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QUESTION OF PALESTINE

Letter dated 19 September 1990 from the Chairman of the Committee
on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian
People addressed to the Secretary-General

As Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, I should like to draw your attention to the escalation of repression on the part of Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinians in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem.

Since my letter of 19 June 1990 ([A/44/955-S/21362](#)), more Palestinians, including children, have been killed or wounded. According to a report recently published by DataBase Project on Palestinian Human Rights, 856 Palestinians, about a quarter of them children, were killed during the period from the beginning of the intifadah up to 31 August 1990 by Israeli forces, settlers and other Israelis. Over 99,000 Palestinians were reported to have been wounded during that same period. In its report for 1990, issued in mid-July, Amnesty International accuses the Israeli armed forces of having shot and killed Palestinians in circumstances which suggest excessive use of force or even deliberate action. In a report issued on 15 July, the Israeli Information Centre for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories (Betzelem) stated that "over 600 Palestinians had been shot and killed by members of the Israel Defence Forces on the basis of orders which nevertheless authorized them only to fire at their legs, save in the case of armed attack. Even if some of them died in circumstances which justified shooting, it is none the less true that hundreds of deaths could have been avoided". The same agency indicated that 1,890 Palestinian women had suffered miscarriages after inhaling tear gas used by the Israeli army.

The imposition of rigorous collective punishments remains widespread. According to DataBase Project, between December 1987 and the end of August 1990, a total of 10,200 Palestinians were placed in administrative detention for periods of up to six months without charge or trial; a curfew was imposed in towns, villages and refugee camps in the West Bank and Gaza Strip for periods totalling 1,755 days; and 1,557 houses or other buildings were demolished or sealed. The same body has already reported a tendency for the increased imposition of arbitrary charges and higher fines, in addition to or in place of detention. According to the issue of Al-Fajr dated 31 May 1990, the military authorities renewed for another period of three months the order for closure of the universities in the West Bank. Certain higher-education institutions were authorized to reopen, but under very restrictive conditions.

Cases of wounding and torture in Israeli prisons have also continued to be brought to the Committee's attention. Wafa, the Palestine News Agency based in Washington, stated on 1 September 1990 that 2,000 Palestinian prisoners had begun a hunger strike at the Al-Maskubiyah prison in Jerusalem in protest against the inhuman conditions of detention, including overcrowding and torture. That agency also indicated that, on 20 August, 190 Palestinian prisoners had been wounded in the Ansar 3 detention camp when Israeli prison guards had fired live ammunition and used tear gas against the prisoners because they had refused to obey the order to resume work.

The restrictions imposed on freedom of expression have been stepped up. Reuters News Agency reported in a press release on 9 July that the Israeli authorities had banned publication of the Palestinian weekly Sawt al-Haqq wa-l-Hurriyah. According to Ha'aretz of 29 July, the Israeli police have renewed the order for closure of the Society for Arab Studies in Jerusalem for the third consecutive year and have

ordered closure of two of its branch offices. According to Al-Fajr of 14 August, the Israeli army has banned entry to the offices of the Gaza Press and ordered it closed for one year.

The Israeli authorities also took measures to prevent Palestinians in the occupied territory from attending the European Regional NGO Symposium and International NGO Meeting on the Question of Palestine, held under United Nations auspices at Geneva from 27 to 31 August.

Mr. Faisal Husseini, Director of the Society for Arab Studies in Jerusalem, and Mrs. Zahira Kamal, Chairperson of the Action Committees of the Women's Union, were forbidden to leave the country for a period of two months. Mr. Ghassan Al-Khatib, lecturer at Bir Zeit University, was not permitted to travel abroad. Mr. Younis Jaru, a lawyer in Gaza, did not receive travel papers and Dr. Feryal Agha, of Gaza, did not receive a re-entry visa. These arbitrary decisions taken by Israel clearly contravene its obligation to permit all persons under its authority to attend a meeting organized by the United Nations.

The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People vigorously deplores the intensified repression by Israel, the occupying Power, in violation of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, and resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly. The Committee once again urges the Security Council to take effective measures to ensure international protection of the Palestinians in the occupied territory, as requested by the General Assembly in its resolutions 43/233 of 20 April 1989 and 44/2 of 6 October 1989.

The Committee considers that the situation in the region all the more strongly justifies the overriding need to move towards a just and comprehensive settlement of the question of Palestine through the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, in pursuance of General Assembly resolution 44/42 of 6 December 1989. The Committee renews its appeal to all the parties concerned to redouble their efforts with a view to attaining this essential objective.

I should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter distributed as a document of the General Assembly, under item 23 of the provisional agenda, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Absa Claude DIALLO
Chairman of the Committee
on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights
of the Palestinian
People
