

I. The Situation in the Middle East: Israel-Palestine

The situation in Israel and Palestine continued to be unstable over the last several months. On 10 December 2014, Palestinian Minister Ziad Abu Ein died after being hit and shoved by Israeli soldiers during a protest against Israeli settlements in the West Bank. Also on 10 December, a 14-year-old Palestinian boy was reportedly shot by Israeli forces in the head, leaving him seriously wounded. On 12 December, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Zeid Ra'ad Al-Husseini, released a statement urging Israel to halt further threats against the people of Palestine. Mr. Zeid also added that the settlements in Palestine are a violation of Article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention.

On 9 December 2014, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) for Palestinian Refugees launched an emergency appeal for \$414 million in order to meet the desperate survival needs of Palestinians. There have been high numbers of deaths related to insufficient emergency relief assistance, including access to food and clean water. To meet this demand, UNRWA will use funding to provide basic food to more than 800,000 refugees and provide an estimate of 245,000 students with one small meal per school day. UNRWA will provide emergency health assistance, including counseling to children and adults to help with trauma, as well as educational opportunities to refugees.

A senior UN relief official stated that the punitive demolitions of Palestinian homes by Israeli authorities between 1 June and 30 November 2014 are a violation of international humanitarian law and have resulted in the displacement of Palestinians. The demolitions further destabilize the already delicate security situation in Palestine and violate the rights and protections in various international legal documents Israel has accepted to follow, including the prohibition on the destruction of property in an occupied territory.

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II. Drug Trafficking in West Africa and the Sahel

The United Nations Security Council has not discussed the topic of drug trafficking in West Africa and the Sahel since 18 December 2013 when various individuals of the Secretariat briefed the Council on peace and security in Africa. Discussions are nonetheless ongoing at the UN at the regional level and these discussions highlight how the issue of drug trafficking is intrinsically related to other aspects of human security.

On a broader level, the Security Council has reaffirmed its commitment to combatting terrorism and drug trafficking over the course of the year within discussion on other agenda items. In his remarks during the Security Council open debate on 19 November 2014, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon recognized that terrorism and drug trafficking reinforce each other, as armed groups use drug trafficking to undermine state authority and use the proceeds to fund illegal activities.

The Special Envoy for the Sahel, Ms. Guebre Sellassie, delivered an update to the Security Council on 11 December 2014 on the situation in the Sahel region. In her address, the Special Envoy emphasized the need for the Council to resume formal debate on peace and security in West Africa and the Sahel, citing the region's "weak institutions, cyclical environmental shocks, vast ungoverned spaces, fragile economies and poverty" as reasons to do so. Furthermore, the representative from the United Kingdom reiterated that the Sahel region is mired by drug trafficking, which further contributes to the instability.

Sources:

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