



DIVISION FOR PALESTINIAN RIGHTS

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1. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People holds first meeting for 1985

On 8 January, in its first meeting for 1985, the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People re-elected Mr. Massamba Sarré of Senegal as Chairman, Mr. Oscar Oramas-Oliva of Cuba and Mr. Mohammed Farid Zarif of Afghanistan as Vice-Chairmen, and Mr. Victor J. Gauci of Malta as Rapporteur. At that meeting the following statement was made by the Secretary-General (SG/SM/3647):

"I should first of all like to express to you my wishes for happiness and success in the new year. May 1985 be a year of peace and tangible progress, especially as regards the achievement of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

"I have great pleasure in congratulating Ambassador Massamba Sarré on his unanimous re-election to the chairmanship of the Committee. This election, by which the Committee has reaffirmed its support for Mr. Massamba Sarré, who has guided its deliberations with such wisdom in past years, is a vote of confidence in his efforts to assist the Palestinian people. I should also like to take this opportunity to congratulate the other officers of the Committee on their re-election.

"The Committee has once again been entrusted with a complex mission: it must work for the implementation of its own recommendations and those contained in the Programme of Action for the Achievement of Palestinian Rights, adopted at Geneva in 1983, and it must focus greater attention on the Palestinian question, particularly through its seminars and its activities directed towards non-governmental organizations. The increased awareness that exists in the world today of the rights of the Palestinian people and of the necessity of guaranteeing the attainment of those rights is a measure of the Committee's success.

"Given our Organization's unsuccessful search for a solution to the Palestinian question over these past 38 years, the persistent danger of conflict in the region underscores the vital necessity of a just, comprehensive and lasting settlement. Until such a settlement can be found, the United Nations recognizes its obligation to alleviate the suffering of the Palestinian people by providing them with economic and social assistance, in consultation with the PLO. The efforts which have been undertaken towards that end will be pursued to the fullest possible extent.

"The fact that the General Assembly, at its thirty-ninth session, renewed its call for the convening of an international peace conference on the Middle East and that it once again requested me to continue my efforts, in consultation with the Security Council, to prepare for such a conference, is a clear indication that the Assembly considers the achievement of a comprehensive settlement to require that negotiations take place to the satisfaction of all interested parties, under United Nations auspices. Any solution must take into account the interests and concerns of all States and peoples in the region, including those of the Palestinian people.

"I have already stated my view, and I reiterate it here, that the United Nations can serve as an appropriate forum for negotiations. I also believe that the Organization is duty bound, all the more so in this year when we shall be commemorating its 40 years of existence, to make a new and vital effort to find ways of promoting progress towards a negotiated peace in the Middle East.

"Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee and observers, I wish you success in the important work which you have undertaken. You may rest assured that my colleagues and I personally will support you as you carry out the mandate entrusted to you by the General Assembly."

At that meeting the Chairman of the Committee also made a statement and the programme of work for 1985 was discussed. The Committee also re-established its open-ended working group.

At its first meeting, held on 18 January 1985, the Working Group re-elected Mr. Victor Gauci of Malta as Chairman and Ms. Savitri Kunadi of India as Vice-Chairwoman.

On 15 January 1985, the Chairman of the Committee, in a letter addressed to the Secretary-General, drew his attention to the action being taken by the Israeli authorities in its continuing policy of annexing the occupied territories of the West Bank. The full text of the letter is reproduced below (A/40/84-S/16896):

"As Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, it is my obligation to bring to your attention still further action being taken by the Government of Israel in its continuing policy of annexing the occupied territories of the West Bank.

"The New York Times of 11 January 1985 reports that sites for six new Jewish settlements were approved by the Israeli Government on 10 January 1985. Two of the approved sites are in the northern part of the West Bank, two in the Hebron area and one each in the Jordan Valley and the Jerusalem area. An official in the settlement department of the World Zionist Organization, which promotes the settlements, has said that each one would cost \$1 million. The Committee has noted that, as on previous occasions, there was public and parliamentary questioning of the decision within Israel itself.

" It has also come to the attention of the Committee that the daily newspaper Ha'aretz, in its issue of 31 December 1984, reported that the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Israel, Mr. Ytzhak Shamir, had requested the establishment of 20 new settlements in the occupied territories in addition to the six already approved.

" As you are aware, Sir, during the past six years, some one hundred new settlements were established in the occupied territories notwithstanding the illegality of such action, the censure of international opinion and numerous resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly. May I recall, in this connection, that in its resolution 465 (1980), adopted unanimously on 1 March 1980, the Security Council strongly deplored the continuation and persistence of Israel in pursuing those policies and practices and called upon the Government and people of Israel to rescind those measures, to dismantle the existing settlements and in particular to cease, on an urgent basis, the establishment, construction and planning of settlements in the Arab territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem.

"As on previous occasions, this information is being communicated to you in order that you may be kept aware of the persistent activities taken against the Palestinians living under Israeli occupation, and in order to express the concern of the Committee regarding constant violations of Palestinian rights, United Nations resolutions and the Geneva Convention of 1949.

"Accordingly, I should be grateful if you would be so good as to have this letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under the item entitled 'Question of Palestine', and of the Security Council. "

At the meeting of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People on 24 January 1985, the Committee considered and approved its programme of work for 1985.

The Committee, inter alia, decided that, in 1985, seminars should be held in Latin America and Asia. The Latin American Seminar will be held in Guyana in June and the Asian Seminar will be held in the People's Republic of China in April of 1985.

The Committee also decided that the International Non-governmental organizations meeting be held in Geneva in September and that the preparatory meeting for it should be held in March of 1985.

It also decided that a non-governmental organizations symposium for North America be held at the United Nations Headquarters in the summer of 1985.

2. Conclusions of the European Council on the situation in the Middle East

The European Council, in its meeting of 3 to 4 December 1984 in Dublin, adopted the following conclusions on the situation in the Middle East:

"The Ten Heads of State or Government discussed the situation in the Middle East. They reaffirmed their desire to see urgent efforts made to establish peace and stability there and their willingness to assist efforts to that end.

"The Ten regard it as vitally important that renewed efforts should be made towards negotiations for a settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict. They note with satisfaction expressions of interest of both sides in a process of movement towards negotiations and they hope that this declared interest will be further built on. They remain convinced that a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East can only be secured on the basis of the principles which they have stated many times in the past and to which the Ten continue to adhere.

"In order to find a lasting solution, no amount of effort by third parties can be a substitute for direct negotiations among the parties themselves - the Arab States, Israel and the Palestinian people - which must recognise mutually each others' existence and rights.

"They call on all parties fully to implement the provisions of Security Council resolutions 242 and 338. They renew their call for an end to the illegal policy of settlements in the occupied territories.

"The Ten have noted the recent holding of the Palestine National Council in Amman. They continue to believe that the PLO must be associated with peace negotiations.

"The Ten have consistently offered to assist in any way open to them in attempts to identify common ground between the parties. The Ten both collectively and individually have maintained contact with all parties. In continuation of this policy, the European Council considers that such contacts should be developed with a view to seeking ways of promoting movement towards negotiations and improvement of the situation in the region."

3. Non-governmental organizations' activity and information

1. The Lutheran World Federation sponsors health and education projects in Jerusalem and the West Bank. It has drawn attention to a resolution adopted by its Assembly held in Budapest, Hungary, July/August 1984 based upon a report from the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Jordan. This report outlined the situation of Palestinians in the occupied territories as well as in exile around the world. The Assembly resolution expressed solidarity with Arab Christians, especially those who issued an appeal for support.

2. The Israeli Council for Israeli-Palestinian Peace reports missions by several of its members. Uri Avnery participated in public discussions with PLO representatives in Palermo, Naples, Rome and Milan, Italy. During this tour Mayor Vetere of Rome discussed a plan for holding a conference of Israeli and Palestinian persons of arts and letters to discuss the conflict on an academic level. Yossi Amitai attended a conference in the Federal Republic of Germany of 120 Jews and Arabs from Israel and the occupied territories as well as Jews and Arabs residing in Western Europe. Many west Europeans interested in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict were also present.

3. The November 29 Committee for Palestine recently completed four successful regional conferences in San Francisco, New York, Chicago, and Austin, Texas. Hundreds of local activists attended from almost 30 cities, such as Dallas, Texas; Madison, Wisconsin; East Lansing, Michigan; San Diego, California; Seattle, Washington; Portland, Oregon; Youngstown, Ohio; Los Angeles, California; Iowa City, Iowa; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Boston, Massachusetts; Binghamton and Albany, New York; Jersey City, Hoboken, Princeton, and Plainfield, New Jersey; and Washington, DC.

The conferences, held in November and December, featured discussions on the state of the Palestinian liberation movement, strategy for building a Palestine solidarity movement in the United States and a review of November 29th's bylaws and principles of unity. Each of the conferences also included a forum on building the Palestine solidarity movement and linking up with other movements for social change. Such networking is growing among non-governmental organizations concerned with the question of Palestinian rights.

4. NAJDA: Women concerned about the Middle East is celebrating its 25th anniversary. It was founded to provide medical and educational aid to the needy of the Arab world and to educate Americans about the culture and politics of this region.

Recently it has joined with Jewish Women for a Secular Middle East to form TADAMUN, a San Francisco Bay area organisation whose purpose is solidarity with women political prisoners under Israeli rule, including those in Lebanon.

5. The Special Non-governmental Organisations' Bulletin containing the NGO appeal for a international peace conference on the Middle East was reissued by the Division for Palestinian Rights in January 1985.

Several NGOs have undertaken to publicise the campaign widely. The International Organisation for the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination has arranged for distribution of 1500 copies. The International Jewish Peace Union has planned a year long campaign during which they shall have events and issue statements concerning the peace conference. The Parliamentary Association for Euro-Arab Co-operation has already secured signatures of politicians from various countries and political backgrounds. These include:

Kjell Bohlin (Norway - MP Socialist Party)
M. Konstandinou (Greece - MP PASOK)
Michael Lanigan (Ireland - Senator Fianna Fail)
Michael Ferris (Ireland - Senator Labour Party)
Michael Cosgrave (Ireland - MP Fine Gael)
Klaas de Vries (Netherlands - MP PVDA)
Lord Mayhew (UK - MP Liberal Party)
Tijl Declercq (Belgium - Senator CVP)
Louis Odru (France - former MP RPR)
Cécile Goldet (France - Senator Socialist Party)
Rafael Estrella (Spain - Senator PSOE)
Richard Müller (Switzerland - former MP)
Lenelotte von Bothmer (Germany Federal Republic - former MP, writer).