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Letter dated 6 December 1988 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 continued tragic situation in the occupied Palestinian territories. Since my last letter to you of 13 October 1988 ([A/43/710-5/20228](#)), and particularly since the declaration of the establishment of the State of Palestine by the Palestine National Council on 15 November 1988, the occupying Power has further intensified its repressive actions in the West Bank and Gaza. There have also been growing reports of attacks by armed Israeli settlers against Palestinians.

The total number of Palestinian casualties since the beginning of the intifadah a year ago has reached 287 persons killed by gunfire and another 138 persons killed by tear-gas, beatings and other actions of the Israeli occupying forces.

Our Committee wishes to express its indignation at the growing number of young children killed and wounded in various incidents. Since my last communication, for example, a five-year-old boy was hit by a bullet in the chest in Nablus and subsequently died in the hospital, according to reports by UPI and Reuters on 18 October. The next day, Reuters reported that a 10-year-old boy was shot in the chest in the village of Bal'a. On 25 October, UPI reported that a seven-year-old boy in the Gaza Strip had died after being hit by a plastic bullet. On 27 October, according to Reuters, a three-year-old girl died at Khan Yunis from the effects of tear-gas. On 3 November, UPI reported that over 30 Palestinian schoolchildren in Jabalyia refugee camp were wounded or injured by tear-gas when Israeli troops stormed their school. On 9 November, according to Reuters, a three-year-old boy was killed and two other children, aged 12 and 13, were wounded when Israeli troops fired at protestors in the Gaza Strip. On 5 December, Agence France Presse and Reuters reported that a young girl was killed by Israeli troops during student demonstrations in Gaza.

These mounting attacks against young children are part of a continued policy of indiscriminate use of force on the part of the Israeli occupying authorities. Israeli radio reported on 11 November that large-scale raids and arrests had been carried out by Israeli troops throughout the occupied territories in an effort to prevent demonstrations in connection with the session of the Palestine National Council. At the same time, the West Bank and Gaza were sealed off from the outside world and Gaza, in particular, was subjected to the longest continuous curfew since 1967, according to a Reuters dispatch of 17 November. Raids and mass arrests again took place throughout the West Bank and Gaza last week, according to a dispatch by Agence France Presse on 30 November, and curfews are still being imposed on a number of towns and villages.

The Committee is also most seriously concerned at the escalating destruction of Palestinian homes, not only as collective punishment of families of suspected activists, but also as a measure aimed against entire Palestinian communities. According to available information, more than 150 homes have been demolished since the beginning of October either as collective punishment or because they were allegedly built without a permit, depriving hundreds of Palestinians, including children, the sick and the elderly, of shelter.

The Committee wishes to reiterate that the policies and practices of Israel, the occupying Power, in the occupied Palestinian territories are in violation of the provisions of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War of 12 August 1949, and to express its deep concern at the

fact that Israel has thus far not heeded the unanimous appeal of the international community to implement the provisions of the Convention.

The Committee is strongly of the view that further repression in the occupied Palestinian territories will not only cause a great deal of human suffering but will also pose significant obstacles to international efforts to advance towards a negotiated settlement. The Committee believes that the decisions of the Palestine National Council have opened the way for the attainment of a just, lasting and comprehensive solution to the Palestine question, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict in the Middle East. It therefore appeals to all concerned to do everything in their power to muster the necessary political will and build on the momentum that has thereby been created, in particular through the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East. The Committee further appeals to you to intensify your efforts in that direction.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of this letter circulated as an official document 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