



**Economic and Social
Council**

Distr.
GENERAL

E/CN.4/1991/61
29 November 1990

Original: ENGLISH

COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
Forty-seventh session
Item 4 of the provisional agenda

**QUESTION OF THE VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE OCCUPIED
ARAB TERRITORIES, INCLUDING PALESTINE**

Letter dated 30 October 1990 from the Permanent Observer
of Palestine to the United Nations Office at Geneva
addressed to the Under-Secretary-General for Human Rights

While the blood had not yet dried from the 31 Palestinian martyrs and hundreds of wounded who were hit by the bullets of the Israeli occupation forces in the esplanade of the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem on 8 October 1990, the Israeli occupation forces committed another massacre in the Palestinian refugee camp of the city of Rafah on 18 October 1990. On that date, the Israeli occupation forces opened fire with automatic weapons and using live ammunition against camp residents, indiscriminately wounding 55 Palestinian citizens, after which a curfew was imposed on the towns and camps of the Gaza Strip. As the world received the news of this series of massacres with astonishment and condemnation, and only one day after the Rafah massacre, the occupation forces committed another massacre in the town and camp of Khan Yunis when they opened fire in the same indiscriminate manner with automatic weapons against demonstrators on 19 October 1990. As a result, 98 citizens were killed or wounded with live ammunition and 150 were wounded through use of metallic/rubber bullets, brutal beatings, as well as suffocation and convulsions induced by poisonous gases and alien substances dropped from above by Israeli helicopters. Medical sources in the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) clinic in Khan Yunis affirmed that in addition to poisonous gases, Israeli forces this time also employed a substance that induces convulsions and hysteria among those affected by it.

These massacres take place in a systematic and planned fashion to confirm the unchanged policy of the Israeli occupation authorities which is reflected in the daily practices of wilful murder of Palestinian citizens, aborting of pregnant women, and administrative detention and torture in prisons and detention centres, in addition to imposition of collective punishments including curfews and sieges against towns, villages and camps, closure of schools and universities, destruction of houses, uprooting of olive and citrus trees, expropriation of land and water, building of settlements, and planning to expel citizens from their homeland. It is not necessary to prove that any one of these actions constitutes a violation of the principles of human rights and international law, and that together, and in view of their continuity over 23 years, they provide indisputable proof of the existence of a pre-determination to commit such acts. This continuity also points to the high number of victims and the exceedingly dangerous nature of these acts, which are crimes of war and crimes against humanity in light of the provisions of international law, the Charter of the United Nations, the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, the two International Covenants on Human Rights, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.

The Palestinian people are victims of these crimes because they are under Israeli military occupation. They continue to hope that the international community will shoulder its responsibilities towards the dangerous situation in the occupied Palestinian territories and will undertake to protect this people, their properties and their lands, until such time as they can expel the Israeli occupation from the land of Palestine and as they are enabled to exercise their inalienable national rights on their land according to the principles of international law and legitimacy as represented in the provisions of the Charter and the resolutions of the United Nations on this subject. Until this goal is achieved, the Commission on Human Rights, the other special committees seized with practices by Israel which affect human rights, the international organizations and non-governmental organizations concerned with this issue are called upon to work towards that aim in the context of their humanitarian duties. Every effort in this direction constitutes an essential ingredient to building a just peace in a region which today faces its most critical threat to international peace and security owing to Israeli practices which give no weight to international legitimacy, to the principles of international law or to the relevant resolutions of the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Commission on Human Rights.

We, hereby, request you to consider this memorandum as an official document of the coming session of the Commission on Human Rights.

(signed) Nabil RAMLAWI
Permanent Observer of Palestine to the
United Nations Office at Geneva
