1. Access restrictions imposed by the Israeli authorities in H2, compounded by systematic harassment by Israeli settlers and, occasionally, by Israeli forces, have resulted in the displacement of thousands of Palestinians and the deterioration of the living conditions of those who stayed. Support provided by Palestinian authorities and NGOs in recent years, however, has enabled the re-population of some parts of H2 that were abandoned in the past.

2. Palestinians living in the restricted areas face serious challenges in accessing basic services, including schools, emergency health services and water and sanitation. For example: water tankers are unable to reach many households, denying people a main coping mechanism for water shortages; access of ambulances is often delayed due to coordination requirements; some schools can be reached only on foot and require children to undergo daily searches at checkpoints.

3. The Israeli authorities justify the restrictions imposed on the Palestinian population as a means to protect the Israeli settlers residing in the city, as well as other Israeli visitors, and to allow settlers to lead a normal life. However, as with all other Israeli settlements, the settlements in the heart of Hebron City are illegal under international humanitarian law.1

4. There are serious gaps in the enforcement of the rule of law on Israeli settlers involved in violence and intimidation against Palestinians. Incidents include acts of vandalism, property damage, physical attacks, verbal abuse, and the harassment of children on their way to school. The large majority of complaints about settler attacks filed in recent years have been closed by the Israeli Police without indictment.

5. As the occupying power, Israel is obligated to ensure that the humanitarian needs of Palestinians living in Hebron are met and that they are able to exercise their human rights, including their right to freedom of movement and their right to be free from discrimination. Israel also has an obligation to ensure that those responsible for violence and intimidation are held accountable under Israeli law.

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1. UN Secretary General report to the General Assembly on Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, A/68/513, 9 October 2013.