



DIVISION FOR PALESTINIAN RIGHTS

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1. Action taken by the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

The Chairman of the Committee, in a letter dated 29 March 1985, addressed to the Secretary-General, drew his attention to the recent policy statements made by Israeli Government officials concerning the occupied territories of the West Bank and Gaza. The full text of the letter is as follows (A/40/215-S/17069):

"In my capacity as Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, I wish to draw your attention to recent policy statements made by Israeli Government officials concerning the occupied territories of the West Bank and Gaza.

"The Jewish Telegraphic Agency and the Jerusalem Post reported on 21 March 1985 that Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin assured Jewish settlers in the Katif region in the Gaza Strip that the region "in any event, must remain an inseparable part of the State of Israel". He also reportedly stated that the territory "geographically has always been part of the Biblical Land of Israel".

"A similar statement with regard to the Jordan Valley was attributed to Prime Minister Shimon Peres. Ha'aretz of 22 March 1985 reported that the Prime Minister had assured settlers in the area that the Jordan Valley was an inseparable part of the State of Israel.

"The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People is gravely concerned at such statements which are yet a further confirmation of the policy of annexation of the occupied territories by the Government of Israel.

"I wish therefore to reiterate the Committee's view that such a policy is a violation of Israel's obligations under the Charter of the United Nations and the fourth Geneva Convention and of numerous resolutions of the United Nations, and that it endangers peace and security in the region and undermines international efforts to facilitate a peaceful solution.

"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."

2. Paragraph adopted on the question of Palestine in the declaration of the commemorative meeting in observance of the thirtieth anniversary of the Asian-African Conference, held in Bandung on 24 and 25 April 1985

The following paragraph was adopted in the declaration of the commemorative meeting in observance of the thirtieth anniversary of the Asian-African Conference (A/40/276-S/17138):

Equally, participating countries expressed their full solidarity with and support for the struggle of the Palestinian people, under the leadership of the PLO their sole and legitimate representative, to achieve their inalienable rights, including the right to return, self-determination and the right to establish a national independent and sovereign state in Palestine. They expressed their indignation and condemned the racist brutal practices of Israel against the Arab population in the occupied territories in Palestine, South Lebanon and Golan. They remained fully convinced that there can be no just and lasting solution to the Middle East conflict, until Israel totally and unconditionally withdraws from all Palestinian and Arab lands occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, in implementation of the relevant resolutions of the United Nations. The participating countries hailed the heroic national resistance in South Lebanon against Israeli occupation."

3. Tenth United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine, held in Beijing, People's Republic of China, 22 - 26 April 1985

REPORT OF THE TENTH UNITED NATIONS SEMINAR ON THE QUESTION OF PALESTINE, 22-26 APRIL 1985
BEIJING, PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

1. The Tenth United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine with the title "The Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People" was held at the Fragrant Hill Hotel, West Beijing, People's Republic of China from 22 to 26 April 1985 in accordance with the terms of General Assembly resolution 38/58 B. Seven meetings were held and sixteen panelists presented papers on selected aspects of the question of Palestine.

2. The United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was represented by a delegation consisting of His Excellency Mr. Massamba Sarré (Senegal), Chairman of the Committee; His Excellency Mr. Victor J. Gauci (Malta), Rapporteur of the Committee; His Excellency Mr. Zain Azraai (Malaysia); Mr. Mohamed Lessir (Tunisia); Mr. Zehdi L. Terzi (Palestine Liberation Organization). Mr. Sarré was Chairman and Mr. Gauci Rapporteur of the Seminar.

Opening statements

3. The opening session of the Tenth United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine was addressed by His Excellency Mr. Geng Biao, Vice-Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress and Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee of the National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China, who had earlier received the representatives of the Committee and the Palestine Liberation Organization at a private meeting.

4. He stated that the purpose of the Seminar was to mobilize public opinion in the world, to support the just cause of the Palestinian people, and to explore ways and means for a just settlement of the Palestine question. Recognising that this was an arduous task, he stressed that China remained prepared to work towards the achievement of this objective, and appealed to all peace-loving States and peoples to strive for positive results at an early date.

5. In tracing the course of events in the Middle East, he contrasted Israel's policy of aggression and expansion with the heroic resistance of the Palestinian people and the efforts made by the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Arab States to seek a just and reasonable solution to the question of Palestine.

6. The Fez Peace Plan, adopted in September 1982, had been welcomed and supported by the international community. The Palestine Liberation Organization and the Arab countries were sincere in their efforts to seek peace in the Middle East. Unfortunately, Israel and its supporters have so far refused to recognise the national rights of the Palestinian people; this constituted the basic obstacle to peace in the Middle East.

7. The Chinese Government firmly supported the just struggle of the Palestinians and other Arab people and the basic principles affirmed by the relevant United Nations resolutions. Any effort which was conducive to the restoration of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and the recovery of the occupied Arab territories and was in conformity with an equitable solution to the Middle East question, would receive the backing of the Chinese Government and its people.

8. At the same opening session, Mr. Massamba Sarré, Chairman of the Committee, gave a brief account of the Committee's work to date. He stressed the particular importance that the Committee attached to the Seminars in the various regions. He indicated the Committee's conviction that objective information on the question of Palestine would help to ensure more comprehensive coverage of developments in the region, and promote public support in favour of an equitable and peaceful solution. Once all the facts surrounding the question of Palestine were known, the resultant better understanding of the question would help to convince even those who so far have been somewhat indifferent to the just cause of the Palestinian people.

9. The widely attended International Conference on the Question of Palestine held in 1983 in Geneva had formulated a number of basic principles necessary for a solution, including the right of all States in the region to existence within secure and recognised boundaries and justice and security for all the people, including a future Palestinian State. That Conference had also recommended the convening of an International Peace Conference on the Middle East, under the auspices of the United Nations, with the participation on an equal footing of all the parties to the Arab-Israeli conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organization - as the representative of the people directly concerned - together with the United States of America and the Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics.

10. Strongly supported by the majority of the Member States of the United Nations, the Committee fully endorsed the importance of such a peace conference and had decided that this should be the main focus of its work programme in 1985. It had therefore decided that in all the seminars and symposia that it organised this year, there would be at least one panel which would deal exclusively with the question of the peace conference.

11. The Committee placed special emphasis on the development of public opinion on the question of Palestine. The views of several influential policy-makers who participated in the Seminar on the role of Asian public opinion, and wide dissemination of their views would assist the Committee and the entire membership of the United Nations in assessing what still needed to be done in this field.

12. Mr. Shafiq Al-Hout, member of the Palestine National Council and head of the delegation of the Palestine Liberation Organization, conveyed a message from His Excellency Mr. Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization and Commander-in-Chief of the Forces of the Palestine Revolution.

13. In his message, Chairman Arafat stated that the Palestinian cause had entered an even more dangerous phase as a result of the intensification of Israel's aggressive policies, supported by successive United States Administrations. These policies had as their sole aim the expulsion of the Palestinian people from their lands and homes. It was a part of Israel's declared policy not to withdraw from the occupied territories, not to return Jerusalem to Palestinian sovereignty, not to permit the establishment of a Palestinian State and not to recognise the Palestine Liberation Organization.

14. The economic, financial and military aid provided by the United States to Israel's aggression hindered the observance of international law and denied the Palestinian people the exercise of its inalienable rights.

15. Despite these enormous challenges, the Palestinian people continued their heroic struggle and resistance to the hostile Israeli policies abetted by the United States. The hardships they endured would not impair their resolve to maintain their struggle which was gathering overwhelming support from all democratic and peace-loving forces.

16. The Palestine Liberation Organization had availed itself of every opportunity to search for peace, and continued its efforts to achieve a joint Arab political plan aimed at the attainment of a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the Middle East conflict.

17. Chairman Arafat expressed his profound gratitude for the valuable efforts of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, which had contributed to the clarification of the facts surrounding the cause of the Palestinian people. He also expressed his gratitude to Mr. Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, Secretary-General of the United Nations, and to all those who had worked for justice for the Palestinian people.

18. In conclusion, he reiterated the Palestine National Council's gratitude to the People's Republic of China, its leadership, its Party and its people, who were the very first nation to extend diplomatic recognition to the PLO and have unfailingly extended full support to the Palestinian cause.

19. At the same meeting, a statement was made by His Excellency Mr. Abdul G. Koroma, Chairman of the United Nations Special Committee with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. He opined that the decision of the General Assembly to hold this Seminar was not only a measure of the international community's deep concern for the Palestinian people, but also a reflection of its recognition that a just solution of the Palestinian problem was of overriding importance in the search for a lasting settlement of the Middle East question. In this decision, the General Assembly thus had reaffirmed its commitment to the Palestinian people for the realization of their inalienable rights, and sought to enlighten and mobilize international public opinion towards the attainment of the objectives of the United Nations on the question of Palestine.

20. The Special Committee attaches particular significance to the mobilization of international opinion towards the attainment of self-determination for all people under alien and colonial domination. The General Assembly had repeatedly called for the full and speedy exercise by the Palestinian people of their right to self-determination without external interference and to national independence and sovereignty as well as their rights to return to their homes and property from which they have been displaced and uprooted.

21. It was all the more important therefore for the international community to rededicate itself to the promotion of a genuine and lasting settlement of the Middle East conflict. Concerted action was necessary to persuade the supporters of Israel to induce it to respond to relevant United Nations resolutions and to the will of the international community on the question of Palestine. Recent events in the Middle East underline the heavy responsibility incumbent upon the international community to do everything in its power to preserve peace and security in the region.

22. Mr. Nihat Akyol, speaking on behalf of the United Nations Council for Namibia, stated that the question of Palestine could be compared to the problem of Namibia which had been controlled by South Africa in defiance of General Assembly and Security Council resolutions. In both instances, great suffering had been caused to many innocent people. The Palestinian people continued to be denied the fundamental and inalienable rights to live in liberty, peace and dignity in their own country. The international community could not remain indifferent while Israel persisted in its acts of aggression against the Palestinian people and annexed the territories of its neighbouring States.

23. The United Nations Council for Namibia reaffirmed its adherence to the resolutions of the General Assembly relating to the rights of the Palestinian people. The Council for Namibia was also convinced that the persistent denial by Israel of the right of the Palestinian people to return to their homeland was in violation of the fundamental principles of the United Nations Charter as well as United Nations resolutions on the question of the rights of people under colonial domination.

24. The Council for Namibia affirmed its solidarity with the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and condemned Israeli policies and plans aimed at driving the Palestinian people from its homeland.

25. The twin questions of Palestine and of Namibia haunted the conscience of the international community. Both questions had been on the agenda of the General Assembly of the United Nations for many years, and a solution has not yet been found.

26. This Seminar was an occasion to reaffirm the Council's solemn commitment and determination to be associated with the defence of a noble cause. South Africa and Israel should be compelled to conform to universally accepted norms and should be condemned for their defiance of world opinion.

27. Mr. Nabil Maarouf, Director of Holy Jerusalem and Palestine Department of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, speaking on behalf of His Excellency Mr. Sayed Sharifuddin Pirzada, Secretary-General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, stated that the Organization had made it a point to participate in the series of regional seminars on the question of Palestine organized by the United Nations, since these seminars were a valuable contribution towards making the cause of the Palestinian people better known to the world public.

28. The Organization remained fully committed to all proposals and solutions that would ensure for the Palestinian people its inalienable historical rights, including its right to return, its right to self-determination and its right to establish its own independent state on its national soil with its capital of Al-Quds Al Sharif, and under the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization, its sole legitimate representative.

29. In spite of world public opinion, the Palestinian people had not regained its rights. Israel's intransigence was due to continued political, economic and military support by the United States of America. It was this support that enabled Israel to violate international law and to defy world public opinion.

30. The Palestine Liberation Organization had displayed its desire for peace by accepting the Fez Peace Plan and publicly expressed support for the proposed Middle East Peace Conference which had however been rejected by Israel, whose negative attitude was encouraged by the United States. Ways and means should be found by which effective pressure could be brought to bear upon the United States Administration to recognize the rights of the Palestinian people. All States that supported the Palestinian people should join in this effort. It was very important that the European Community should be persuaded to exert its influence on the United States.

31. At the second meeting, Mr. Hans Teller, representative of UNESCO in China, outlined the assistance given to the Palestinian people by UNESCO, in accordance with resolutions adopted by its General Conference. UNESCO had renewed its agreement with UNRWA for the period 1984-1985 whereby UNESCO assumed technical responsibilities for the educational programme for Palestinian refugees. UNESCO also continued its efforts to maintain the functioning of the cultural and educational institutions in the occupied Arab territories, including the projects concerning the Palestine Open University, on which a study had already been approved.

32. With regard to the preservation of cultural properties in the Holy City of Jerusalem, the Director-General of UNESCO had entrusted a personal representative to visit Jerusalem on many occasions for the protection of the cultural heritage of the Holy City.

33. Some 50 fellowships had been granted to Palestinian students and a consultant had been hired to advise the Palestine Literacy Council. A special account had been opened to finance scholarships for Palestinian students and contributions had already been received from some Arab States. Another special account had been opened for assistance to the Palestine Liberation Organization with the financial contributions from the Government of Iraq.

34. At the 7th meeting, Ms. Savitri Kunadi, speaking on behalf of the Special Committee against Apartheid, reaffirmed the Special Committee's support for the General Assembly resolutions relating to the question of Palestine and stressed its solidarity with the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People in the task of securing the practical attainment of those rights. The Special Committee against Apartheid attached great significance to the mobilization of international public opinion for the attainment and realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and viewed the early convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East as a contribution to the just solution of the Middle East problem, the core of which is the question of Palestine.

35. On the occasion of the commemoration of the thirtieth anniversary of the Asian-African Conference in Bandung, Indonesia in April 1955, the Seminar decided at its 3rd meeting on 23 April 1985 to send a message to His Excellency Dr. Mochtar Kusumaatmadja, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Indonesia, extending felicitations and recalled that the Bandung Declaration had affirmed its full support for the cause of the Palestinian people.

36. The delegation of the Committee on Palestinian rights was officially received by His Excellency Mr. Zhao Ziyang, the Prime Minister of China, on Thursday, 25 April 1985.

37. The closing session on Friday, 26 April 1985, was attended by His Excellency Mr. Qian Qichen, Deputy Foreign Minister of China. The meeting was addressed by the Deputy Foreign Minister, the Chairman of the Seminar and Mr. Shafiq al-Hout, the representative of Chairman Arafat of the Palestine Liberation Organization.

A full report of the Seminar together with the papers of the experts will be published at a later date.

4. Declaration on the Arab-Israeli conflict adopted on 29 April 1985 by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Ten States members of the European Community

The following declaration was adopted on the Arab-Israeli conflict by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Ten States members of the European Community at the fifty-seventh Ministerial Meeting on European Political Co-operation, held in Luxembourg on 29 April 1985 (A/40/291-S/17162):

"ANNEX

"Declaration on the Arab-Israeli conflict adopted on 29 April 1985 by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Ten States members of the European Community

"The Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Ten continue to maintain a close interest in developments in the Middle East. They welcomed recent moves towards a reactivation of the process of negotiations in the search for a solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict, notably the Jordan/Palestinian agreement reached on 11 February at the initiative of King Hussein which contained a commitment to negotiations for peace in accordance with United Nations resolutions, including the resolutions of the Security Council. In the view of the Ten this represents a constructive step forward. They also welcomed the ideas put forward by the President of Egypt.

"The Ten consider that these important initiatives reflect a desire for movement towards a peaceful solution. This deserves encouragement and a positive response.

"They confirm their conviction that the achievement of a just and lasting solution calls for the participation and the active support of all the parties concerned. The Ten consider that no effort should be spared to maintain and strengthen the present movement in the peace process and to facilitate a dialogue between all the parties to the conflict.

"The Ten reconfirm their willingness to contribute to a comprehensive, just and peaceful settlement of the Middle East question on the basis of the principles which they have stated many times in the past and to which they continue to adhere.

"In particular, they recall the rights of all States in the region, including Israel, to existence and security, and the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, with all that this implies. With regard to the association of the PLO with the negotiations, the Ten refer to their well-known positions. In their contacts with all the parties concerned, the Ten, both collectively and individually, will work to promote the reconciliation of the various positions."

5. Resolutions adopted by the Economic Commission for Western Asia on the question of Palestine

The following resolutions were adopted by the Economic Commission for Western Asia on the question of Palestine at its twelfth session (E/ECWA/XII/L.11):

"135(XII) Economic and social conditions of the Palestinian Arab people under occupation

"The Economic Commission for Western Asia.

"Recalling its resolution 30(III) of 14 May 1976, in which it appealed to the Economic and Social Council for prompt action to take practical measures to ensure the improvement of the economic and social conditions of the Palestinian Arab people in their homeland, its resolution 108(IX) of 11 May 1982 on assistance to the Palestine Liberation Organization, and its resolution 132(XI) of 16 April 1984 calling for special attention to be devoted to social and economic studies on the Palestinian people in the occupied territories,

"Recalling the provisions of the Geneva Declaration on Palestine and Programme of Action for the Achievement of Palestinian Rights concerning the adoption of measures to alleviate the economic and social burdens borne by the Palestinian people as a result of the continued Israeli occupation of their territories and with regard to contributing or increasing special contributions to the proposed budgets, programmes and projects of the relevant organs, funds and agencies of the United Nations system that have been requested to provide humanitarian, economic and social assistance to the Palestinian people.

"1. Express gratitude to the Executive Secretary for the secretariat's efforts to conduct social and economic studies on the Palestinian Arab people;

"2. Calls upon the Executive Secretary to ensure that all available data and information relating to the occupied Palestinian territories are included in all studies and statistical abstracts issued by the Commission at the regional level;

"3. Calls upon the Executive Secretary to include in the programme of work and priorities for the period 1986-1987 studies, in co-operation with the concerned Arab and international organizations, on economic and social conditions in the occupied Palestinian territories, such as may serve to strengthen the resistance of the Palestinian people in those

areas, and to prepare studies on the population situation, the Israeli settlement policy aimed at changing the demographic structure and destroying the Palestinian character of the occupied Palestinian territories, and studies relating to support for the industrial sector, particularly existing industries and the solution of the problems from which they suffer, such as those of marketing, finance, manpower and raw materials;

"4. Appeals to the international and Arab organizations concerned with the problems of social and economic development to assist the Executive Secretary in the preparation and execution of such specialized studies.

3rd meeting
24 April 1985"

"138(XII) General study of the economic and social situation and potential of the Palestinian Arab people

"The Economic Commission for Western Asia.

"Recalling its resolution 27(III) of 14 May 1976 deciding on the preparation of a comprehensive study of the economic and social situation of the Palestinian Arab people.

"Recalling also its resolution 123(X) of 11 May 1983 and its resolution 124(XI) of 26 April 1984.

"Noting that the sub-committee referred to in the two aforesaid resolutions has not met.

"1. Decides to refer the study to the secretariat for revision with the participation of the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and any other members that wish to attend, it being understood that the observations commended or those that might be communicated up to the end of June 1985 will be taken into account;

"2. Also decides that the Committee shall begin its work within not more than one month of 25 April 1985 and that it is to complete the task entrusted to it by the end of August 1985 at the latest;

"3. Requests the Executive Secretary to invite members to a special session of the Economic Commission for Western Asia at a time no later than the end of October 1985 to adopt the study.

3rd meeting
24 April 1985"

6. Non-governmental organizations activity and information

I. The President's Committee of the World Alliance of Young Men's Christian Associations decided at its February meeting to endorse the circulation of the NGO appeal for an International Peace Conference on the Middle East to all of its members with the request that they solicit signatures for the petition.

(See Special Non-Governmental Organization Bulletin, January 1985.) The first three pages of signatures contain the names of members of the President's Committee, the Committee on Refugees and Rehabilitation and the World Alliance Staff.

II. The Resource Center for Nonviolence is sponsoring a Middle East Peace Delegation and Study Tour to Jordan, Egypt, Israel, the West Bank and Gaza Strip, 30 June-18 July 1985. The tour is designed for persons anxious to understand the roots of the conflict in the region with a view to exploring the possibilities of a negotiated Arab/Israeli settlement based on mutual recognition and guaranteed security of both the Israeli and the Palestinian people.

III. The Syracuse Area Middle East Dialogue Group has published a Consensus Statement resulting from more than three years of dialogue between Syracuse, New York area U.S. citizens of Christian, Jewish and Palestinian (Christian and Muslim) backgrounds. It is entitled "A Path Toward Peace" and stresses the need for mutual and simultaneous recognition of the legitimacy of the State of Israel and the legitimacy of self-determination for the Palestinians including the option of an independent Palestinian State in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

IV. The recently-appointed executive director of the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, Dr. Omar Kader, an American-born Palestinian, spoke in the New York Region, 18-20 April. He outlined the plans of the organization to counteract stereotypes and strengthen cultural identity through projects such as a high school textbook survey and an oral history project.

V. The World University Service has issued a briefing paper entitled "Palestinians". It outlines the historical background of the educational situation of the Palestinian people, the work of the PLO, the role of UNRWA and the high level of achievement in the light of the difficulties encountered.

In response to the educational needs of the Palestinians, World University Service reveals plans to place British youth in summer work camps organized by Bir Zeit University and to request donations for the adult education programme which contains a women's education project to teach literacy, not as an end in itself but as a key to development.

VI. The National Conference of Black Lawyers recently sent a high level delegation to Israel, the West Bank and Gaza led by their director, Dr. Gerald C. Horne.

In addition to briefing Black and Arab-American members of the U.S. Congress, this delegation will be producing a book focusing on deprivation of human rights of Palestinians in the occupied territories.

VII. The London-based Minority Rights Group has issued its revised report entitled "The Palestinians". In its outlining of the historical development of the Palestinian question, it refers to UN documents and the role of UN agencies. It also follows the development of the Palestine Liberation Organization. In addition to its statistics, maps and bibliography, this publication seeks to present the problem with a human face and a sense of urgency.

