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QUESTION OF PALESTINE

SECURITY COUNCIL
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Letter dated 9 May 1989 from the Chairman of the Committee on the
Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People
addressed to the Secretary-General

In my capacity as Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, I wish to draw your most urgent attention to the intensification of armed attacks by Israeli troops against Palestinian civilians in the occupied Palestinian territory over the past week-end.

According to The New York Times and The Washington Post of 7 and 8 May 1989, 3 Palestinians were shot and killed and more than 150 were wounded on 6 May when Israeli troops opened fire on processions of mourners to cemeteries in the Gaza Strip during the annual observance of Id al-Fitr, marking the end of the holy month of Ramadan. The press reports indicated that a confrontation began when the soldiers tried to break up large, organised processions of several thousand people. Although reports differ on the actual circumstances of the ensuing clashes, it is clear that the troops used live ammunition liberally, as two of the dead were shot through the heart. The army also called in helicopters to drop tear-gas on the crowds. The total number of casualties is reportedly the largest in a single day since the beginning of the intifadah: more people have been wounded or killed in the past 30 days than in any thirty-day period since December 1987.

According to Agence France-Presse, a military spokesman announced on 8 May that the West Bank would be considered as a "closed military zone" until 10 May and that a curfew would be enforced in the entire Gaza Strip until further notice. The New York Times and Agence France-Presse have reported that another 22 Palestinians, including 2 children, were wounded in clashes with Israeli troops on 7 and 8 May, despite the curfew.

The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People wishes to protest once again in the strongest terms the mounting violence by the police, and the armed forces of Israel, the occupying Power, against unarmed civilians, which is completely contrary to its obligations under the Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War of 12 August 1949 and to numerous resolutions of the Security Council. The Committee considers that the continued escalation of repression in the occupied Palestinian territory necessitates the adoption of urgent measures by the Security Council to provide international protection to the Palestinian civilians, as requested by the General Assembly in its resolution 43/233 of 20 April 1989, which the Committee strongly supports. Further, appropriate action to alleviate the sufferings of the unarmed civilians under occupation, especially women and children, by you and by organisations of the United Nations system would be greatly appreciated by the entire membership of the Committee.

The Committee firmly believes, however, that genuine protection can ultimately be achieved only through the attainment of a comprehensive and just settlement of the Palestine question in accordance with the principles contained in General Assembly resolution 43/176 of 15 December 1988, which have received the near-unanimous support of the United Nations membership, and reiterates its appeal to you and to all concerned to intensify all efforts to attain this essential objective.

I should be grateful if you would arrange for the text of this letter to be circulated as an official document of the forty-third session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 37, and of the Security Council.

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