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General Assembly  
Tenth emergency special session  
Agenda item 5  
Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem  
and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian TerritorySecurity Council  
Fifty-sixth year**Letter dated 28 September 2001 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 would like to share with you a few thoughts on the anniversary of the Palestinian uprising, which became known as the “Al Aqsa intifada”.

It was a highly controversial visit by the then Israeli opposition leader and now Prime Minister Mr. Ariel Sharon to the Al-Haram al-Sharif compound in Jerusalem and the forceful suppression of the ensuing protests that sparked 12 months of violence, of which we have apparently not seen the end yet. During those months, over 800 people lost their lives and thousands were injured, many incapacitated for life, the vast majority of them Palestinian civilians, including many children.

Israel reacted to the explosion of grievances and frustration by the Palestinians by using excessive force, including combat helicopter gunships, fighter aircraft and other sophisticated materiel, as well as by imposing a stifling economic blockade in order to crush the uprising. In addition to the tragic loss of human life, large parts of the Palestinian infrastructure have been systematically destroyed in the course of the year. Tens of thousands of people lost their livelihoods and hundreds of thousands became dependent for their survival on emergency humanitarian assistance offered by the international community. Moreover, this led to a virtual dismantling of the peace process, which since Madrid and then Oslo appeared to have been gradually heading towards a peaceful resolution of the conflict, albeit with occasional difficulties.

International efforts to end the violence and bring the parties back to the negotiating table continued over the past year, regrettably without lasting effect. Once again, on behalf of our Committee, allow me to take this opportunity to salute your close personal engagement in these efforts, which have been positively received by both parties and the broader international community. These intensive efforts led to the establishment of the [Sharm el-Sheikh Fact-Finding Committee](#), headed by former United States Senator George Mitchell and the publication of its report, which set out a series of steps the parties had to take in order to end the violence and resume negotiations. Regrettably, Israel's selective and piecemeal approach to the Mitchell Committee recommendations and its insistence on security issues has not allowed implementation to proceed, as it should, in an integrated way, combining security and confidence-building measures with longer-term issues. The understandings reached by the parties with the assistance of the United States Director of Central Intelligence George Tenet aimed to create a security framework, within which the Mitchell report could start being implemented. This effort was also largely inconclusive owing to preconditions set by the Israeli side.

The meeting between Chairman Arafat and Foreign Minister Peres at Gaza International Airport, on 26 September 2001, was a welcome development and was met by the international community, including our Committee, with great satisfaction. As you mentioned on the occasion through your Spokesman, we were all encouraged by the reiteration by the parties of their full commitment to implementing the recommendations of the Mitchell report and the Tenet understandings. It is much hoped that the important agreements reached at the meeting between Chairman Arafat and Foreign Minister Peres, as outlined in their joint communiqué, will enable the parties to resume full security cooperation leading to a permanent cessation of violence and the resumption of comprehensive negotiations between the two sides.

Cautiously optimistic as we may allow ourselves to be under the circumstances, we should not lose sight of the problems lying at the heart of the question of Palestine, which will have to be tackled for a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the region to be achieved. Security Council resolutions [242 \(1967\)](#) and [338 \(1973\)](#), which embody the principle of “land for peace”, should be the basis of any solution. This was reaffirmed in recent months by the Security Council in its [resolution 1322 \(2000\)](#) of 10 October 2000 and by the General Assembly at its tenth emergency special session in its [resolution ES-10/7](#) of 20 October 2000.

Since its inception in 1975, our Committee has maintained that the core of the problem has been the continuing illegal occupation by Israel of the Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem. Once again, we call upon the Government of Israel to abide by the principles of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, and the provisions of all relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions. Illegal Israeli policies such as settlement activity, extrajudicial killings of suspected Palestinian activists, and closures of and incursions into Palestinian areas should be stopped forthwith and faits accomplis on the ground should be reversed. The inalienable rights of the Palestinian people should be respected and the Palestinians should be able to live in an independent State of their own, in peace with Israel and the other neighbouring countries.

The Committee has been extremely worried over developments in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem, especially since late September 2000. In the light of the continuing violations by Israel of international law and of its agreements with the Palestinian side, the Committee remains gravely concerned that the Israeli Government has not been able to embrace fully and unequivocally the fundamental principle of land for peace and apply in practice the commitments and obligations it entered into at Madrid and Oslo. As the crisis persists and the parties continue to lack mutual trust and confidence, assistance by key international actors, including the co-sponsors of the peace process, the European Union and leaders in the regions, the United Nations and yourself remains crucial.

It is also the firm position of our Committee that, at this critical juncture, the United Nations should continue to maintain its permanent responsibility with respect to all aspects of the question of Palestine, until it is resolved in a satisfactory manner, in conformity with relevant United Nations resolutions, in accordance with international legitimacy, and until the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people are fully realized.

I should be grateful if you would have the text of the present letter circulated as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) **Papa Louis Fall**  
Chairman  
Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable  
Rights of the Palestinian People