



SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 27th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. KOUASSI (Togo)

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AGENDA ITEM 71: REPORT OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE TO INVESTIGATE ISRAELI PRACTICES AFFECTING THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF THE POPULATION OF THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES: REPORTS OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

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The meeting was called to order at 10.35 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 71: REPORT OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE TO INVESTIGATE ISRAELI PRACTICES AFFECTING THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF THE POPULATION OF THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES: REPORTS OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/41/454, A/41/455 and Add.1, A/41/456, A/41/469 and Add.1, A/41/677, A/41/680-682)

1. The CHAIRMAN drew the attention of members of the Committee to the documentation on agenda item 71, namely the report of the Special Committee (A/41/680) and the various reports of the Secretary-General, as well as the letters from the Permanent Representative of Jordan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (A/41/82, A/41/94, A/41/426, A/41/427, A/41/635 and A/41/716) and the communications on the item from the representatives of Morocco (A/41/113, A/41/117 and A/41/138), Tunisia (A/41/475), Iraq (A/41/620) and Oman (A/41/691 and A/41/700).

2. Mr. WIJEWARDANE (Sri Lanka), speaking in his capacity as Chairman of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Population of the Occupied Territories, introduced the report of the Special Committee, covering the period from 30 August 1985 to 31 August 1986. The report was based on information received by the Special Committee from the oral and written accounts of persons having first-hand knowledge of the situation in the occupied territories and the testimony of organizations in those territories and on the views of the Governments concerned. The Special Committee had attempted to give not only a clear picture of day-to-day life in the occupied territories but also an assessment of the human rights situation there during the period covered.

3. The Special Committee had consistently sought the co-operation of the Governments concerned and had received information from some of those Governments. Regrettably, the Government of Israel, the occupying Power in the territories under consideration, had continued to withhold its co-operation from the Special Committee, which had therefore not been able to visit the occupied territories and to inform itself of the situation on the spot.

4. The information thus gathered had been analysed in the context of that international law applicable to the situation and, in particular, of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War of 12 August 1949. The Special Committee had also relied on the Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, of 14 May 1954, the Hague Conventions of 1899 and 1907 respecting the Laws and Customs of War on Land, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The information was examined by the Special Committee with reference to a number of fundamental human rights (freedom of movement, freedom of expression, freedom of association, the right to education, etc.). The question of annexation and settlement and its various ramifications was examined, as was the question of the treatment of detainees.

(Mr. Wijewardane, Sri Lanka)

5. In chapter V of its report, the Special Committee gave its conclusions and its evaluation of the human rights situation during the period in question. The policy followed by the Government of Israel had not changed, and certain members of the Israeli Government had made repeated reference to a so-called "iron fist" policy. The Special Committee had noted that that policy affected virtually all aspects of civilian life in the occupied territories and that the human rights situation had thus deteriorated even further. It had attempted to illustrate that situation in annex III to the report, which contained chapter XV, sections A and B, and which gave an idea of the sheer volume of the information available.

6. As in his letter of transmittal, he wished to dwell briefly on the consequences of the financial crisis facing the Organization for the work of the Special Committee. The Special Committee had agreed, in a spirit of constructive co-operation, to limit its activities in response to the Secretary-General's request to all United Nations bodies to contribute to the efforts undertaken to surmount the financial crisis. It had therefore endeavoured to carry out its mandate to the best of its ability, but the voluntary limitations accepted had nevertheless prevented it from presenting its work in its entirety. The situation that was the subject of the Special Committee's mandate generated a considerable volume of information, at least a representative cross-section of which had to be retained in the interests of fairness to the hardships and deprivation suffered by the civilian population of the occupied territories. For that reason, annex III to the report, which, in the view of the Special Committee, was perhaps its most important part, had to be reflected in one way or another in any statement of the human rights situation in the occupied territories.

7. The Special Committee reiterated its hope that the international community would take a constructive approach to the human rights aspect in considering the situation in the occupied territories; that aspect had a vital bearing on the political realities of the region and therefore must not, and could not, be ignored.

8. Mr. SALAH (Jordan) said that the bitter conclusion to be drawn from the report of the Special Committee was that Israeli policy towards the population of the occupied Arab territories had not changed. The repressive practices of the occupier in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and the Golan Heights persisted and had even worsened. There had been a return to the policy of the "iron fist", although that term did not do full justice to the brutality of the policy in question.

9. There was no longer any need to demonstrate the inhuman character of the occupation. Even Israeli society felt its effects, thereby proving, if there was still a need for such proof, that the occupation could not solve Israel's problems or guarantee its future. That country was, however, more concerned with exerting its domination than with ensuring its "security" and its "permanence". That was also apparent from the report of the Special Committee, where it was stated that the arguments presented by Israel to justify the demolition and sealing of houses were baseless.

(Mr. Salah, Jordan)

10. Israel considered the most minor Palestinian activity as a threat to its security. Military Order No. 854, which required those Palestinians wishing to teach or to study at a university to recognize the legality of the occupation, reflected that mind-set. There was every reason to believe that Israel, without admitting as much, considered that the very existence of the Palestinian people jeopardized its security and that it must therefore put an end to that existence in one way or another.

11. The international community must firmly reject such assertions and should consider Israel alone responsible for the persistence of disturbances and tensions in the region.

12. The Israeli authorities constantly provoked the Arab population of the occupied territories. They then used the reaction of the population as a pretext for intensifying their repression. A police patrol passing through an Arab university or school often triggered a process that led unfailingly to the closure of the establishment concerned and the arrest of hundreds of students, with all the consequences that that could entail.

13. Another example of provocation was the repeated violation of Muslim places of worship by Israeli political organizations and terrorist groups. Such acts were part of a deliberate policy, as was demonstrated by the incidents at Al-Aqsa Mosque in January 1986 when members of the Knesset, in the ultimate act of provocation, had tried to force their way into the holy place to pray, thereby showing complete contempt for the hundreds of millions of Muslims who revered that sanctuary.

14. Such attacks, from which no aspect of the social life of the Arab population, none of their rights and none of their values was spared, were designed to keep the population in a state of fear and humiliation and to stir up hatred between the two communities. In that connection, there was one fact to which the international community could not in any circumstances turn a blind eye: Israel was trying to imbue its young people with hatred of the Arabs so that the feeling would become a part of their cultural reality.

15. On top of that, there was the destitution to which the Palestinian people had been reduced. Since 1967, Israel had been following a policy of economic strangulation in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip: it took such forms as seizing water resources, confiscating agricultural land, exploiting the Palestinian labour force, swamping West Bank markets with Israeli products and denying producers in the area access to Israeli markets, not to mention the heavy taxes that Arab citizens and traders had to pay. Although all reports from the area confirmed such facts, Israel claimed stubbornly to be striving to put the economy of the occupied Arab territories on its feet again.

16. What was even more serious, Israel had drawn up a 20-year plan for the establishment of settlements, thereby demonstrating its intention of opposing peace for the next 20 years at least.

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(Mr. Salah, Jordan)

17. Duplicity in applying the law was another characteristic of Israeli policy, as was shown by the support given to settlers by the judicial apparatus or by the acquittal of two Shin Beth members responsible for the murder of Palestinian Fedayeen.

18. The Israeli political, military, judicial and ideological apparatus presented a sorry spectacle in its attempts to undermine the cultural, psychological and economic foundations of the Palestine identity. It must be understood that the policy was a deliberate one aimed at changing the demographic, social and physical characteristics of the Arab territories. Jordan would continue to struggle vigorously against such practices until Israel realized that it could not achieve its illegal ends by holding the Palestinian people and the Arab territories hostage.

19. Nineteen years had passed since the invasion of the Arab territories, but Israel still did not seem to know what it intended to do with them. On the one hand, it had annexed Jerusalem and the Golan Heights, on the other, it had returned Sinai to Egypt. Its intentions with regard to the West Bank and the Gaza Strip were uncertain, to say the least.

20. Israel's attitude was not to be attributed to confusion, however. It was pursuing several policies, drawing support conveniently from the whole gamut of Israeli political parties, whose positions ranged from advocating the annexation of the occupied Arab territories to the outright expulsion of their population. That multiplicity of positions reflected the Israeli Government's ultra-conservative, wait-and-see attitude to the future of the occupied Arab territories and its willingness to allow each political grouping to try to shape that future in its own way.

21. Meanwhile, the Palestinian people remained illegally confined and exposed to the whims of the military apparatus, whose instructions were to leave them at the mercy of Israeli political forces.

22. Mr. MANSOUR (Observer, Palestine Liberation Organization) said that the report of the Special Committee gave a clear picture of the situation in the occupied territories and revealed that Israel was intensifying its policy of the "iron fist" with the dual purpose of annexing the whole of Palestine and expelling the Palestinian people. Israel's continued refusal to allow the Special Committee to visit the occupied territories was further proof that the Palestinians were living under inhuman conditions.

23. The occupied Palestinian territories had been transformed into one huge concentration camp where arbitrary arrests, extensive curfews and brutal police raids were frequent. Thousands upon thousands of Palestinians, many of them children, had been imprisoned and tortured, as was widely documented by Amnesty International which was still waiting for the results of the investigation which the Israeli police claimed to have conducted into the ill treatment of young Palestinian detainees held in the notorious Al-Fara'a detention centre.

(Mr. Mansour, Observer, PLO)

24. Israel had been waging a massive campaign to destroy the political, economic and social infrastructure of the occupied territories and the will of the Palestinian people living under occupation.

25. A number of schools and universities had been closed for varying lengths of time, students had been arrested and imprisoned, activities had been disrupted and publications censored. Restrictions on freedom of movement had continued to be imposed but, according to Amnesty International, the use of restriction orders had largely been replaced after July 1985 by the use of administrative detention. Some 126 people had been subjected to administrative detention between July and December 1985.

26. Contrary to Israel's mendacious claims, the economy of the occupied territories was deteriorating steadily, as was evidenced by the situation in the Gaza Strip. A study by a researcher from Harvard University, published in May 1986, and articles in the Jerusalem Post showed that the sectors on which the economy of the Gaza Strip was based - citrus fruit production and fishing - were deteriorating. Furthermore, average annual per capita consumption of water, which was essential for irrigation, differed by a ratio of 100 to 1 according to whether the consumers were Zionist settlers or Palestinians.

27. The expropriation of Palestinian land and the development of settlements brought with them an intensification of terrorism by settlers indoctrinated with the racist Zionist ideas of the dangerous Rabbi Meir Kahane, whose aim was to expel, in every possible way, the 2 million Palestinians from Palestine. According to data compiled by Meron Benvenisti in his West Bank Data Base Project, Israel had seized more than 52 per cent of the total area of the West Bank. The Jewish settler population had increased by almost 20 per cent in one year and, if the trend continued, would reach the 100,000 mark by the end of the decade. Israel was continuing to develop an increasing number of settlements, to which hundreds of millions of dollars were allocated. Some were already becoming small cities and, more significantly, military outposts.

28. Israeli repression was escalating further. The Israeli Government had revived the Emergency Defence Regulations imposed in 1945 by the British Mandate authorities, especially those aspects relating to arbitrary deportations, administrative detention and the closing of Palestinian newspapers. Hundreds of Palestinians had been arrested or deported, and Palestinian newspapers had been temporarily or permanently closed, as had happened to the daily Al-Mithaq and the weekly Al-Ahd on 24 August 1986. The editor-in-chief of the Arabic daily Al-Sha'b had been arrested on 3 November 1986 and was awaiting deportation.

29. The escalation of repression had been accompanied by underhand political manoeuvring by Zionist leaders, the United States Administration and their agents in the region to prepare the ground for a quisling leadership to replace the PLO and for an Israeli-Jordanian condominium over the occupied Palestinian territories which would enable Israel to perpetuate its illegal occupation. That would be achieved under the guise of a so-called five-year development plan which included

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the appointment of quislings as mayors and the opening at Nablus of a branch of the Cairo-Amman Bank. The United States-Israeli offensive, the purpose of which was to move on to the second stage of the Camp David Accords, had taken a dangerous turn after the meeting at Ifran and the Alexandria summit.

30. Those grand designs would not succeed, however, because the Palestinian people and the Palestine Liberation Organization were one and could not be divided. The situation in the occupied Palestinian territories was such that a popular revolution was imminent.

31. Israel's arrogance enjoyed the total support of the Government of the United States, whose complicity, as defined by the International Law Commission, in the crimes committed against the Palestinian people was incontestable.

32. Israel was further encouraged by the silence of the international community, which could not engage in mere lip service against Israel and resign itself to inactivity on the pretext that its hands were tied. The Special Political Committee was not addressing the root cause of the problem. The international community was duty bound to ensure respect for the Fourth Geneva Convention. The provisions of the Charter surely provided remedies and, if the Secretary-General and the General Assembly felt at a loss, they could seek an advisory opinion on the matter from the International Court of Justice.

33. Lastly, it should be borne in mind that the United States and Israel continued to obstruct the process of establishing a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East, in disregard of United Nations resolutions and international law. In particular, they rejected General Assembly resolution 38/58 C calling for the convening of an international peace conference on the Middle East. The Palestinian people, under the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization, would continue its struggle until it attained all its inalienable rights.

34. Mr. ABoul-GHEIT (Egypt) expressed satisfaction with the way in which the Special Committee had discharged its mandate. The item under consideration and that on UNRWA were two facets of the Palestinian problem and two consequences of the inability of the international community to find a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the problem or even to put an end to the Israeli occupation of the Arab territories.

35. The report under consideration, which was the eighteenth submitted by the Special Committee, once again contained a long list of practices which were all violations of human rights and international conventions and agreements: an "iron fist" policy, collective punishment, destruction of housing, expulsion, administrative detention, expropriation of land in order to establish settlements, violation of the holy places of Al Quds and other towns in the West Bank, strangulation of the economy of the occupied territories in order to create a cheap Palestinian work force, obstacles to school and university education, etc. All those practices were based on the cult of violence and repression and were designed to break the Palestinian people's will to struggle and resist. After almost two

(Mr. Aboul-Gheit, Egypt)

decades of occupation, however, that objective was far from being attained and the situation in the occupied Arab territories continued to deteriorate. Accordingly, all peace-loving forces must redouble their efforts to find a peaceful solution to the Palestinian problem.

36. In the view of his delegation, any improvement in the situation in the occupied territories hinged upon three essential pre-conditions: Israel must understand that there could be no comprehensive peace if it pursued its policy of expansion and settlement which was an obstacle to all peace efforts; Israel must understand that peace for all the peoples of the region required that the Palestinian people must once again be able to enjoy its legitimate national rights, including the right to self-determination; lastly, Israel must understand that a comprehensive peace required an end to the military occupation of the Arab territories and respect for the right of all peoples to live in peace as good neighbours.

37. In addition to those basic pre-conditions for a settlement of the Palestinian problem, Israel should take a number of other measures long advocated by Egypt to win the confidence of the Palestinian people in the occupied territories: it should officially abandon its settlements policy, prohibit the expansion of existing settlements, enforce the law for settlers too, scrupulously respect the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention and improve the living conditions of the Palestinian people, who might then glimpse the possibility of a truly better future. His delegation continued to hope that 1987 would be the year of negotiations, the year that would see an end to tragedy and suffering and, lastly, the year in which an international peace conference on the Middle East would be convened.

38. Mr. BIRCH (United Kingdom), speaking on behalf of the twelve member States of the European Community, said that the Twelve had taken note of the latest report of the Special Committee and of the fact that the Government of Israel continued to deny its co-operation to that Committee despite the request of the Secretary-General. In spite of the efforts made by the Special Committee to provide information which was as complete and objective as possible, the report was therefore unable to present a complete picture of the situation and the Twelve had accordingly consulted other sources of information and would also take due account of the views expressed by Israel and other delegations.

39. The Twelve were seriously concerned by the refusal of the occupying Power to acknowledge the applicability to the Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967 of the provisions of the Fourth Hague Convention of 1907 and the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949. Under those provisions, any change in the status and demographic structure of those territories, including the establishment of settlements, was illegal. The Twelve reaffirmed in that context the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force, a principle of international law to which Security Council resolution 242 (1967) also referred. Accordingly, the Twelve continued to be concerned at the Israeli policy of creating settlements in the occupied territories and expanding existing ones and, in

(Mr. Birch, United Kingdom)

particular, at recent statements by the Israeli Government advocating an intensification of that trend. The settler population on the West Bank had grown by about 8,000 to 10,000 people in the past year, and the drive to take over more land continued unabated. That had led inevitably to friction with the local inhabitants, who justifiably opposed a policy that resulted in demographic changes which were illegal under international law and unacceptable to world public opinion.

40. The European Community repeated its appeal to Israel to end its damaging and illegal policy, and to help create the atmosphere of trust required for dialogue, which would lead to constructive negotiations aimed at an overall peaceful settlement.

41. The European Community was disturbed by reports of harassment and illegal acts committed by the settlers against the Palestinian population, in spite of efforts made by the military authorities to curb them. In general, it deplored all acts of violence in the occupied territories, from whatever quarter they came. The cycle of violence gravely endangered the chances of peace in the region.

42. The Twelve were also strongly concerned about continuing reports of arbitrary acts committed by the Israeli occupation authorities. The measures re-introduced in August 1985 seemed once again to be applied rigorously. At the end of October, around 30 Palestinians had been arbitrarily detained, town arrests had become more common and deportations had continued, contrary to the Fourth Geneva Convention. Collective punishment was imposed in an arbitrary fashion in the form of curfews and restrictions on the right to travel on the bridges crossing the Jordan. Furthermore, the unacceptable practice continued of demolishing or sealing the houses belonging to the families of those detained. The members of the EEC were further concerned about the reduction in recent years of the annual number of family reunification permits issued each year by the Israeli authorities. They also noted the report by Amnesty International on living conditions in Israeli prisons, published in September 1986. They wished to draw the attention of the members of the Committee to the refusal of the authorities of the occupying Power to permit the International Committee of the Red Cross to have unrestricted access to interrogation centres, including the one at Far'a, and to serious questions raised about the treatment of detainees.

43. The Twelve were also bound to restate their view that the policy by which Israel sought to impose its civil administration on the occupied territories was unacceptable. A military occupation was regarded as a temporary situation, and could not confer upon the occupying Power the right of annexation or disposal, or that of extending its law, jurisdiction or administration in those territories. For that reason, any measure of that type was invalid. The same principles applied to the Golan Heights. Lastly, the continuation of the state of emergency, declared in 1985 by the occupation authorities on the West Bank and in Gaza, was only acceptable to the extent that its application was compatible with the Fourth Geneva Convention.

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44. The members of the EEC set store by the status of Jerusalem, considered by three religions as a holy city, and accordingly rejected any unilateral measure seeking to modify its status. They regarded it as essential that the protection of unimpeded access by all to the holy places must be guaranteed at the current time and in any future agreement on Jerusalem.

45. Although the question of the human rights of the inhabitants of the occupied territories had implications not only for the welfare of the people concerned, but also for the wider prospects for a just and comprehensive settlement of the Middle East conflict, the economic situation in the territories also had an important role in the search for a settlement. That was why the European Community had been providing aid to the occupied territories since 1981, had been supporting the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, and had just decided to increase substantially its support for the educational programmes of UNRWA. Furthermore, on 27 October 1986, the European Community had decided to establish a separate programme of aid to the Palestinians living in the occupied territories, which would bring together all existing technical and financial assistance provided by the Community. The Twelve had also taken steps to provide preferential access to its markets for Palestinian agricultural and manufactured goods originating in the occupied territories.

46. Although those measures were favourable, they could not be a substitute for determined efforts to seek a just and comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict. The position of the Twelve had been defined in the Venice Declaration and in numerous subsequent statements. Sir Geoffrey Howe had recently had the opportunity to reaffirm, on behalf of the member States of the European Community, in the general debate in plenary, that a just, lasting and comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli dispute could be achieved only through negotiation. All parties must clearly and unambiguously accept two principles: the right to existence and security of all the States in the area, including Israel, and the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, with all that that implied.

47. Mr. DOWER (Israel) said that the debate on the agenda item under consideration was the occasion for launching an all-out onslaught against Israel, in pursuit of the warfare which had been waged against it on many levels since the first day of its existence. Israel was described as the personification of evil. Those ritual attacks might have been laughable if they did not mean that the Arab-Israeli conflict could not be settled for years to come, and that thousands of people, Israelis and Arabs alike, would be its victims, because of the intransigence, short-sightedness and madness of leaders manipulated by foreign interests or dreaming of wiping off the map two sovereign States, Jordan and Israel.

48. For the last 19 years, the State of Israel had been engaged in promoting the well-being and in ensuring the safety and socio-economic development of the Palestinian Arabs. Under Israeli administration, every sector of activity had made substantial progress, as compared to the situation which had prevailed before 1967, or as compared to the current situation in most of the neighbouring countries. In spite of voluminous reports and countless resolutions condemning Israel, the facts

(Mr. Dowek, Israel)

could not be obscured. His delegation did not intend to conceal difficulties or evade sensitive topics. It would not deny that, behind the surface of daily life, there were political implications, frustrations and foreign manipulations which had direct repercussions on the more prosaic aspects of the situation. It would certainly not claim that a comprehensive settlement could be reached without tackling the political and human aspects of the problem.

49. In offering to assess the main indicators of the quality of life in any society, he addressed first of all the question of employment and working conditions. According to the 1985 statistics, the rate of unemployment was 6 per cent in Judea and Samaria, and 2.2 per cent in the Gaza District, as opposed to 8 per cent in Israel. The working conditions and wages of Arab workers were identical to those of Jewish workers. The net per capita income in 1985 was \$1,524, which was far above the average in many developing countries. The wages of public officials had been raised by 10 per cent, and many of them could receive a second salary from Jordan. From 1983 to 1985, local production had increased by 3 per cent yearly, while in Israel it had remained unchanged. The yearly increase in private income and private consumption had been 5 per cent and 6 per cent, respectively, while public consumption had risen by merely 4 per cent yearly. He quoted in detail other data which reflected the improvement of the standard of living since 1967. The number of dwelling units constructed yearly was three times higher than the annual increase in the number of families.

50. As for education, which was currently provided by 25,000 teachers, the number of pupils in primary and secondary schools, which was 450,000, or one third of the population, denoted an increase of 104 per cent in comparison to 1967. The number of classrooms had grown by 95 per cent. In 1967, no university education had existed, whereas 17,000 full-time students were now taking courses in five universities, four colleges and two seminars for teachers. Vocational training, which covered every field, had developed significantly, and through the years had provided training for 56,000 young people and thus helped to improve their prospects for the future.

51. The health budget had doubled in real terms in 1985 and a substantial increase was programmed for 1986. The four major hospitals of the area were currently being enlarged in order to add more beds and open new departments. The infant immunization programme had fully attained its objectives, and 53 per cent of all births in the West Bank and 75 per cent of all births in the Gaza district took place in hospital maternity wards. One hundred and forty centres dispensed treatment, free of charge, to pregnant women and to children up to three years of age. For the first time, a health insurance plan had been established and already covered 40 per cent of the population in Judea and Samaria and 80 per cent in the Gaza district. In 1985, the adoption of a programme prepared by the Joint Health Planning Committee, composed of senior Palestinian and Israeli physicians, had represented a major step forward in the co-ordination of health services. With the co-operation of WHO, three research centres, dealing with primary health care, epidemiology and medical manpower respectively, were in the process of being established. Special attention was given to the training of local health

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personnel, and highly professional courses were held for Arab doctors in a number of Israeli hospitals.

52. Another encouraging indicator was the significant progress made in strengthening infrastructures (modernization of the telecommunications network, the linking of all major localities to direct international dialling and the telex service, development of the road network and public transport). The building of a modern bus terminal at the Adam Bridge on the Jordan River would make it possible to tackle the ever-increasing movement of passengers between Jordan and Israel. It should also be recalled that thousands of people went on pilgrimage to Makka Alkarima each year without encountering any opposition whatsoever. In the refugee camps, the living conditions had been substantially improved owing to major projects of sanitation and drainage, the paving of internal roads and the setting-up of telephone lines.

53. The constant increase - at rates much higher than in most developing countries - in capital formation and investments attested to the dynamic character of the region's economy under Israeli administration. Furthermore, all restriction on the flow of money from external sources, which represented nearly 1 million dollars per day, had been lifted. All development projects submitted by private entrepreneurs, local or foreign, had been approved. International organizations were carrying out, with the active support of the Israeli Government, more than 100 new projects. Across the years, the authorities had received 934 proposals for projects and requests for grants. Six hundred and eighty-five had been approved and implemented, and 50 per cent of the cost had been met by the administration. An agreement on developing co-operatives in the area had just been signed with the United States Agency for International Development. A Palestinian bank, the Amman-Cairo Bank, had opened its doors only a few days before.

54. Agricultural production, which had doubled in real terms between 1970 and 1980, continued to increase and to diversify, and its quality was also increasing. Production techniques were constantly being improved, and unemployment in that sector had been reduced.

55. Municipal services had also improved greatly in the entire area, and in the previous weeks Israeli administrators had been replaced by Palestinians so that the population could increasingly take over the management of daily business.

56. With regard to security and the maintenance of public order, the situation in the years immediately following the Six-Day War had required recourse to deportation measures, administrative detention or temporary closure of universities. Since 1980, and until recently, there had been a dramatic decline in the number of cases justifying such measures. Regrettably, the renewed outbreak of terrorist activities had compelled the authorities to resort once again to those measures, only in extreme cases and after having duly determined whether any other solutions existed. For a population of almost 1.3 million, only about 100 persons had been affected and on the sole ground that they constituted a clear threat to security. The legality of the measures could not be contested for they stemmed

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from the Jordanian law in force in the area, the security regulations issued by the Military Commander, the 1979 Israeli law and the British Mandatory Defence (Emergency) Regulations of 1945. They were also fully consonant with article 27, paragraph 4 and article 78 of the Fourth Geneva Convention. The measures were taken according to regular procedures including the right of appeal, and if the decisions were maintained, they were subject to periodic review by a competent body in keeping with the provisions of the above-mentioned articles. Furthermore, the Israeli High Court of Justice could be petitioned at any moment against the decisions of the Regional Commanders or the recommendations of the Appeal Boards. A number of the persons affected had made use of that procedure. As for the closing of universities, the decision had in many cases been taken by the local academic authorities themselves, in order to avoid disturbances and bloody clashes between the various political factions or as a result of student strikes and unjustified demands. Only in a few cases had the decision been taken by the military authorities because of urgent security imperatives and in order to maintain public order. Israel was reluctant to take such measures and made every effort, where possible, to avoid their enforcement. Its prime consideration was the protection of civilians - Arabs as well as Jews - from blind terrorism, and in the present circumstances it was compelled to resort to all legal and lawful means, as distasteful as they might be in the eyes of some. To Israel, blind terror was much more distasteful.

57. Addressing the question of the Jewish villages in Judea, Samaria and Gaza, he said that almost all of them had been established on land that was public domain and which, in nearly all cases, had not been previously cultivated because no one had ever dreamt that it could be. Out of a total of 5 million dunums, the present or future villages would cover only 250,000 dunums, or less than 5 per cent of the land. Furthermore, out of 2.5 million dunums belonging to private owners, only 1 per cent had been or would be used for that purpose. Since 1977 the amount of private land which had been expropriated to build roads, electricity lines and so forth had been very low (0.01 per cent) and, if the land confiscated since 1967 by the Israel Defence Forces for security reasons was taken into account, the rate was approximately 2 per cent, and was well below the figures given by Arab and other sources. The establishment of those Jewish villages did not pose a threat to the Arabs. They had brought progress and social, economic and cultural development to the region. It should not be forgotten that, with the exception of a short period between 1949 and 1967, Jews had always lived alongside the Arabs in Judea, Samaria and the Gaza district. Since 1967, the "iron curtain", namely the curtain of hatred, prejudice and ignorance, had been raised. Today, 50,000 to 60,000 Jews lived side by side with their Arab neighbours. Up until 1967 and for a few years following the war, there had not been any Jewish villages to provide an excuse for the negative attitude of the Arabs; they had failed to yield to the voice of reason and stubbornly refused to recognize Israel and negotiate and make peace with it.

58. The picture that had been painted had been executed with the help of statistics which were not exclusively Israeli and it was not part of a propaganda exercise. Objective readers of the annual reports of the many international committees created at the prompting of those who were anxious to discredit Israel

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could find there confirmation of many points highlighted by his delegation. Although the reports were far from being unbiased, owing in particular to the bringing-to-bear of political pressures, they none the less contained positive data which the authors could not totally conceal. At a session of the Commission on Human Rights, the delegation of Israel had identified in the reports submitted which paragraphs were designed to please the Arab countries. The only result had been the placing of a stricter control on the drafting of the reports, expurgation of positive references and even reformulation of statistics so as to blacken Israel at all costs. The Arab delegations knew better than any other delegation that the real situation of the Palestinian Arabs was far from being as dire as they would have the world believe. Some delegations would react by asking why then did Israel stubbornly refuse each year to receive the Special Committee. A few might express regret or even condemn Israel for such "stubbornness" and "unco-operativeness" and would not hesitate to declare the Special Committee to be impartial. All those delegations knew perfectly well, however, that the Special Committee was not and could not be impartial.

59. Why should Israel accept being placed systematically on the accusation bench every year? Why should there be a "special committee" for only one specific situation which was in no way critical when compared with many others? No delegation present would ask for a special committee to be sent to Syria to investigate its practices in Al-Hamma or those of its occupation forces in Lebanon. No delegation would dream of asking for an investigation into the massacres perpetrated against the Kurds by Iraq and Iran, or by the Sudanese authorities against the Christians in the Sudan. No one would dare suggest an investigation into the inhuman treatment of prisoners or into the thousands of disappearances in many countries of the Middle East. No one would suggest an investigation into the open collusion of Libya, Syria, Iran and Iraq with international terrorism. As to the situations in Cambodia, Afghanistan, Kashmir, the Punjab and Nicaragua, they surely deserved the attention of United Nations investigating committees. What lay behind the seemingly innocuous expression "the Arab occupied territories including Palestine"? Should the Special Committee be allowed to investigate the situation in Tel Aviv, Haifa, Hebron or Amman, all of which were situated in Palestine as it had been at the time of the British Mandate? Was Israel, behind its 1967 armistice lines, an occupied territory? According to Mr. Kaddoumi, head of the PLO's political department, the answer was yes, as had emerged from an article published in the Arabic daily, Al-Sharq al-Awsat, on 7 October 1986. For the PLO, Palestine, within its borders under the British Mandate, was an indivisible territorial unit. Israel was not prepared to help the PLO make its dream come true.

60. After stressing the purely political role of the Special Committee, whose members had been appointed as the representatives of States, not ad personam, he said it was no mere chance that three of them represented States which had not maintained diplomatic relations with Israel for almost 20 years and automatically sponsored practically every resolution against Israel. Two of the members were the Permanent Representatives of their countries, and the third was not a career diplomat but represented a country which not only participated in the diplomatic

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onslaughts against Israel but also had not hesitated to harbour Abu al-Abbas in the wake of the Achille Lauro tragedy and had refused to hand him over for trial on the ground that it supported the so-called "struggle" of the PLO. How could those three countries claim to be objective when they were, at one and the same time, the accuser, the investigator, the prosecutor, the grand jury, the court and the executioner? In any legal procedure, even in the most retrograde judiciary system, the practice, at least on the surface, was to consider the accused to be innocent until his guilt had been duly proved before an impartial court, independent of political pressures and composed of judges whose integrity was beyond question and who made their rulings in all conscience according to universally applicable laws and standards.

61. The conclusion could not be avoided that the sources of information used by the Special Committee were as lacking in objectivity as the investigators themselves; reports coming from Amman, Damascus and the PLO terrorists, articles in the Arab press, etc. Israel had always refused to lend itself to a sham investigation whose conclusions were obviously predetermined by the composition of the Special Committee and the wording of its mandate. In recent years, with the aim of lending more credibility to its so-called "findings", the Special Committee had increasingly relied on the Israeli press and on Israeli publications and statements while, of course, ignoring all positive elements, presenting incomplete information as the full truth and distorting statistics or quoting them out of context. By doing so, all the Special Committee proved was that, in Israel, nothing could be concealed and the most delicate issues could be debated publicly and freely. Above all, it showed in the most patent manner that the norms and standards of the Government and people of Israel were those of the free world and that they were determined to correct the misdeeds and human errors that might occur in the course of a prolonged conflict. Israel was completely open to the world, as were all truly democratic societies. Diplomatic representatives had free access to all areas, and international press correspondents, whether residents or not, scoured the country and met whoever they wished. The International Committee of the Red Cross carried out its functions with the utmost freedom and benefited from the fullest co-operation of the Israeli authorities. Furthermore, the investigatory teams of the World Health Organization, the International Labour Organisation, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the International Commission of Jurists and the various human rights organizations were all welcomed and given complete freedom of action. Each year more than one million tourists visited the country, including about 200,000 Arab tourists.

62. In conclusion, he wished to reiterate that the situation of the Palestinian Arabs in Judea, Samaria and Gaza was much better than that of citizens and minorities in many of the countries that levelled accusations at Israel and sponsored draft resolutions condemning it. The Israeli Government was proud of the progress achieved in almost every field of life by the Palestinian Arabs, placing them among the most advanced ethnic groups in the Middle East. It was determined to continue to provide in the most efficacious way for their needs and to help them continue to develop and prosper. The signing of the peace treaty between Israel

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and Egypt and of the non-belligerency pact between Israel and Lebanon, although abrogated under Syrian pressure, the open bridges on the Jordan and the common life shared by Palestinian Arabs and Israelis over the past 19 years were the manifestation of very deep currents that would bring peace, stability and co-operation to the region. Peace was inevitable, not war and hatred.

63. Mr. IDRIS (Sudan), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that he wished to call attention to the mendacious statements made by the representative of Israel in claiming that Christians were persecuted by the Sudanese authorities. There was nothing suprising in such slanders coming from the representative of the Zionist State. He would like to remind that representative, if he needed reminding, that the Constitution and laws of the Sudan prohibited all discrimination based on religion, ethnic affiliation or any other criterion. Sudanese citizens of the Christian religion could hold any political post in accordance with their abilities.

64. The Southern Sudan had, for many years, been administered by Christians indigenous to the region. One of the members of the Ruling Council, which governed the country, was a Christian, and 25 per cent of the members of the Sudanese Cabinet were Christians.

65. It was to be wondered whether the Israeli Government, which put itself forward as the champion of Christianity in Africa, would allow a Christian Arab to govern the Zionist State or to hold a position of responsibility in Israel, where Arabs of the Christian religion were constantly under suspicion and subjected to all manner of persecution.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.