



**General Assembly  
Security Council**

Distr.  
GENERAL

A/40/494  
S/17346  
18 July 1985

GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
Fortieth session  
preliminary list\*  
QUESTION OF PALESTINE

Item 33 of the

SECURITY COUNCIL  
Fortieth year

Letter dated 18 July 1985 from the Acting Chairman of the  
Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of  
the Palestinian People to the Secretary-General

In my capacity as Acting Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, it is my responsibility to inform you of recent action taken by the Israeli authorities that will lead to the closing of the Hospice Hospital in occupied East Jerusalem.

The source of this information is news reports that appeared in Al-Fajr on 17 May and 12 July 1985 and in Ha'aretz on 9 July 1985.

According to Al-Fajr, the Hospice is the only government hospital in the Arab part of Jerusalem and has traditionally cared for the poor. It has been under threat of closure by the Israeli Health Ministry for many years but such attempts were thwarted by local and international pressure. Although the Israeli Government claims, according to Al-Fajr, that the closure is intended to reduce government expenses, it rejected offers by Hospice administrators and benefactors to turn the institution into a private hospital with its own budget.

At a press conference held on 14 May 1985, speakers, including the Hospital Director and other Israeli and Arab physicians, agreed that the Israeli health officials had no valid grounds to close the Hospice, since its staff is professionally qualified and is rendering a much needed service to the Arab residents of the Old City.

Ha'aretz and Al-Fajr have reported that the Hospice Hospital will be officially closed as at the end of July 1985. The decision was made by the Health Ministry of Israel after consultations with the State Employee Commission. After the closure, Arab patients from East Jerusalem in need of hospitalization will be referred to government hospitals in West Jerusalem.

It is the understanding of the Committee that this is but a further instance of the way in which the Israeli authorities are failing to provide medical services in a manner that is acceptable to the local population. It has been reported that the Israeli authorities have taken over a building in Sheikh Jarrah intended to house a central hospital and have prevented the Red Crescent Hospital in Jerusalem from expanding. The Secretary of the Pharmaceutical Union in the West Bank and Chairman of the Friends of the Hospice Committee has said that Israeli officials have refused to allow a children's hospital or a health centre to be built in Muslim waqf land to serve the poor population of Jerusalem.

I bring these matters to your attention since it is the considered view of the Committee that they represent still further evidence of the way in which the Government of Israel is failing to abide by international agreements regarding the status of citizens under occupation.

As has been expressed in previous communications, the Committee remains convinced that a concentrated international effort to find a just solution to the question of Palestine and to help avoid such inequities as are described in this letter must be given a new momentum.

In conclusion, I would like to request that this letter be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under item 33 of the preliminary list, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Oscar ORAMAS-OLIVA  
Acting Chairman of the  
Committee on the Exercise  
of the Inalienable Rights  
of the Palestinian People

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\* A/40/50/Rev.1.