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ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

**Letter dated 30 September 2003 from the Permanent Observer for Palestine
to the United Nations Office at Geneva addressed to the Chairperson of
the Commission on Human Rights**

I acknowledge receipt with great appreciation of the advance unedited version of the report of Professor Jean Ziegler, the United Nations Commission on Human Rights Special Rapporteur on the right to food, concerning his mission to the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

I avail myself of the opportunity which is offered to me to extend my gratitude and appreciation to Professor Ziegler for his report, which required from him considerable efforts and which reflects his objectivity and transparency in fulfilling his mission, aimed at highlighting the sufferings that the Palestinian people are exposed to under the Israeli occupation and the Israeli occupation practices, as a result of which the Palestinian people in the Occupied Territories are denied the right to enjoy the minimum level of food, and have been suffering from violations of this right by the Israeli occupation authorities for years. I am confident that the United Nations Commission on Human Rights will examine this report at its upcoming sixtieth session when dealing with “The right to food” agenda under item 10 of its provisional agenda, “Economic, social and cultural rights”.

I have also received among the documents submitted to us a letter from the Permanent Representative of Israel on the same issue, the content of which I have no intention of discussing, but as the Permanent Representative of Israel used the expression “Disputed Territories” instead of the “Occupied Palestinian Territories”, I think this a matter which requires some clarifications.

The Permanent Representative of Israel used the mentioned expression after the Israeli occupation Government declared that the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, i.e. the Palestinian Territories, are not Occupied Territories. It is to be recalled that for years Israel has referred to these Occupied Territories as "Territories", without any particular specification, a fact contrary to the reality established in all United Nations Security Council, General Assembly and Commission on Human Rights resolutions since the occupation by Israel of these territories through war in 1967, all of which consider these territories as Occupied Territories.

The use of the expression "Disputed Territories" to refer to the Occupied Territories in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, including Jerusalem, by Israel and its Permanent Representative in Geneva in fact constitutes a new fabricated lie by which Israel tries, as has always been the case, to delude and mislead public opinion, to impose before the international community expressions and facts on the ground which are completely in opposition to reality, in order to evade its responsibility as the occupying Power, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, to deprive the Palestinian people of the right to recover their territories occupied by Israel through war, contravening in this way the principles of international law according to which the acquisition of others' territories by force is not only inadmissible, but is also a crime of aggression, a crime against humanity and against peace and security and a flagrant violation of the principles of human rights according to the Vienna Declaration of 1993.

I would be most grateful if you could arrange to have this letter distributed as an official document to the members of the upcoming sixtieth session of the Commission on Human Rights, under its agenda item 10.

(Signed): Nabil RAMLAWI
Ambassador
Permanent Observer
