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REPORT OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE TO INVESTIGATE ISRAELI  
PRACTICES AFFECTING THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF THE POPULATION  
OF THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

Letter dated 9 December 1977, from the Permanent Representative of Israel  
to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to inform you that a delegation of the International Committee of the Red Cross recently visited Israel for the purpose of making its first contact at a high level with the new Government in Israel.

The delegation was composed of Mr. Richard Pestalozzi, Special Assistant to the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, and Mr. Jean-Pierre Hocke, Director of the Operations Department of the International Committee of the Red Cross. In Jerusalem and in Tel Aviv, the delegation met with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Moshe Dayan; the Minister of Defence, Mr. Ezer Weizman; the Minister of the Interior, Mr. Yosef Burg; the Minister of Justice, Mr. Shmuel Tamir; the Israel Defence Forces Co-ordinator for the Territories, General Avraham Orly; and the Assistant Director-General responsible for United Nations Affairs in the Israel Foreign Ministry, Ambassador Eytan Ronn.

Following the visit, the spokesman of the Israel Defence Forces issued the following statement on 6 December 1977:

"Israel recently informed the International Committee of the Red Cross of a substantial extension of the arrangements for visits by ICRC delegates to security detainees in the territories. According to the new arrangements, the military government authorities will notify the ICRC of the arrest of security detainees within fourteen days of the arrest of security detainees and an ICRC delegate will be entitled to visit without witnesses every such detainee within that period in order to ascertain the detainee's health.

"After the visit, if the ICRC delegate so requests, the detainee may promptly be examined without witnesses by a Red Cross physician.

"Agreement has been reached as to visits in special circumstances within less than fourteen days from the arrest."

A parallel statement was published by the International Committee of the Red Cross in Geneva on 6 December 1977.

Although Israel does not consider that the Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of August 1949, 1/ is applicable to the territories, in practice it applies all the humanitarian provisions contained in it, and the representatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross are accorded all the rights and privileges provided for under it.

I should like to emphasize that these new arrangements are in line with the Israel Government's policy of allowing complete and free access to the territories and that the Israel administration in the territories is willing and capable of operating under the full exposure of international opinion. It is hoped that the unusual and unprecedented step of allowing Red Cross delegates, accompanied, if necessary, by a Red Cross doctor, to visit detainees during the initial period of interrogation will go a long way towards quashing once and for all the empty allegations of Arab propaganda which have been raised once again in the course of the current session of the General Assembly.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly under agenda item 57.

(Signed) Chaim HERZOG  
Permanent Representative of Israel  
to the United Nations

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1/ United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 75, No. 973, p. 287.