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

Letters dated 23 November and 13 December 2000 from the Permanent Observer
for Palestine to the United Nations Office at Geneva addressed to
the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

[23 November 2000]

The Israeli occupation forces and settlers continue their war against the Palestinian people, using all kinds of weapons, planes, artillery, rockets and heavy machine guns to kill Palestinians deliberately, thus causing the death until 19 November 2000 of 240 Palestinians and wounding more than 10,000 others. The Israeli occupation forces have also arrested 500 Palestinians whom they took to Israel and nobody knows what has become of them.

The Israeli forces are using all other aspects of war to kill Palestinians, such as tightening the siege on Palestinian towns and villages, isolating them from each other, forbidding any access or exit therefrom, including of foodstuffs and medicine and preventing ambulances from transporting the wounded to hospitals. Moreover, they have opened artillery fire on ambulances, thus killing a number of drivers and medical staff and wounding others.

These same forces have also attacked with artillery and rockets Palestinian houses, schools and hospitals. They launched a heavy missile bombardment against the Gaza Strip on the evening of 20 November 2000, striking from helicopter gunships and gunboats at residential locations; as a result, more than 20 children together with tens of civilians were killed and many others were injured.

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In addition to all these means of killing, groups of Israeli settlers and occupation troops have gone so far as to uproot thousands of fruit trees that constitute the basic means of subsistence for hundreds of Palestinian families in their daily lives. By so doing, these Israeli troops and settlers emphasize even further their determination to go on tightening the strangulation of the already scarce means of living available for Palestinians and to expose this people to certain death.

The deliberate killing of Palestinians, causing serious corporal harm to the wounded, imposing collective punishments on Palestinians, so depriving them of food and medicine and preventing them from providing medical treatment to their wounded, destroying their sources of subsistence and the daily food of the great majority with the aim of destroying the society by hunger and disease, are all practices to which the definitions of the crime of genocide apply, as you certainly know. Moreover, they constitute grave violations of human rights, crimes of war and crimes against humanity according to the Convention on the Prevention and the Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 and the First Additional Protocol thereto of 1977.

I am enclosing herewith a list* with the names of Palestinian martyrs from 28 September to 19 November 2000.

I would be most obliged to you if you could have this letter as well as its enclosure distributed as an official document of the fifty-seventh session of the Commission on Human Rights under agenda item 8.

[13 December 2000]

Israel continues its war against the Palestinian people using various kinds of direct and mass killing, as well as other techniques of killing, such as shooting at Palestinian civilians, residential areas and houses with heavy machine guns, artillery and rockets.

Israel continues tightening its military blockade on all Palestinian towns and villages, thus isolating these localities from their surroundings.

The Israeli military forces continue bulldozing fruit trees, destroying farms, demolishing houses in the areas under the Palestinian National Authority and, for the ninth consecutive Friday, these forces continue using military force to prevent Palestinians from having access to Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem to pay their Friday prayers there.

On the 12th and the evening of the 13th of this month, and after shelling with artillery and missiles from tanks at the town of Khan Younes for two consecutive days, the Israeli occupation forces stormed the town, which is under the Palestinian National Authority, to demolish and bulldoze houses, thus causing the death of a number of Palestinians and wounding tens of others, in addition to causing grave material damage.

* Reproduced as received, in Arabic and English only.

The occupation forces, along with groups of Israeli settlers, continue shooting and shelling unremittingly from Kfar Daroum settlement against the town of Deir Al-Balah and from Jalo settlement against Beit Jala, Aida Camp and Hebron, in daily aggressive acts, thus causing the destruction of the homes of Palestinians and drastic human and material losses.

On the other hand, operations of uprooting and bulldozing fruit trees, destroying farms that constitute the basic means of subsistence for thousands of families all over various occupied regions of the Palestinian National Authority continue unceasingly.

In addition to the daily random and deliberate killing of Palestinians, the Israeli army forces have killed the Palestinian Anwar Ahmed Hamran, 28 years old, from Jenin, in front of the gate of Al-Quds university in Nablus, by opening fire and firing six shots at his body, although there was no confrontation.

All Palestinian towns and villages are exposed to shooting, artillery and tank missiles from the Israeli settlements inside and on the outskirts of these regions. This way, Israel has turned its settlements established in the occupied Palestinian territory into military barracks, for launching their daily military attacks against the Palestinian people for more than 70 days now.

In addition to all these crimes, the Israeli occupation authorities also persist in tightening their military blockade of Palestinian towns and villages, isolating them from their surroundings, preventing access and exit therefrom, including of food, medicine and ambulances to transport the wounded, thus seriously endangering the region with famine, particularly after it has been officially declared that the stock of wheat has run out.

I am enclosing herewith a list* with the names of Palestinian martyrs who have been shot dead at the hands of Israeli troops and settlers during the period from 20 November to 9 December 2000, to be added to the previous one.

Signed: Nabil RAMLAWI
Ambassador
Permanent Observer

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