



Security Council

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ENGLISH

PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE TWO THOUSAND
SIX HUNDRED AND FORTY-THIRD MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Tuesday, 21 January 1986, at 11.00 a.m.

President: Mr. LI Luye

(China)

Members:

Australia
Bulgaria
Congo
Denmark
France
Ghana
Madagascar
Thailand
Trinidad and Tobago
Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
United Arab Emirates
United Kingdom of Great Britain and
Northern Ireland
United States of America
Venezuela

Mr. WOOLCOTT
Mr. TSVETKOV
Mr. ADOUKI
Mr. BIERRING
Mr. de KEMOULARIA
Mr. SIMPSON
Mr. RABETAPIKA
Mr. KASEMSRI
Mr. ALLEYNE
Mr. SAFRONCHUK
Mr. AL-SHAALI

Mr. MAXEY
Ms. BYRNE
Mr. PABON

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The meeting was called to order at 11.30 a.m.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The agenda was adopted.

THE SITUATION IN THE OCCUPIED ARAB TERRITORIES

- (a) LETTER DATED 16 JANUARY 1986 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF MOROCCO TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL (S/17740)
- (b) LETTER DATED 16 JANUARY 1986 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL (S/17741)

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Chinese): I should like to inform members of the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Israel, Jordan, Morocco, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and the Syrian Arab Republic in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In accordance with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion without the right to vote, in conformity with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Alaoui (Morocco) took a place at the Council table; Mr. Netanyahu (Israel), Mr. Kasrawi (Jordan), Mr. Shah Nawaz (Pakistan), Mr. Shihabi (Saudi Arabia) and Mr. El-Fattal (Syrian Arab Republic) took the places reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Chinese): I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter dated 20 January 1986 from the Permanent Representative of the United Arab Emirates to the United Nations, which appears in document S/17748 and reads as follows:

"I have the honour to request that the Security Council extend an invitation to Mr. Zehdi Labib Terzi, Permanent Observer of the Palestine Liberation Organization to the United Nations, in accordance with the Council's past practice, in connection with the Council's consideration of the item: 'The situation in the occupied Arab territories'."

The proposal by the United Arab Emirates is not made pursuant to rule 37 or rule 39 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council, but if approved by the Council the invitation to participate in the debate would confer on the Palestine Liberation Organization the same rights of participation as those conferred on Member States when invited to participate pursuant to rule 37.

Does any member of the Security Council wish to speak on this proposal?

Ms. BYRNE (United States of America): The United States has consistently taken the position that, under the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council, the only legal basis on which the Council may grant a hearing to persons speaking on behalf of non-governmental entities is rule 39. For 40 years the United States has supported a generous interpretation of rule 39 and would certainly not object had this matter been raised under that rule. We are, however, opposed to special ad hoc departures from orderly procedure. The United States, consequently, opposes extending to the Palestine Liberation Organization the same rights to participate in the proceedings of the Security Council as if that organization represented a State Member of the United Nations.

(Mr. Byrne, United States)

We certainly believe in listening to all points of view, but none of that requires violating the rules. In particular, the United States does not agree with the recent practice of the Security Council, which appears selectively to try to enhance the prestige of those who wish to speak in the Council through a departure from the rules of procedure. We consider this special practice to be without legal foundation and to constitute an abuse of the rules.

For those reasons, the United States requests that the terms of the proposed invitation be put to the vote. Of course, the United States will vote against the proposal.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Chinese): If no other member of the Council wishes to speak at this stage, I shall take it that the Council is ready to vote on the proposal by the United Arab Emirates.

It is so decided.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour: Bulgaria, China, Congo, Ghana, Madagascar, Thailand,
Trinidad and Tobago, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics,
United Arab Emirates, Venezuela

Against: United States of America

Abstaining: Australia, Denmark, France, United Kingdom of Great Britain
and Northern Ireland

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Chinese): The result of the voting is as follows: 10 votes in favour, 1 against and 4 abstentions. The proposal has been adopted.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Terzi (Palestine Liberation Organization) took a place at the Council table.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Chinese): I should like to inform members of the Council that I have received a letter dated 21 January 1986 from the Permanent Representative of the United Arab Emirates to the United Nations, which reads as follows:

"In my capacity as Chairman of the Arab Group for the month of January 1986, I have the honour to request that, during the Council's discussion of the item presently on its agenda, 'The situation in the occupied territories', the Security Council extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Samir Mansouri, Acting Permanent Observer of the League of Arab States to the United Nations."

That letter will be circulated as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/17750. If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Council agrees to extend an invitation to Mr. Mansouri under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the appropriate moment I shall invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The Security Council is meeting today in response to a letter dated 16 January 1986 addressed to the President of the Security Council by the Permanent Representative of Morocco to the United Nations (S/17740) and a letter dated 16 January 1986 addressed to the President of the Security Council by the Permanent Representative of the United Arab Emirates to the United Nations (S/17741).

(The President)

I should also like to draw the attention of members of the Council to the following documents: S/17727, letter dated 9 January 1986 addressed to the Secretary-General by the Permanent Representative of Jordan to the United Nations; S/17739, letter dated 15 January 1986 addressed to the Secretary-General by the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations; and S/17749, letter dated 20 January 1986 addressed to the Secretary-General by the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Jordan to the United Nations.

The first speaker is the representative of Morocco, upon whom I now call.

Mr. ALAOUI (Morocco) (interpretation from French): In my capacity as Chairman of the group of States members of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, I should like to offer you, Sir, congratulations on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council. Your personal qualities and the constant support that your country gives to the just causes of peoples guarantee the success of the Council's deliberations to which the Islamic community attaches special importance, given the seriousness of the situation prevailing in Al-Quds Al-Sharif.

Reportedly, throughout the first half of January, the Al-Aqsa Al-Sharif Mosque has been desecrated by members of the Israeli Knesset, with the complicity and protection of the Israeli occupation forces that punished the faithful who were expressing their legitimate indignation at the sacrilegious acts.

(Mr. Alaoui, Morocco)

These events took place in the occupied Arab city of Al-Quds after numerous acts of provocation by the Israeli authorities since 1967 seeking to change the status of the city by expropriating the property of its inhabitants and establishing settlements there, and they constitute a challenge to the hundreds of millions of Moslems for whom the Al-Aqsa Al-Haram Al-Sharif Mosque will always remain the primary sanctuary they face in their prayers and the third Holy Place of Islam.

That led the Security Council clearly and unambiguously to recognize on 15 September 1969, following the arson which damaged the Al-Aqsa Al-Haram Al-Sharif Mosque, that

"any act of destruction or profanation of the Holy Places, religious buildings and sites in Jerusalem or any encouragement of, or connivance at, any such act may seriously endanger international peace and security". (resolution 271 (1969), para. 2)

The Kingdom of Morocco, which has the honour of acting as Chairman of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, was obliged to place these new acts of profanation before the Security Council in order that it might carry out its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security through the adoption of the measures called for by the seriousness of the situation.

There is no need to recall that the Organization of the Islamic Conference itself was established at Rabat only a few days after that Security Council decision in order to mobilize the entire Umma - the Arab nation - in defence of the Holy Places under illegal Israeli occupation. Since that time, the General Assembly and the Security Council have constantly appealed to the occupation authorities to respect the rights of the civilian population and, in particular, their religious beliefs, rights guaranteed by the fourth Geneva Convention of August 1949 relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War

(Mr. Alaoui, Morocco)

Under the chairmanship of His Majesty King Hassan II, the Al-Quds Committee, formed by the Organization of the Islamic Conference in May 1979, has also undertaken intense diplomatic efforts to safeguard Jerusalem, that Arab city which for centuries has been the symbol of the coming together in harmony and tolerance of the faithful of the three revealed monotheistic religions. In this connection, His Majesty the King himself has undertaken a series of initiatives and contacts with His Holiness the Pope and many peace-loving Heads of State, during which he drew their attention to the imperative need to do everything to resist Israeli faits accomplis intended to judaize the Holy City of Jerusalem. But we must not forget that this question is but a manifestation - albeit the most serious and most dangerous - of Israel's repressive policy in the Arab territories occupied since 1967.

Despite all those attempts to achieve a peaceful settlement of the question of Al-Quds respecting values recognized by the entire international community, Israel thus far has displayed only arrogance and scorn, stepping up its illegal measures, even annexing the city of Al-Quds and declaring it its administrative capital.

The Security Council has repeatedly confirmed, inter alia in its resolution 476 (1980) of 30 June 1980, that

"all legislative and administrative measures and actions taken by Israel, the occupying Power, which purport to alter the character and status of the Holy City of Jerusalem have no legal validity". (resolution 476 (1980), para. 3)

Thus, the recent events fall within the framework of the escalation of illegality and violence which is part of the Israeli plan to judaize the occupied territories and to deny millions of Moslem and Christian faithful the right to their Holy Places. The international community must respond to these acts with increased firmness in order to stem that escalation and make the occupation authorities respect mankind's most sacred values.

(Mr. Alaoui, Morocco)

Israeli practices in the occupied Arab territories are well known in this Organization; they have been examined in many official reports and documents. We take this opportunity to pay a tribute to the objective, dispassionate work of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, under the chairmanship of His Excellency Ambassador Massamba Sarre of Senegal.

The ministerial conference of the countries members of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, which met at Fez from 6 to 10 January last,

"denounced the odious and treacherous act of aggression against the Al-Aqsa Al-Haram Al-Sharif Mosque perpetrated with the support and protection of the Israeli occupation authorities"

and warned Israel

"against continuing these attacks, which could not fail to have the direst consequences at a time when the Islamic States are compelled to do their duty by all means to put an end to them".

For his part, His Majesty King Hassan II has again taken the initiative and has convened an emergency meeting of the Al-Quds Committee at Marrakesh to consider the situation and to take specific steps on behalf of the entire Moslem community. That Committee is meeting today as this Council's discussion begins.

That shows the importance of the Council's debate at this crucial time and reflects the hopes pinned on this Council by thousands of believers throughout the world. Those hopes must not be disappointed. At stake is the credibility of our Organization, which must now show its commitment to universality by demanding proper respect for the Holy City of Jerusalem, the age-old crucible of universal civilization. The Council and each of its members must go beyond short-term domestic or external political plans and solemnly affirm the fundamental and

(Mr. Alsoui, Morocco)

inviolable principles governing the rights of innocent civilian populations, defending them against terrorist practices from any quarter, and respecting religious beliefs and the needed tolerance among differing practices and beliefs.

That is the message we are entitled to expect from this Council so that it may meet its responsibilities under the Charter of the Organization. Firmness in the condemnation of the acts of profanation and in the warning addressed to Israel will be the surest way to strengthen the chances of a peaceful, comprehensive settlement of the entire Middle East question that would respect the sacred and inalienable national rights of the Palestinian people.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Chinese): I thank the representative of Morocco for the kind words he addressed to me.

Mr. AL-SHAALI (United Arab Emirates) (interpretation from Arabic):

Mr. President, allow me at the outset to express to you and the other members of the Council our thanks for your response to the request to hold these meetings. That request, which was submitted by the Arab Group and the States of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, expresses the importance attached by these States to the item on the agenda, the consideration of Israeli violations of the sanctity of the Haram al-Sharif in occupied Jerusalem. It also expresses two basic facts.

The first is that Israel still persists in its policies designed to Judaize the city and to violate the sanctity of its Holy Places, despite the various resolutions adopted by the Council calling upon Israel to desist from these practices and also rejecting the Israeli administrative and legislative measures and decisions aimed at changing the legal character of Jerusalem.

The second fact is that the Council, which is entrusted with safeguarding international peace and security, has failed to implement its own resolutions on the subject. Therefore, it has failed to curb Israel and stop its practices against the civilian population and Holy Places. Our resort to the Council once again was not voluntary; we were constrained to do so. We would not be here today had the Council discharged its task by implementing its resolutions and followed closely the developments and practices that infringe on them in letter and spirit.

During the past two weeks the Israeli violations of the sanctity of the Holy Places were systematically repeated, as reported in the letters of the Permanent Representative of Jordan of 9 January 1986, the Permanent Representative of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) of 10 January 1986, and the Chargé d'affaires of the Jordanian Mission of 20 January 1986. Also, the news agencies have reported more details about these incidents. Despite the fact that these violations are part of a long chain of Israeli practices against the

(Mr. Al-Shaali, United Arab Emirates)

Holy Places, be they Moslem or Christian, Israel has always taken refuge behind extremists and madmen, as it has always claimed. However, the picture has become clearer this time, as these acts were led by Israeli officials - members of the Knesset or the Government under the protection of the Israeli police.

On 8 January 1986 a number of members of the Interior Commission of the Knesset - including Geula Cohen, who openly advocates the expulsion of Arabs from Jerusalem and the West Bank - in an attempt to profane the Holy Place entered the interior of Al-Haram al-Sharif while the faithful were praying and performing their religious rites. When they were confronted by the Moslems, a large number of Israeli police stormed the interior of the Holy Place and attacked the worshippers and arrested some of them.

The next day - on 9 January 1986 - Ariel Sharon - the terrorist we all know as the hero of Sabra and Shatila - the Israeli Minister of Industry and Trade, came to the Holy Place and entered protected by Israeli police and walked there in an attempt to provoke the Moslems and offend their sentiments and to incite Israeli extremist elements to follow suit. Members of two extremist political movements, namely the followers of the Temple and Hathiya, entered the Al-Haram al-Sharif chanting the Israeli national anthem and attempted to hoist the Israeli flag. However, the guards of Al-Haram al-Sharif stood firm against that act of profanation. That was followed by statements by a number of members of the Israeli Knesset, including Geula Cohen and Don Shelanki, Chairman of the Interior Committee of the Knesset, in which they expressed their intention to enter the Holy Place once again.

These acts - in light of the involvement of the Israeli officials, to which I referred, and their legislative and executive aspects - constitute a clear violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention, particularly articles 27 and 58, which

(Mr. Al-Shaali, United Arab Emirates)

call for respect by the occupying State, Israel, for the performance by the people under protection, the Palestinian Arabs, of their religious beliefs.

We all know that Israel refuses to implement that Convention, despite unanimous agreement on the necessity to do so, and claims that it applies the Hague Rules of 1907 to the occupied Palestinian and Arab territories. However, in its violation of the sanctity of Al-Haram al-Sharif, Israel clearly violates article 46 of the Hague Convention, which provides for the following:

(spoke in English)

"Family honour and rights, the lives of persons, and private property, as well as religious convictions and practice must be respected".

(continued in Arabic)

The above notwithstanding, this incident cannot be separated from the main context of Israeli practices. Hence it can only be understood in the framework of Israeli policy towards occupied Arab territories in general, and Jerusalem in particular. This policy is aimed at obliterating the intellectual and cultural landmarks of Jerusalem in an attempt to remove all material evidence of its Arab character and Islamic history and to give legitimacy to its own historical and religious claim by evacuating the indigenous Arab population from the city and destroying their history in order to annex Jerusalem permanently to Israel.

A brief review of Israel's acts since its military occupation of the city in 1967 would show that the first step taken by Israel following its storming of the city on 7 June 1967 was to take all necessary measures to ensure permanent control over it. This was declared by Moshe Dyan, the then Israeli Minister of Defence, in front of the Wailing Wall, when he said that they had reunified Jerusalem and returned to their most sacred city from which they would never depart.

(Mr. Al-Shaali, United Arab Emirates)

Before burying the dead that day, Israeli bulldozers started to pull down the Magharba quarter, expelling its Arab population and demolishing their houses over their heads if they refused to leave them. This was done under the instructions of Etan Moshe, who was responsible for the evacuation and who said that the bulldozers would persuade the Arabs to evacuate their homes. This is taken from Jerusalem Without Fences, a book written in Hebrew.

That was followed by the legislative, administrative and political annexation, the liquidation of Arab institutions and the expulsion of Arab inhabitants by all means of harassment, such as exile, expropriation of land, establishment of Jewish institutions, imposition of Israeli administration and law on the city, abrogation of the Arab legal system, cancellation of the municipality of Jerusalem, seizure of Arab companies and closing some Arab co-operatives and museums, such as the Archaeological Palestinian Museum and the museum housing the Dead Sea Scrolls, as well as other important Moslem and Christian institutions.

(Mr. Al-Shaali, United Arab Emirates)

On 18 May 1981, Haaretz reported that between 1967 and 1980 the Israeli authorities had demolished 548 houses owned by Arabs in West Jerusalem. That was in addition to the confiscation of thousands of hectares of Arab land and the destruction of Arab quarters, such as two Moslem quarters - the Maghreb quarter and the Al-Silsilah Gate quarter - as well as part of the Christian Assyrian quarter. These quarters had some Moslem holy places, scores of housing units and more than 400 stores and other buildings dating back to Mamelukan times.

Christian and Moslem holy places have also been objects of Israeli violations and acts of oppression, starting with the occupation of the Arab part of Jerusalem in 1948. The culmination of those violations was what happened to the Mamillah cemetery in West Jerusalem. That cemetery, containing the remains of a large number of followers of the Prophet Mohammed and the faithful, was turned into a public park. In this connection, I wish to quote Mr. Julian Wilson, the United States Consul General in Jerusalem. He said:

(spoke in English)

"The Moslems for their part are concerned at instances of desecration by the Israelis of Moslem sites - notably the Mamillah cemetery in the New City, most of which was converted into a public park some years ago, and the mosque at Ain Karim west of Jerusalem, which was allowed to fall into a sad state of disrepair and was often used as a latrine by residents of the area".

That appeared in an article in the Middle East Journal, the 1969 winter issue, volume 23, page 4.

(continued in Arabic)

Following the annexation of East Jerusalem after the June 1967 war, Moslem and Christian Holy Places were the objects of a new series of acts of aggression and profanation. Among those I would refer particularly to the excavations behind the Al-Aqsa Mosque; the repeated statements of orthodox Israeli political leaders and

(Mr. Al-Shaali, United Arab Emirates)

others concerning the establishment of a temple inside the Haram Al-Sharif Mosque; the burning of the Al-Aqsa Mosque; the fact that Israeli visitors were allowed to go inside Haram Al-Sharif without any Moslem control, for the purpose of harassing the Moslem worshipers; and the occupation by force of Moslem holy places and their use as headquarters for the Israeli army.

There is a very long list of those practices, and it is difficult to deal with them in detail. I shall, however, deal briefly with an argument used by the Israelis in the past, concerning the Holy Al-Buraq, which the Jewish people call the "Wailing Wall" - an argument used by the Israelis in order to occupy Jerusalem.

The place in question is a strictly Moslem holy place. It belongs to the Moslems. That was categorically proved by the international Commission which investigated this issue in 1930, after the bloody incidents of 1929. Those are known by historians of the Palestine question as the "incidents of the Holy Al-Buraq", or "the incidents of the Wailing Wall". After considering all the documents and evidence submitted by Arabs and Jews and the Mandatory Government, the Commission issued the following ruling:

(spoke in English)

"Subsequent to the investigation it has made, the Commission herewith declares that the ownership of the Wall, as well as the possession of it and those parts of its surroundings that are here in question, accrues to the Moslems. The Wall itself as being an integral part of the Haram Al-Sharif area is Moslem property. From the inquiries conducted by the Commission, partly in the Sharia Court and partly through the hearing of witnesses' evidence, it has emerged that the Pavement in front of the Wall, where the Jews perform their devotions, is also Moslem property".

(Mr. Al-Shaali, United Arab Emirates)

That quotation is taken from the report of the Commission appointed by His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, with the approval of the Council of the League of Nations, to determine the rights and claims of Moslems and Jews in connection with the Western or Wailing Wall at Jerusalem. The report is dated December 1930.

(continued in Arabic)

No one can cast any doubts on the ruling of that international Commission, whose members included Sweden, Austria and the Netherlands. The Commission was established by the Council of the League of Nations on 5 May 1930. The Commission and its ruling were recognized by the Jews, who appointed someone to represent them in the name of the Chief Rabbi of Palestine, the World Association of Rabbis, the Jewish Religious Council and the Agudath Israel Organization.

The international reaction to these Israeli violations and practices has been clear and decisive. But the will of the international community has been defied and flouted and treated with disdain by Israel. Since 1967, the Security Council has adopted nine resolutions calling upon Israel to abrogate all administrative and legislative measures designed to change the character of Jerusalem. Indeed, all the resolutions on this question adopted by the Security Council and the General Assembly between July 1967 and the present day indicate that the international community does not recognize that Israel has any sovereignty over Jerusalem and its surroundings. The international Organization has also rejected and denounced Israel's claim of sovereignty over West Jerusalem, occupied by Israel in 1948. This international consensus dates back to various international conventions and treaties, including the Sykes-Picot Agreement of 1916 and the partition resolution adopted by the General Assembly in 1947, as well as subsequent General Assembly and Security Council resolutions.

(Mr. Al-Shaali, United Arab
Emirates)

What is taking place in Arab Jerusalem is a microcosm of what is taking place in the rest of the occupied Arab territories. Israel persists in its refusal to inform the international Organization about what is taking place in the occupied territories or to permit the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People to visit those territories and obtain first-hand information about the situation there. Those who visited Syrian Kuneitra - and I was among them - after the withdrawal of the Israeli army in 1973 were able to see for themselves the evidence of Israeli vengeance, the destruction the Israelis left behind. Even cemeteries and hospitals were subjected to shelling and destruction.

It should not be hard to imagine the tragedy being experienced by the Palestinian people under occupation. They see their houses pulled down on their heads, their land usurped, their history and civilization destroyed and systematically liquidated. Anything that has a wrong basis is wrong. The practices and violations in question are an inevitable result of the continuation of occupation. And the continuation of occupation is the result of the protection given to the Israeli régime by some members of the international community.

(Mr. Al-Shaali, United Arab Emirates)

The delegation of the United Arab Emirates still expects the Council not to content itself with denunciation and condemnation. It must take action to impose the necessary controls so as to prevent the recurrence of such acts of aggression, put an end to the Israeli aggression and recognise the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, particularly its right to self-determination, thus preparing the ground for a just and comprehensive peace in the region. The alternative is the continuation of violence, the escalation of tension and the loss of more human lives and property in the region.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Chinese): The next speaker is the representative of Israel. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. NETANYAHU (Israel): Let me try, amid the passions that some will undoubtedly try to inflame here, as some have already tried, to inject a note of realism and balance into the discussion. We should start with the facts of the incident that allegedly sparked it.

On 8 January this year a group of Knesset members visited the Temple Mount. The Temple Mount is open to the public; it is visited each year by over 1 million people of all religions, who enter all the holy shrines on the Mount.

That particular visit was a courtesy tour, co-ordinated in advance with the Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Moslem religious authorities, the Waqf, which, under Israeli policy, administers the Moslem holy places. I should stress that it was not the first such visit. It was carried out as part of the normal function of the Knesset members who belong to the Interior Committee, which is responsible for legislation involving all the Holy Places.

(Mr. Netanyahu, Israel)

During the course of the visit the group arrived at Solomon's Stables, a site with no religious significance, at the south-east corner of the Mount. It is not in any of the mosques; it is at the edge of the south-east corner of the platform that forms the Temple Mount.

A photographer accompanying the group wanted to take some photographs of the Knesset members. That served as a pretext for a prearranged incitement by a small group of agitators. I stress that, not accidentally, another photographer, representing the East Jerusalem Arab daily, Al-Fajr, was left unmolested and was allowed freely to photograph the unfolding events: the photographer of the Knesset members - a big hue and cry; the Arab photographer right next to him - nothing.

The agitators began to shout: "The Jews are invading the Temple Mount", "The Jews are conquering Al-Aqsa", followed by "Itbakh al-Yahud!" - which, for the benefit of those who do not speak Arabic, means "slaughter the Jews!", the traditional incitement to anti-Semitic riots.

There was a mob that quickly heeded those incitements. It assembled on the scene, surrounded the Knesset members, roughed them up and threatened them.

Had it not been for the intervention - I stress, the non-violent intervention - of a handful of Israeli police, who acted with the utmost restraint, I cannot say that we would not have had a true disaster on our hands. Luckily, nothing happened. I emphasise "nothing". No one was hurt; no shrine was desecrated. What desecration? What mosque? No property was damaged. In fact, the only assault was on the Israeli representatives, and if anyone should lodge a complaint, it is the Knesset members.

Following that incident the Speaker of the Knesset and the Mayor of Jerusalem met with the Mufti of Jerusalem to discuss the matter. They set a date for another visit by the Knesset members, and that second visit took place on 14 January. Despite the prior co-ordination, there were again attempts to disrupt the visit.

(Mr. Netanyahu, Israel)

Since then, due to Israel's policy and the actions of its law enforcement agencies, quiet prevails on the Temple Mount.

In other words, a handful of agitators attempted to transform a routine visit into a mob scene. Is that sufficient reason, is it any reason, for convening this "urgent" meeting of the Security Council? Are we here to discuss the incident on its own merits, or is there an ulterior motive?

If there is a broader motive, it certainly cannot be the maintenance of international peace and security, which is, of course, the *raison d'être* of this body. It cannot even be the safeguarding of Holy Sites, especially Moslem Holy sites, because if that were the guiding concern there would have been many times, many justifiable times, to convene the Council in earlier days.

For example, when in 1979 the mosque in Mecca was attacked by fanatics, and some 250 people were killed, the Council was not convened to condemn or even to discuss Saudi Arabia's failure to prevent such a profanation, to use the language of today's complaint, and such a bloodbath. Neither was it convened when King Abdullah was assassinated on the steps of the Al-Aqsa Mosque on that very Temple Mount in 1953. Nor was it convened in 1982 when the Syrian army pounded into rubble 35 mosques, some of them over a thousand years old, at Hama. They were some of the most ancient and sacred mosques in existence. For good measure, the Syrians also destroyed the ancient churches of Hama, and slaughtered 25,000 people in the process.

What about the profanation, the real desecration, of Moslem sites in those and other instances? Since we did not hear a word of complaint in the Council in any of those flagrant instances, we must look elsewhere for the real origins and purpose of this meeting of the Council.

(Mr. Netanyahu, Israel)

Everyone knows that the main agitator for the meeting was the PLO. The PLO has, of course, suffered many political and military setbacks recently. It is weakened and dispersed, and after the "Achille Lauro" murder its duplicity has been exposed for all the world to see. Through this exercise it is attempting to regain lost ground by trying to inflame religious intolerance and hatred. That is the real reason why it pushed for the meeting.

Undoubtedly, some speakers will try, as some have already tried, to weave into this already distorted agenda a further irrelevancy - a debate about the legal and political status of Jerusalem. Let me briefly state our position on the matter unequivocally: Jerusalem, united in its entirety under the Israeli flag, is the capital of Israel. It has been the capital of the Jewish people since the time of David. It will remain so forever. But, as I understand it, that subject is not the ostensible purpose for which this Council meeting was convened. After all, even those who do not recognize our position - the position that I have just stated - agree that Israel has overall responsibility for safeguarding religious freedom and religious sites in Jerusalem, regardless of status.

(Mr. Netanyahu, Israel)

Now there are others who will allege that Israel has failed to fulfil these obligations. This is a remarkable allegation. It is remarkable for two reasons: first, Israel's impeccable record - as far as the Middle East is concerned, its unique record in this domain; and, second, the abysmal record of so many of our accusers, a record that includes some of the most egregious violations of religious freedom anywhere.

Let me briefly sum up Israel's record and its policies.

Jerusalem today is an open city to all religions. Each religious denomination is free to worship according to its own beliefs and to administer its own Holy Places. And since the reunification of the city in 1967 these holy sites have been rebuilt, rehabilitated, developed and enriched. They enjoy a steadily increasing stream of pilgrims and tourists. Last year, as I have mentioned, over a million people came, including - and the members of the Council may not be aware of this - 200,000 pilgrims from Arab and Moslem countries, many of which do not yet recognize Israel and in fact have lined up to speak against us. These pilgrims do not come merely to pray and to worship in their own Holy Places, though of course that is the purpose of their visit. In the process they witness firsthand what is to many of them - so familiar with the sorry record of religious intolerance elsewhere - an astounding phenomenon: a holy city peaceful and prosperous in the midst of a region engulfed by religious hatred and fanaticism, a city in which the three monotheistic religions, Judaism, Christianity and Islam, freely worship unhindered and unmolested.

Jerusalem - and I say this proudly as a Jerusalemite from the age of two days - is a city where one can hear at once the sound of the shofar, the ringing of church bells and the call of the muezzin to prayer. This is not a vision of the future, it is a description of the present. And these are not my images or words.

(Mr. Netanyahu, Israel)

They have been stated again and again by millions of tourists - we have had millions of tourists - and thousands of journalists who have witnessed this unprecedented harmony.

I shall quote one as an example. Members can easily find many, many more. David Shipler wrote this in The New York Times Magazine:

"Unlike many of the city's conquerors through the ages, the present rulers have refrained from slaughtering or banishing people of other religions. Nor have they replaced houses of worship with their own. ... Both Jewish and Moslem Holy Places have flourished. The Moslems have reversed years of neglect under the Jordanians by bringing in money from throughout the Arab world to clean and restore their most prominent shrines."

I should like to extend a personal invitation to each of the members of the Council to come to Jerusalem and witness this reality at firsthand. It is a reality that has not come about by accident. It is the deliberate result of Israel's policy as enacted in its laws a few days after the reunification of the city, which has been mentioned here by one of the speakers. That law guaranteed that "the Holy Places shall be protected from desecration and any other violation". It guarantees "the freedom of access of the members of the different religions to the places sacred to them". It is inspired by the universal vision of Isaiah, who prophesied that Jerusalem shall be a house of prayer for all the nations.

Israel is committed to its policy of tolerance. Tolerance is not weakness. And, as both Prime Minister Peres and Vice-Premier Shamir have reiterated in the last few days, the existing arrangements on the Temple Mount, ensuring freedom of access to all, will be upheld without any change.

This is Israel's record. It is a record of unparalleled, unsurpassed respect for all religions and for all faiths.

(Mr. Netanyahu, Israel)

Now what about our accusers' records? What about Jordan, which issued several of the letters that preceded this discussion - Jordan, which controlled the holy sites before Israel united Jerusalem in 1967? Did Jordan allow free access to the holy sites to all religions? Did it ensure the upkeep of these religious shrines? It did nothing of the kind. Jordan curbed the access of Christians to their holiest shrines. It banned Jewish access altogether. If in the course of this debate it becomes necessary, I shall elaborate in great detail Jordan's record in this domain. It is well documented. But at this time I shall limit myself to this point - access and to this brief discussion of Jordan's record, though not because of other examples - I could, for example, speak about Saudi Arabia's religious tolerance, or perhaps Libya's, or Syria's, or Iran's. Again, in the course of this debate I shall be happy to do so if it becomes necessary. I have not focused on Jordan or mentioned it because it is the worst offender in the Arab world. I assure the Council it is not. I have done so because Jordan's record during its occupation of Jerusalem until 1967 provides the simplest and sharpest contrast to Israel's exemplary record - a record of free access and religious freedom for everyone since then.

Let me sum up. The alleged anti-Islamic incident never happened. What did happen was an attempt to incite anti-Jewish hatred. That attempt has now been transferred by some to this chamber. That is why there is no place for this debate. But this time it is not only because the prestige of the Security Council should not be further diluted; it is because Jerusalem, the city of peace, deserves better.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Chinese): The next speaker is the representative of Saudi Arabia. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. SHIHABI (Saudi Arabia) (interpretation from Arabic): God the Almighty addressed His Messenger Mohammed, Peace be upon him, and therein called upon him in the Holy Koran:

"Glory to God who did take his Servant for a Journey by night from the Sacred Mosque to the Al-Aqsa Mosque Whose Precincts We did Bless". (Sura XVII, verse 1)

Al-Quds comprises the Al-Aqsa Mosque. The Al-Aqsa Mosque, whose precincts were blessed by God, is the First Kibla direction which God instructed Moslems to face in their prayers. For the prophets journeying to it, God revealed a full Sura in the Holy Koran, the Sura of Al-Isra, with which 1,000 million Moslems live every single day from sunrise to sunset and have lived for over 1,400 years.

Al-Aqsa Mosque, for which the hearts of one billion Moslems yearn, is now being subjected to Zionist attempts and threats to desecrate it and violate its sanctity and sanctuary. We know, and the Council knows, that there are criminal Zionist designs to destroy it. The Zionist criminals are moving step by step to achieve their design, thinking that by so dividing the crime into stages they can reach the final stage with the least possible damage.

(Mr. Shihabi, Saudi Arabia)

The picture is clear despite the media black-out on what is now taking place at Al-Quds. Zionism has escalated its campaign of aggression against the Al-Aqsa Mosque. Israeli soldiers have encroached upon its sanctuary. They have established positions at the mosque, and Zionist individuals, including Knesset members and Jewish rabbis protected by Zionist soldiers, have entered it to perform religious and non-religious practices, thus defying its Islamic nature and violating its sanctity - a sanctity we the 1,000 million Arabs honour. They are committing all this under the protection of the guns of the Zionist authority, which initiated the conspiracy and is carrying out its stage-by-stage development. They are confronted today by the unarmed Arab and Moslem population in Palestine, which is facing their fire unprotected.

We must recognize the gravity of what is taking place and the gravity of the results. It is clear that the Zionist extremists are accelerating the execution of the crime under the protection of the Zionist authority and that they will not halt their attempts. The Almighty says in the Holy Koran:

"Truly it is not their eyes that are blind, but their hearts which are in their breasts." (Sura XXII, verse 46)

They undoubtedly do not see the consequences of the crime they are perpetrating. Nevertheless, it is the duty of the Council to take a firm stand in keeping with its international responsibilities. Each and every one of us in the United Nations must now take a firm stand towards this situation which is fraught with danger - a stand in compliance with our international commitment and vital international interests, which are threatened by Zionism and its attempt to set the region on fire through its aggression against the Al-Aqsa Mosque.

Forty years ago the Zionists invaded Palestine and usurped it from its Arab population under the colonialist umbrella. They took further advantage of opportunities suitable for quick military strikes that enabled them to control the

(Mr. Shihabi, Saudi Arabia)

rest of Palestine. Over the past four decades they have turned the region into a war zone and a battlefield. And despite all efforts for peace and the Arab proposal for a just settlement, in which the Arabs made great sacrifices, no serious and convincing signs have emerged from the Zionist side that it genuinely wishes peace. Now we are receiving alarming news and information that the obsession of the Zionist aggression against the Al-Aqsa Mosque has entered a dangerous stage. This is one of the most serious challenges to any peace attempt.

We must draw attention here to the fact that a violation of the sentiments of the Moslems of the world and their spiritual and religious commitments would create a situation impossible to foresee. But, knowing the situation as we do, we can affirm that aggression against the Al-Aqsa Mosque would reach every household in the Islamic world and shake it, falling like lightning on one billion Moslems and exhausting their patience.

I cannot envisage or draw a scenario now of the reaction of every Moslem if the Zionists inflicted damage upon the Al-Aqsa Mosque or tampered maliciously with its hold on the religious life and values of Moslems. Then it would be Israel and its friends, and even those who are negligent in deterring Israel, who would shoulder the responsibility before God and the people for a crime that is one of the ugliest in history against Islam and Moslems.

We see it as our duty to give this word of caution and advice by drawing attention to the consequences. This is not addressed to Zionism, whose blindness to reality does not allow it to understand caution or recognize advice, but to the other States that recognize their responsibilities, especially the friends of Israel. If they do not recognize the gravity of what the Zionists are now doing in Al-Quds, and if they do not deter Israel from committing these actions, then its crime will take them by surprise. If they do not deter Israel from its

(Mr. Shihabi, Saudi Arabia)

transgression, ignorance and crimes in Al-Quds and in the Al-Aqsa Mosque, and if it persists in perpetrating its crime, then they will be astounded by the wrath of hundreds of millions of Moslems calling "Allah-Akbar - God is Great. The Zionists have violated the Al-Aqsa Mosque". This is a call that would stop at no frontier or barrier and could not be restrained by tanks, airplanes or ocean liners.

The news black-out by the media in some countries on what is going on in Palestine, especially in Al-Quds, and on what is being committed today in the sanctuary of the Al-Aqsa Mosque in particular, will not change the reality of the matter, nor will the consequences of this crime be changed by attempts to ignore what is happening.

In the aggression against the Al-Aqsa Mosque, all the manifestations of the Zionist crimes are being demonstrated. They are unacceptable under any norm and are rejected by all standards; they have violated moral, legal and humanitarian values, beginning with the Zionist invasion of Palestine, the homeland of the Palestinian Arab people, and now being crystallized in their actions against the Al-Aqsa Mosque. Racist Zionism does not respect religion, morality, law or conventions. At members' disposal in the United Nations are documents citing all the evidence in this regard. It is a disease that afflicts Palestine and that causes Al-Quds to suffer from its pains. There in Al-Khalil it was yesterday, as it is still today, violating the Ibrahim Mosque; and now it is raising its sinful hand against the Al-Aqsa Mosque. I hope members recognize the dangerousness this challenge and aggression poses at present and in the future - at present in Palestine; and in the future for the peace and security of the region. Is there anything more dangerous to peace and security in the region than the practices of the racist Zionists members are witnessing? They do not respect the national, religious, historical, cultural or economic rights of anyone in the region.

(Mr. Shihabi, Saudi Arabia)

following upon their successful exploiting of transitional events in the history of the region and pouncing on it in exceptional, non-recurrent circumstances in order to steal the homeland of a people and attempt to rid it of its owners - materially, humanly, religiously and spiritually.

(Mr. Shihabi, Saudi Arabia)

The time is ripe for all of us to recognize, as time is starting to pass us by, that Al-Quds is not on the international political auction block and that Palestine has never been in the world's political auction market despite all the crimes committed against it. The rights of Moslems and Arabs to Al-Quds, as well as their dedication to the safety of the Al-Aqsa Mosque, are eternal rights on whose rock all manoeuvres and auctions vanish.

Many resolutions have been adopted by the General Assembly, this Council and other international bodies disapproving Israel's policies in Al-Quds: from condemnation of its invasion and occupation, including rejection of any changes to its status and structure, to demands that its sanctity not be violated and the prohibition of any theft of its cultural appurtenances. Yet Israel has not relented: unfortunately, it fails to see that some have the requisite seriousness to face the situation as it is, not in terms of local or international "auctions".

We in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia are committed not only to the full rights of the Palestinian people, but to the Arab character of Al-Quds and the sanctity of Al-Aqsa Mosque, the first of the two Kiblas and the third holiest shrine in Islam. We ask members here, as countries responsible for peace and security on behalf of the Council, to recognize and deal with the seriousness of what the Zionists are doing in Al-Quds and the Al-Aqsa Mosque and resolutely to adopt a firm resolution so that the Zionists will not misunderstand your patience and ignore the resolution; indecisiveness will not serve the Council's purpose.

We know, as members of the Council know, the extent of the baseless Zionist claims regarding Al-Quds and the Al-Aqsa Mosque. We reiterate what everyone here knows: that Moslems everywhere in the world are committed to the Arab character of Al-Quds, the protection of the Al-Aqsa Mosque and the preservation of its sanctity.

(Mr. Shihabi, Saudi Arabia)

I sincerely hope that none of us will act here to cover up a crime obvious to everyone, an act of aggression that needs no proof, and a grave act whose effects can be minimized only by taking every measure to prevent it. Any attempt to thwart this Council's efforts to take a firm and decisive stand will only encourage the Zionist terrorists in Palestine to pursue their designs. Indeed, it would constitute before God, history and mankind collusion in the responsibility for not deterring them.

This Council will be considering a draft resolution that is the minimum warranted by the battle waged by the Zionists against the Islamic world in Al-Quds and the Al-Aqsa Mosque. Though less comprehensive than the wrath of Islam towards the crimes of the racist Zionists committed against the Al-Aqsa Mosque and Al-Quds, it will still, if it deters Israel, have secured safer conditions than would otherwise have emerged from a situation created by the Zionists' far-reaching designs on the Islamic and Arab world. Members here should not underestimate what is taking place. The media blackout in some countries on what is occurring cannot, in view of the Council's great responsibility, justify any delay in adopting a firm stand.

Council members bear heavy responsibility, both as representatives and as States, for what is happening. The way they address this matter will surely influence the Islamic world's reaction. I hope they will waste no time in adopting a firm resolution on this grave situation which members share the burden of addressing from one of the loftiest platforms of international responsibility.

A while ago, we heard a statement by the Israeli representative in which he referred to some Arab States, including the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. I shall not enter into a debate with him on this matter, since none of his attacks on others

(Mr. Shihabi, Saudi Arabia)

can alter the truth of what is taking place in Al-Quds. Al-Quds is in jeopardy, as is the Al-Aqsa Mosque. These are facts that we must address and he should not attack others.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Chinese): In view of the lateness of the hour I intend to adjourn the meeting now.

The next meeting, to continue consideration of this item, will be held at 4 o'clock today.

The meeting rose at 12.50 p.m.

