinian refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and the occupied Palestinian territories, including children, women and youth. It also provides social services, including healthcare and food supplies. The Agency will continue to be the international witness to the crime of the Nakba and apartheid, until the implementation of Resolution 194, which guarantees the Palestinian refugees the right to return to their homes and properties from which they were displaced since 1948.

65. The central role of Agency confirms its socio-political importance, as it constitutes a representation of the international community on the ground. In this regard, we condemn the attempts to distort and liquidate the agency's work, despite its proven historical record in relief work, for what these attempts entail in achieving political dimensions supported by Israel.

66. The African Union supports the right of return for Palestinian refugees in accordance with UN Resolution 194. The Palestinian refugees have been forcibly removed from their land since 1948 or prevented from returning back to their homeland. Palestinians have the right to return to their land and properties in accordance with UN Resolution 194. The African Union stresses the need to continue supporting UNRWA until a just solution to the refugee issue is achieved. The African Union rejects all unilateral measures that would prejudice the definition of the refugee concept, the right of return, and the relief activity of the UNRWA.

VIII. THE GAZA STRIP, THE SIEGE ON THE STRIP, AND THE EXACERBATION OF THE HUMANITARIAN SITUATION

67. Civilian suffering is increasing day by day in the Gaza Strip, where two million Palestinians, including nearly a million children, live in poverty, unemployment and restrictions on health care, education and basic services. Their daily lives are affected by the closure imposed by Israel and the land and sea blockade imposed on Gaza since 14 years ago with no end in sight. Israel has caused a serious humanitarian crisis, an increase in poverty and despair, and the killing and injury of defenseless civilians at the hands of the occupation forces and settlers. The Gaza Strip has one of the highest unemployment rates in the world, estimated at about 45%, with poverty levels exceeding 53%.

68. Israel, the occupying power, bears full and direct responsibility for the suffering of the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip, as a result of the unjust blockade and the continuous aggression, targeting the residents' livelihoods and restricting them to push them to emigrate, in the largest and ugliest systematic forced displacement operations supervised and managed by the Israeli government.

69. The spread of the Coronavirus pandemic in the occupied Palestinian territories showed some negative repercussions that have existed for a long time as a result of the Israeli occupation. It revealed more structural deficiencies, especially in the health sector and specifically in the Gaza Strip, which disproportionately affected Palestinian access to healthcare. The occupation force exacerbated the crisis on July 21, 2020, when it destroyed a building in the Gaza Strip that was intended to treat cases of Coronavirus and relieve pressure on other hospitals.

70. The health care system in Gaza is on the verge of complete collapse. This could result in a complete humanitarian catastrophe. Israel prevents or restricts the entry of vital and dual-use materials, as it believes they can be used for military and civilian purposes. This situation is exacerbated by the presence of chronic energy shortages and pollution. In addition, there is a severe shortage of ventilators in the Strip's 93 hospitals only, and 110 beds in intensive care units to cover a population of two million people.

71. Israel has restricted the transportation of some goods. It has reduced the permitted fishing area and prohibited the delivery of fuel, including fuel supplied by the United Nations to Gaza's only power plant. This has resulted in a sharp decrease in the electricity provided to nearly 2 million Palestinians. At present, people can access the electricity supply for a maximum of four hours a day, which is an extremely difficult situation.

72. Palestinians in Gaza urgently need to take immediate steps to mitigate the impact of the blockade, including building new power plants, treating water and sanitation, permitting the entry of much greater quantities of building materials and free movement of people and goods.

IX. THE ISSUE OF PRISONERS, RACIST PRACTICES, AND ARBITRARY MEASURES

73. Israeli has imposed racist laws to legitimize the settlement system. It has institutionalised the apartheid system that denies the Palestinian people their rights. This racist systems justifies the plunder the Palestinian land to the detriment of their lives and livelihoods. Israeli has put in place legislation that allows it to steal the allowances of the families of Palestinian martyrs and prisoners from the Palestinian tax revenues. However, the Palestinian Authority continued to pay these allocations through deductions from the development allocations.

74. Prisoners in Israeli prisons are subject to heinous crimes committed by the occupation authorities against them. These include the adoption of racist laws and legislation against them, a policy of repression and abuse, and deliberate medical negligence of their health. These crimes have claimed the lives of hundreds of prisoners.

75. Israeli prisons also witnessed an increase in the number of Palestinian detainees with Coronavirus, which reached about 147 cases during the reporting period. This highlights once again the urgent need to release Palestinian prisoners, especially the most vulnerable, such as women, children and the elderly.

76. In violation of all internationally recognized rights, Israel imposes what is called administrative detention on the Palestinian people. Palestinian citizens are arrested and thrown into prisons without an indictment against them and without the occupation authorities disclosing the reason for their arrest. This type of detention is completely in violation of all international laws. Administrative detainees are subject to this violations usually for long periods of time, which are renewed in accordance with provisions issued by formal committees that are not related to the law.

77. Palestinian prisoner Maher Al-Akhras presented a myth in the struggle and confronting the arbitrary measures against Palestinian prisoners, when he began his open hunger strike since the date of his arrest in July 2020, refusing his administrative detention without charge or trial. This has resulted in the deterioration of his health.

78. The Israeli court system, including the military one, are arms of the Israeli occupation and contribute to the consolidation of its colonization of the land of the State of Palestine through its violation of international standards and fair trial guarantees stipulated in international charters and agreements. This system includes a special military court for children, which is the first and only in the world. Every year, between 500 and 700 Palestinian children are arrested, with a conviction rate of 100%, in clear violation of human rights principles and international humanitarian law. There are currently more than 5,000 Palestinian prisoners, including 43 women and girls, 180 children, and 700 sick prisoners.

79. In a racist measure, the Israeli Knesset approved, in its first reading in 2019, a bill that allows the Israeli Military Prosecution to request the execution of the death penalty against Palestinian prisoners who have been accused of carrying out operations against the occupation forces. This law is part of the system of racial discrimination against the Palestinians. Field extrajudicial execution of more than 210 prisoners inside Israeli prisons was recorded before the passing of the death penalty, which reveals the true face of Israel and expresses the criminality of the state of Israel against the Palestinians.

80. In flagrant violation of international law and human values, the State of Israel continues to detain the bodies of Palestinian martyrs in refrigerators, as if they were goods for exchange, according to a government decision approved by the Israeli Supreme Court, a policy that testifies to the truth of the racist court, which, according to its decisions, detains at least 50 bodies, in flagrant violation of international humanitarian law.

X. RECOMMENDATIONS

81. The African Union, therefore:

1. Renews its support for the Palestinian people in their struggle to gain their freedom and establish their independent state with Jerusalem as its capital on the borders of June 4, 1967, living in peace side by side with the State of Israel.
2. Supports a peaceful solution to end the Arab-Israeli conflict aimed at achieving lasting peace as well as durable security and stability in the region anchored on the effective implementation of its relevant decisions as well as this United Nations resolutions and in accordance with the principles of international law, the Arab initiative.
3. Calls for the resumption of peace negotiations between the two parties, under the auspices of a multilateral international mechanism and within a specific time frame, in accordance with the mutually agreed terms of reference, while ensuring the implementation of the negotiation outcomes, leading to the two-state solution and the establishment of a Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital, without Reduction, fragmentation or postponement.
4. Rejects all unilateral measures related to the occupied city of Jerusalem, refugees, and settlements. It considers all these issues to be subject to negotiation mediated by a multilateral international mechanism
5. Calls on all member states of the African Union to abide by the requirements of international law and relevant United Nations and African Union resolutions towards all illegal Israeli practices and measures in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem and the Syrian Golan, by not recognizing, supporting or providing assistance in preserving the emerging illegal situation,

including, Israeli measures, which aim to perpetuate the policy of annexing the occupied Palestinian territories.

6. Affirms that the Palestinian refugees include every Palestinian who was forcibly displaced from the land of historic Palestine since the Nakba in 1948, or left before this date and was unable to return, and their successors related to the lineage to the current generation, in accordance with the provisions of UN Resolution 194 and calls for preserving the agency (UNRWA) and its tasks until the return of the refugees to their lands and homes.
7. Calls again on Israel to curb the de-facto policy of continuing settlements, annexing lands, and judaizing the city of Jerusalem, in the effort to change the demographic balance and obliterate the Islamic and Christian historical monuments of the city, as stipulated in the relevant United Nations resolutions, the last of which was Resolution 2334 of 2016, in addition to the rules of the Fourth Geneva Convention.
8. Reaffirms its call to all Member States to end all forms of direct and indirect dealing with the illegal Israeli colonial settlement system in the land of the State of Palestine, similar to what the international community did with the apartheid regime in South Africa until its liberation in 1994.
9. Reiterates our rejection and condemnation of the policy of excessive and lethal force against Palestinian civilians, the policy of executing prisoners and the law of Jewish nationalism, considering this as racist measures that perpetuate the character of apartheid in Israel, and are considered war crimes that require legal accountability and calls on Israel to revoke these legislations that violate the foundations of values, morals and the rules of international humanitarian law.
10. Calls for international protection for the land and people of the State of Palestine, in preparation for ending the occupation, and to preserve the opportunity for a two-state solution, pursuant to UN Security Council Resolutions (605) of 1987, Resolutions (672) and (673) of 1990, and Resolution (904) of 1994, which were based on the International Geneva Conventions and affirmed their applicability to the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967.
11. Also calls on the Israeli occupation authorities to release prisoners , especially children, women, the elderly and the sick, while ensuring their safety, and to end the individual and collective repressive practices against the Palestinian people that increase their suffering and fuel hatred between the Arab and Israeli residents.

**DRAFT DECLARATION
ON THE SITUATION IN PALESTINE AND THE MIDDLE EAST**

WE, the Heads of State and Government of the African Union, meeting at the Thirty Fourth Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on 06 and 07 February 2021;

TAKING NOTE of the report on the Situation in Palestine and the Middle East and recalling all previous resolutions and decisions adopted by the Organization of African Unity and the African Union on the situation in Palestine aimed at achieving a lasting peace and security in the Middle East;

REAFFIRMING our full support for the Palestinian people and their representative the Palestine Liberation Organization under the leadership of President Mahmoud Abbas in their legitimate struggle against the Israeli occupation in order to restore their inalienable rights, including to self-determination and independence in their State of Palestine existing side by side with the State of Israel;

REITERATING our desire to find a just political solution to the question of Palestine in accordance with the principles of international law and all relevant United Nations resolutions, leading to a complete end to the Israeli occupation that started in 1967, the independence of the State of Palestine on boundaries of 4 June 1967, with East Jerusalem as its capital, and a just solution for the plight of the Palestine refugees in conformity with the UN Resolution 194 (III);

RENEWING our call for the resumption of credible negotiations between the two sides to achieve a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East, including through an international multilateral mechanism in accordance with the international consensus on the basis of international law and United Nations resolutions aimed at justly resolving all permanent status issues;

FURTHER REAFFIRMING the steadfastness of our position in support of the just Palestinian cause that is premised on the values of freedom, justice, human rights and humanitarian principles and maintaining the historically established Pan-Africanist solidarity with the Palestinian people in their legitimate quest for independence, freedom and justice;

FURTHER RENEWING our call to all members of the international community to uphold the legal status of East Jerusalem as the capital of the State of Palestine, to respect international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions in this regard, and to refrain from any action or decision that would undermine the legitimate status of the city, in particular to refrain from transferring embassies from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem;

FURTHER REITERATING that all Israeli settlements established in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the Syrian Golan and other activities implemented as part of the occupation's colonization of the territory of the State of

Palestine, including land confiscation, home demolitions, forced displacement of civilians, racist and discriminatory policies and permit regime, construction of the wall and imposition of measures of collective punishment are illegal and constitute grave violations of international humanitarian law, relevant United Nations resolutions, and are in defiance of the calls by the international community to cease all settlement activities;

HEREBY DECLARE AS FOLLOWS:

1. **EXPRESSES** its unwavering support for the inalienable, permanent and unqualified right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, including their right to live in freedom, justice and dignity and the right to their independent State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital, and calls on Israel, the occupying power, to fully comply with its obligations under international law and completely end its 53 years of military occupation and cease its obstruction of the realization of Palestinian self-determination and recall the importance of upholding the historic status quo of the holy sites in Jerusalem under the Hashemite custodianship;
2. **REGRETS** that Israel, the occupying Power, persists with the occupation in all of its illegal manifestations, including its relentless pursuit of colonization and annexation measures, and continues to act in bad faith and in total contradiction of ending the occupation and continues to systematically violate UN Security Council and General Assembly resolutions;
3. **STRESSES** the duty upon all States to take all measures, necessary to ensure the respect by Israel, and all other relevant parties, of their obligations under international law to end the occupation, and that occupation of the territory of the State of Palestine will not come to end without decisive international intervention and tangible measures of accountability in accordance with international law;
4. **EMPHASISES** its determination that all colonial policies and measures, including legislative and administrative measures and actions taken by Israel, the occupying Power, including any activities involving the confiscation of land, the disruption of the livelihood of protected persons, the forced transfer of civilians and the annexation of land, in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the Syrian Golan, are in grave violation of the relevant provisions of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War of 12 August 1949, contrary to the relevant resolutions of the UN Security Council, illegal and have no validity and constitute an obstacle to peace and socio-economic development;
5. **STRESSES** that any actions taken by Israel, the occupying Power, to colonize the Holy City of Jerusalem, including imposing its laws, jurisdiction and administration, are illegal and therefore null and void and have no validity whatsoever, and calls upon the occupying power, to immediately cease all such illegal and unilateral measures including provocations and incitement against the Christian and Islamic holy sites, in particular the Haram al-Sharif, and to respect the sanctity of the holy sites and protect the unique spiritual, religious and cultural dimensions of the city,

as foreseen in relevant United Nations resolutions, which represent a legitimate interest to the international community, as a whole;

6. **DEMANDS** that Israel abide scrupulously by the provisions of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, in particular article 49, and comply with all of its obligations under international law and cease immediately all actions aimed at altering the character, status and demographic composition of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the Syrian Golan, and immediately terminate settlement activities, in accordance with all the relevant resolutions of the Security Council, including resolution 2334 (2016) and the advisory opinion rendered on 9 July 2004 by the International Court of Justice, and as an indispensable condition for salvaging the two-State solution on the basis of the pre-1967 borders;
7. **CALLS UPON** all Member States to actively pursue policies that ensure respect for their obligations under international law and relevant United Nations and AU resolutions with regard to all illegal Israeli practices and measures in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the Syrian Golan, including, *inter alia*, by not recognizing, and not rendering aid or assistance in maintaining, the situation created by measures that are aimed at advancing the colonization and annexation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and other Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967;
8. **IMPLORES** all African countries to end all forms of direct and indirect dealings with the illegal Israeli colonial settlement system in the territory of the State of Palestine, including East Jerusalem, in conformity with the provisions of paragraphs 3 and 5 of UN Security Council Resolution 2334 and the previous AU decisions in this regard;
9. **CONDEMNS** the use by Israel of unlawful lethal and other excessive force against Palestinian civilians, including against civilians with special protected status under international law, who pose no imminent threat to life, and **CALLS FOR** accountability for these illegal actions as well as for actions perpetrated by Israeli settlers in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, and stresses that Israel, the occupying Power, is fully responsible for these acts of violence against Palestinian civilians and their properties and has the duty to implement measures, including the confiscation of arms, aimed at preventing illegal acts of violence by Israeli settlers, and to guarantee the safety and protection of the Palestinian civilians in the occupied territory;
10. **REAFFIRMS** the necessity of achieving a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, in all its aspects, and of intensifying all efforts towards that end, in conformity with international law and other internationally agreed parameters, including all relevant United Nations resolutions, and in this regard **STRESSES** that all efforts to end the Palestinian-Israeli conflict should be grounded in respect for international law, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law, and should ensure credible

and comprehensive accountability for all violations in order to bring about sustainable peace;

11. **REITERATES** its support for the initiative of President Mahmoud Abbas for peace, presented to the United Nations Security Council on 20 February 2018, calling for the timely convening of an international conference that would launch a credible multilateral political process, based on the longstanding terms of reference and clear parameters enshrined in the relevant United Nations resolutions and within a defined time frame aimed at expediting the realization of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace settlement;
12. **REITERATES** that the Palestine refugees forcibly displaced from the land of historic Palestine since the Nakba in 1948, or who left before this date and could not return, and their ancestors, have the right to return and are entitled to their property and to the income derived therefrom, in conformity with the principles of equity and justice;
13. **AFFIRMS** the necessity for the continuation of the work of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and the importance of its unimpeded operation and its provision of services for the well-being, protection and human development of the Palestinian refugees and for the stability of the region, pending the just resolution of the question of the Palestine refugees, and **APPEALS** to States and organizations for the maintenance of their voluntary contributions to the Agency, as well as an increase in contributions where possible, in particular to the Agency's program budget which remains severely underfunded;
14. **EXPRESSES** its grave concern about attempts to discredit the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East despite its proven record; and **DENOUNCES** all acts of intimidation and threats directed at the Agency and other human rights organizations, civil society actors and human rights defenders involved in documenting and countering violations of international law and impunity in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and calls upon all States to ensure their protection;
15. **DEMANDS** that Israel respect the territorial unity, contiguity and integrity of all of the Occupied Palestinian Territory and guarantee of the freedom of movement of persons and goods within the Palestinian territory, including movement into and from East Jerusalem, into and from the Gaza Strip, between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, and to and from the outside world, and reiterates the need for the occupying power to cease immediately imposition of its prolonged closures and economic and movement restrictions, including its illegal and inhumane blockade on the Gaza Strip;
16. **EXPRESS** deep concern about the continued steep deterioration of the economic and humanitarian conditions in the Gaza Strip as a result of the Israeli blockade and holds the Israeli occupation fully responsible for the situation in the Gaza Strip, stressing that the crisis in the Gaza Strip is not merely a humanitarian crisis requiring emergency relief, but one of the manifestations of the colonial occupation, which

should be addressed by ending the colonial occupation and enabling the geographical and political unity of the Palestinian territories between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. We call on the international community to work to end this unjust Israeli blockade;

17. **CONDEMNS** the systematic and widespread policy of ethnic cleansing practiced by the Israeli occupation against Palestinians in occupied East Jerusalem, through eviction orders, home demolitions, revocation of residency rights and discriminatory policies, whose aim is to isolate the Holy City, sever its geographical connection with the territories of the occupied West Bank in 1967, and achieve the demographic superiority of Israeli settlers over the owners of the land of Jerusalem, policies violating the Fourth Geneva Convention, constituting racial segregation, and breaching the International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid and the Convention on Elimination of Racial Discrimination;
18. **CONDEMNS** the discriminatory Israeli legal system and its arbitrary measures and sentences on Palestinian detainees and prisoners, especially children, women, the elderly and the sick, which deprive them of the minimum rights guaranteed by international human rights law and norms, including the Geneva Convention on the Rights of Women and Children and call upon the Israeli occupation to release all Palestinian and Arab detainees and prisoners in Israeli jails immediately and unconditionally;
19. **REJECTS** any unjust or partial solutions, including the so-called “deal of the century” and will work tirelessly with other international actors to ensure the independence of the State of Palestine on the borders of 4 June 1967 with East Jerusalem as its capital;
20. **CALLS** for the cessation of all actions and measures that are contrary to the international law and United Nations Resolutions, and in this context, **URGES** the mobilization of diplomatic action to revive the peace process and preserve the Two-State Solution on the pre-1967 borders and advance the realization of a just and lasting peace;
21. **REITERATES** that a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East requires full Israeli withdrawal from all occupied Palestinian and Arab territories to the 4 June 1967 line, including the Syrian Golan Heights and the territories still occupied in Southern Lebanon;
22. **REAFFIRMS** that our solidarity with the Palestinian people is premised on the values of freedom, justice and humanitarian principles that Africa unwaveringly defends in the international fora in all circumstances and alongside all those striving to ensure that Palestine regains its right to exist in independence and sovereignty as a key State in the Middle East; and **REAFFIRMS** the urgency for renewed efforts to find a just and lasting solution to the conflict, based on the existence of two States, living side-by-side in peace and harmony, within the framework of the relevant African Union and United Nations pronouncements.

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