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REPORT OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE TO

INVESTIGATE ISRAELI PRACTICES AFFECTING

THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF THE POPULATION

OF THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

SECURITY COUNCIL

Thirty-sixth year

Letter dated 8 September 1981 from the Permanent
Representative of Jordan to the United Nations
addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon instructions from my Government, I wish to bring to your most urgent attention the latest Israeli occupation's deep diggings and excavations beneath the Al-Aqsa Mosque within the Haram al-Shareef holy sanctuary, the first Qibla in Islam and the third of the three holy sanctuaries. These diggings and desecrations, in deep tunnels reaching 15 metres and more below this 1300-year-old place of worship to God and a symbol of a great spiritual and historical legacy, have been a prime target of the Israeli occupation authorities' relentless and reprehensible efforts since the occupation of Arab Jerusalem in 1967 to fundamentally alter the landmarks, legacy and history of a large segment of mankind. Hundreds of millions of adherents to the Islamic faith look to Jerusalem and the monumental Al-Aqsa sanctuary as its focal point and its centre-piece. The collapse of this holy sanctuary would be nothing less than a cultural, political and spiritual genocide against this legacy and its innermost and immortal soul.

So serious are these Israeli transgressions against hundreds of millions of adherents of the Islamic faith that it poses a real and inevitable threat to world peace and security.

The latest clandestine Israeli desecrations have reached a stage where the Al-Aqsa Mosque is presently in danger of total collapse. The religious Islamic institutions in the occupied territories have condemned these most serious underground Israeli excavations and the claims of finds announced on 25 August 1981. The Mufti of Jerusalem, Sheikh Sa'ddudin al-'Alami has described these dangerous diggings as blatant desecration of Al-Aqsa Mosque.

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The Heads of all the Islamic Waqf (charitable) Foundations have described these persistent desecrations of the holiest Islamic site as a part of the Zionist effort to seize the holy sanctuary.

The Jordan Mission finds itself duty-bound to alert the community of nations to the fact that a destruction or collapse of the 1350-year-old Al-Aqsa Mosque would not only constitute a crime against humanity and the historic landmarks whose preservation has been entrusted to UNESCO; it would also most certainly bring in its wake a serious threat to world peace and security.

The Government of Jordan reserves the right to submit this aggression before the Security Council unless the Israeli occupation authorities stop forthwith these acts of desecration before an irreversible damage is perpetrated.

I request that this letter and the attached map and documents be circulated as an official document of the General Assembly, under item 64 of the provisional agenda, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Hazem NUSEIBEH
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

ANNEX I

COMMUNICATION FROM H.E. MR. MARWAN KASIM, MINISTER OF
FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE HASHEMITE KINGDOM OF JORDAN ON
ISRAELI OCCUPATION AUTHORITIES' INCESSANT DIGGINGS AND
DESECRATION BENEATH AND AROUND THE HOLY SANCTUARY OF
THE AL-AQSA MOSQUE AND THE DOME OF THE ROCK

Since the Zionist occupation of the Arab lands in 1967, the City of Jerusalem has been subjected to a horrendous Zionist plan designed to Judaize the City and to obliterate its Arab and Islamic quarters. This awesome plan has entered a new phase whereby Israeli occupation authorities have intensified their diggings in the vicinity as well as beneath the Al-Aqsa Mosque, the Dome of the Rock and the areas and open spaces contiguous to the holy sanctuary with a view to dismantling and eventually wrecking the holy structures built upon them with the avowed aim of enabling Israel to build what it calls Solomon's Temple on their ruins.

In view of the utmost gravity and seriousness of this Israeli plan and because it poses a fundamental challenge to the entire Arab World and the Islamic World, the Government of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan finds itself duty-bound to present the following:

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I. Israeli Attempts to Destroy
the Al-Aqsa Mosque and the
Dome of the Rock

(A) The Israeli attempts to wreck the Al-Aqsa Mosque and the holy Dome of the Rock has passed through several stages. The most important of which are as follows:

1. On August 21, 1969, the occupation authorities were involved in an attempt to burn-down the Al-Aqsa Mosque when that act of arson destroyed the historic Salahuddin (pulpit) and sizeable parts of the Al-Aqsa Mosque. The fire caused serious cracks to a number of the Mosques' pillars which resulted, in turn, in the collapse of a portion of the ceiling. The Arab inhabitants of Jerusalem confronted this abominable act of arson without assistance from occupation authorities by transporting water buckets by hand until they succeeded in extinguishing the fire.

2. Early in 1980, an attempt was made to blow-up the Al-Aqsa Mosque by explosives in a conspiracy plan for execution by Rabbi Meir Kahana. The explosives were discovered minutes before detonation at a distance of 50 meters from the Al-Aqsa Mosque.

3. Jewish religious fanatics have repeatedly attempted to conduct prayers within spacious areas of the Al-Aqsa Mosque similar to what they had done within the Ibrahimi holy sanctuary in Hebron. The Jewish extremist, furthermore,

attempted on August 9, 1981 to enter the holy sanctuary in big numbers and on several occasions and from various gates leading to Al-Aqsa holy sanctuary to conduct prayers therein. They broke the Magharbah gate, the Iron gate and they ascended to the Tankinazia building in which the occupation authorities are garrisoned and which overlooks the open spaces of the Al-Aqsa Mosque. But the Moslem worshippers confronted those transgressors and repelled their intrusions.

4. Many Israeli diggings were made in the vicinity, as well as under the foundations of the Al-Aqsa Mosque and the holy Dome of the Rock.

II. The Following is a Chronology of the Most Important Occupation Attempts

First Phase:

Towards the end of 1967 and the beginning of 1968, extensive diggings were carried out on an area of 70 square meters under the Southern Wall of the Al-Aqsa Mosque.

Second Phase:

In 1969, the diggings exceeded an area of 80 square meters adjacent to the wall of the Al-Aqsa Mosque. These ongoing diggings caused a serious undermining of the foundations of the building adjacent to the Mosque. Subsequently, the entire Magharbah quarter was demolished.

Third Phase:

The diggings carried out in 1970 resulted in serious cracks in the foundations of the Ottoman Mosque (Ribat el-Kurd), and the Jawhariyah school.

Fourth Phase:

Israeli diggings between 1972-1974 behind the Wall of the Al-Aqsa Mosque and extending across the Southern wall of the Al-Aqsa Mosque and under the Mihrab (pulpit) and beneath the Mosque of Omar adjacent to the Al-Aqsa Mosque.

Fifth Phase:

The diggings in 1975 in the middle of the Eastern side of the wall near the Golden Gate where those diggings inflicted extensive damage upon an ancient Islamic cemetery near the site.

Sixth Phase:

An expansion of the area of the Wailing Wall designed to destroy all the buildings in the area surrounding the Wailing Wall. An Israeli Ministerial Committee endorsed in 1977 the implementation of this plan which includes the demolition of several Islamic historic buildings, including the Old Islamic Shari'a Court, the Tankinazia School, the Khalidiya Library, a charitable Zawiya (corner) and the Abu-Midian Ancient Mosque.

Seventh Phase:

The most ominous and menacing of these continuous diggings perpetrated by the Israeli occupation authorities

started when the occupation authorities declared on August 27, 1981 that they had discovered a tunnel beneath the Wailing Wall and the holy Dome of the Rock which extends between both, as well as beneath the foundations of the Al-Aqsa Mosque. The occupation authorities alleged that this tunnel had been discovered a month before the discovery was announced. But that the announcement had been withheld and kept secret after informing the two Chief Rabbis of Israel as well as the Minister of Religious Affairs and the Defense Minister.

The Israeli officials visited the area and requested that the matter remained shrouded in secrecy. However, the news reached the world media which compelled the Israeli Ministry of Education to stop the diggings and to close the tunnel in order to avoid far-reaching Islamic reactions.

However, the diggings did not in fact stop and was resumed when the Israeli Supreme Court issued a decision on Friday, September 4, 1981 which revoked the decision of the Minister of Education and permitted a resumption and completion of the diggings which were resumed on Sunday, September 6, 1981.

III. The Arab Inhabitants' Resistance To These Israeli Diggings

A. The Government and people of Jordan have reacted to news of these Israeli transgressions with

anger and consternation. This Jordanian reaction is based upon the following facts:

1. The tunnel which the occupation authorities claimed to have discovered is a purely Islamic legacy as proved by the reports of archeologists since over 100 years and, is located on the map which was prepared by Colonel Warren towards the end of the 19th century around 1880. It is a part and parcel of the Canals which were constructed during the past 1400 years. The tunnel which the Israelis claimed to have discovered had been closed since decades. The mere tampering and opening of this tunnel should be viewed as an aggression against the Islamic holy places and a danger to the expansive spaces and the structures of the Al-Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock built upon them. It should be stressed that the latest Israeli diggings have resulted in serious cracks in the middle of the Western wing of the Al-Aqsa Mosque.

2. The continuance of Israeli diggings beneath, as well as adjacent to the Al-Aqsa Mosque is a flagrant violation of the Security Council, as well as the General Assembly resolutions which have called upon Israel to refrain from pursuing these acts of desecration. By continuing these acts of diggings, Israel is not only violating international law, but is also assailing the fundamental religious beliefs, principals and ethical values. Israel's dastardly acts

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will have far-reaching Islamic dimension, as well as a crime against civilization.

3. Jordan firmly believes that the Israeli conspiracy to destroy the Al-Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock is still continuing, notwithstanding the varying statements of Israeli officials concerning the existing excavations. The incontrovertible truth is that all those Israeli leaders are in agreement on the Judaization of the holy city, the destruction of the Al-Aqsa Mosque and the exploitation of blind religious bigotry to serve the Israeli political objectives and to impose a new fait accompli

(Sgd.) Marwan Kasim
Minister of Foreign Affairs

ANNEX III

Reconstruction Committee of the
Blessed Al-Aqra Mosque and the
Holy Dome of the Rock
Office of the Resident Engineer
Jerusalem

Report on the Tunnel Beneath the Ground of Al-Haram Al-Sharif
(The Holy Mosque)

Introduction

Since the Israeli occupation of Jerusalem in 1967 the religious authority has started the digging of a tunnel parallel to the Western Wall of the Holy Mosque in an effort to uncover the lower foundations of the wall, as part of a broader scheme aimed at discovering the relics of the Temple. This led, at the time, to serious cracks in the historic Islamic buildings adjacent to the Western Wall of the Holy Mosque, namely the Ottoman School, the Jawhariya School and the Ribat Al-Kurd.

In spite of the opposition and the protests of local and international bodies, tunnel-digging operations continued. The latest information available to the office of its resident engineer indicates that the tunnel currently stretches between the courtyard outside the Bozak wall and a point below the Wakkfs Department and the gate of the Council.

Location of new tunnel

The tunnel, which the Rabbi of the Wailing Wall claims has been discovered recently, lies beneath the area south of the Matthari and stretches to the east just below the Kaitbai fountain. It is six metres wide and 25 metres long.

The fact is untrue that the tunnel has been discovered recently. It exists actually in the map of the area, drawn up by Col. Warren late in the nineteenth century, around the year 1880. It is also untrue that the stones were removed and the tunnel discovered in the attempt to investigate the cause of water leakage. In fact the tunnel-digging, which takes a southern-northern direction parallel to the Western Wall, has led to the discovery of a closed Islamic door shaped as a vault in the same Western Wall of the Mount temple, at the level of the tunnel.

It may be true that the decision to open the door and gain access to the area under the Mount temple was taken a month earlier.

This tunnel was closed in earlier times and turned into a well. There are three screws atop the well, one of which was closed 20 years ago; the second is

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the one on which the Kaitbai well was erected, and the third lies in the courtyard in front of the fountain.

On the morning of Saturday, 29 August 1981, the screw located in front of the fountain was unsealed, and wooden planks were discovered while the openings were blocked with reinforced concrete.

Essam Awaad
Resident Engineer

File 2/9/5

His Excellency, the Ambassador
of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan
United Nations, New York

Israeli Excavations Threaten the Aqsa Mosque and the Dome
of the Rock in Jerusalem

1. Newspapers, broadcasts and reports from Jerusalem indicated that the Israeli excavations around the Holy Al Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock were continuing and that they threaten to cause cracks and bring down both temples.
2. The Jerusalem Post, in its 4406th edition of 22 August 1981, reported that archaeological teams belonging to the Israeli military occupation authorities were carrying out excavations under the southern walls of the sacred shrine, allegedly aimed at discovering the tombs of the King of Israel (a picture is enclosed - annex 1).
3. The Israeli military occupation radio reported on the morning of Thursday, 27 August 1981, that the two Chief Rabbis in occupied Palestine had visited a tunnel discovered recently under the Wailing Wall - i.e. the Holy Bozak - leading to a sensitive area - i.e. the Sacred Shrine. The next morning, on 28 August 1981, the enemy radio announced that the Islamic Organization in Jerusalem had asked the occupation authorities to allow its engineers to explore the site of the tunnel, and to undertake the necessary measures in the light of their discovery. The broadcast further said that the tunnel was no more than an old well and that it had been discovered well over a month earlier.
4. The Israeli newspaper, the Jerusalem Post, reported in its edition of 28 August 1981 details of the tunnel excavations, carried out a month earlier by a task force belonging to the Israeli Ministry of Religions. The report added that the excavations had begun a century ago, and that a room had been built there for a synagogue. The report further said that the excavations extended for some distance under the Sacred Shrine, and that they are meant to reach the Dome of the Rock. In view of the importance of this report, I enclose a photograph thereon as annex 2.
5. The construction engineer of the Holy Al-Aqsa Mosque, Essam Awaad, released a report concerning the digging of the tunnel. The report revealed that the excavations started down below the western wall of the Sacred shrine in the place known as Matthara, between Selselahand Kattanin gates, and extended 25 metres east at a depth of six metres, reaching a place in front of Kaithai fountain facing the

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Western part of the Dome of the Rock. I enclose herewith a copy of the report (annex 3).

6. These excavations, it has been noted, surround the sacred shrine and the Aqsa Mosque from the south and the Dome of the Rock from the west. These excavations are an extension of their counterparts and of the incessant encroachment on Islamic cultural buildings adjacent to the western and southern walls of the sacred shrine, as well as the Holy Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock, as shown by the enclosed map (annex 4).

7. Regardless of the dispute between the religious communities and the Israeli military governors on the site of the first excavations, and their allegations that they are the burial places of the ancient kings of Israel, and regardless of their claim that the tunnel they had discovered in the second place was no more than an old well, the Israeli excavations in the said area constitute a flagrant violation of the sanctity of the holy Islamic sites, and persistently threaten to bring them down, thus paving the way for their demolition and the setting up of a shrine for Judaism in their stead and in the courtyards of the sacred shrine thereof.

8. These excavations constitute a challenge to the Arab and Islamic worlds, and constitute constant violations of the Hague and Geneva conventions as well as the resolutions of UNESCO, the Security Council and the entire United Nations, and hence deserve attention and action on all levels.

Please accept my highest respects.

Rohi Al Khattib
Mayor of Jerusalem
