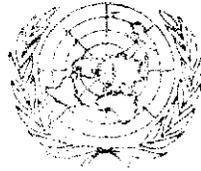




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QUESTION OF PALESTINE

Letter dated 9 February 1979 from the Chairman of the Committee on
the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People
addressed to the Secretary-General

As Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, I have the honour to convey to you my concern over the recurrence of systematic repressive measures taken by the Israeli authorities against the Palestinian people in the occupied territories.

In my letter dated 22 August 1978 (A/33/218-S/12820), I drew your attention to similar cases of ill-treatment and torture by the Israeli authorities of Palestinian prisoners in Tulkarim prison. These incidents, according to reports received by us, occurred last year in detention centres at Nablus, Ramallah, Jenin and Ber Sheva. One example of these reprehensible practices was the ill-treatment of Palestinian children after their arrest in the Kalandia refugee camp last year.

Such repressive measures are familiar, inasmuch as they have been consistently reported for some years past in the international press, and by the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Population of the Occupied Territories. The Special Committee has heard testimony given by Palestinians, and corroborated by their Israeli lawyers, asserting that Palestinians are subjected by the Israeli authorities to torture and ill-treatment. The Committee has also referred in its reports to specific cases of violations of human rights in the occupied territories.

Moreover, recent press reports, based on official documents of the United States Department of State, confirm that such cases of torture and inhuman treatment do indeed occur in the occupied territories. This obviously refutes the claims of the Government of Israel that such practices are only isolated incidents.

Let me point out that this inhuman treatment of the Palestinian people violates the Geneva Convention of 12 August 1949 relative to the Treatment of

Prisoners of War 1/ and Security Council resolution 237 (1967) of 14 June 1967. Further, it violates the principles contained in resolution I (XXXIV) A, adopted by the United Nations Commission on Human Rights on 14 February 1978. That resolution urges the Israeli authorities to observe the norms of international justice and demands that the Government of Israel forthwith end systematic repression and torture.

It should be noted that in the wake of the Camp David talks, systematic repression has started again and is being directed particularly against Palestinians who openly express opposition to those talks and express support for the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), which has been recognized by the United Nations as the representative of the Palestinian people.

Examples of these repressive acts by the Israeli authorities are:

- (a) Arrests by the Israeli authorities at Bin Zeit University and in Ramallah;
- (b) The statements by the Foreign Minister of Israel about deporting Palestinians who support the thinking and ideals of the PLO;
- (c) Demolition of homes of Palestinians supporting the PLO.

These are merely a few examples of the wide-ranging campaign of repression launched by the Israeli authorities against the Palestinian people.

Similarly, the Government of Israel is continuing to establish new Jewish settlements in the occupied territories and to enlarge existing settlements. These illegal measures are a violation of United Nations resolutions; they aggravate an explosive situation and complicate any prospects for a settlement of the Middle East situation.

A disquieting element is added to this gloomy situation by an article published in the 24 November 1978 issue of the Israeli newspaper Haaretz. According to this article, a report of the Committee of Directors of Ministries of the Government of Israel recommends that, under the internal autonomy plan of the Camp David accords, the State of Israel should keep 1 million dunams of land in the occupied territories.

The report also provides for Israeli control of all water resources in those territories.

According to the same report, the Israeli authorities plan to establish in those territories municipal councils under Israeli jurisdiction. The intentions of the Government of Israel, as shown by this report, are unmistakable: to perpetuate its control of the occupied territories and thereby to deny the Palestinian people their inalienable rights.

1/ United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 75, No. 972, p. 135.

All the foregoing information on violations of the human rights of the Palestinian people, in defiance of United Nations resolutions, and on the Government of Israel's illegal steps to keep the occupied territories at all costs are a matter of deep concern to the international community and directly endanger international peace and security.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter distributed as an official document of the thirty-fourth session of the General Assembly under the item entitled "Question of Palestine".

(Signed) Médoune FALL
Chairman of the Committee on
the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights
of the Palestinian People