



DIVISION FOR PALESTINIAN RIGHTS

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CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
I. INTERNATIONAL DAY OF SOLIDARITY WITH THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE	2
II. CONSIDERATION OF THE QUESTION OF PALESTINE AT THE FORTY-SECOND SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY	3
III. EXCERPT FROM FINAL DECLARATION ISSUED BY THE EXTRAORDINARY ARAB SUMMIT CONFERENCE HELD AT AMMAN, JORDAN, 8-11 November 1987	9

I. INTERNATIONAL DAY OF SOLIDARITY WITH THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE

On 30 November 1987, the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People was observed at United Nations Headquarters, New York, at Geneva, Vienna and several other capitals.

Two special meetings of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People were held on Monday, 30 November, at Headquarters, in accordance with the provisions of General Assembly resolution 32/40 B of 2 December 1977. All Member States of the United Nations, specialized agencies and observers were invited to attend.

Among those who addressed the special meetings were the Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, the President of the General Assembly, the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council. A message from the Chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) was read out by the observer for the PLO.

Statements were also made by the Minister of State for External Affairs of India and by the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Sri Lanka.

Further statements were made by the Chairman of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, the President of the United Nations Council for Namibia, the Vice-Chairman of the Special Committee against Apartheid, the Chairman of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Population of the Occupied Territories, the representative of the Chairman of the movement of the Non-Aligned Countries, the Chairman of the Group of African States, the Chairman of the Group of Arab States, the Chairman of the Group of Asian States, the Chairman of the Group of Eastern European States, the Chairman of the Group of Latin American States and the representative of the Chairman of the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

A number of messages from Heads of State or Government and Ministers for Foreign Affairs were read out by their representatives. Messages were also read out by the Deputy Permanent Observer for the League of Arab States and the Permanent Observer for the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

Statements were also made by the Chairman of the International Co-ordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine and the observers of the South West Africa People's Organization and the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania.

In commemoration of the International Day, the Committee arranged the screening of a series of films during the week beginning 30 November, in the Dag Hammarskjöld Library Auditorium.

At the request of the Committee, in further commemoration of the International Day, the PLO prepared an exhibition which was displayed in the public lobby at United Nations Headquarters from 30 November to 6 December 1987.

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II. CONSIDERATION OF THE QUESTION OF PALESTINE AT THE
FORTY-SECOND SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

On 23 November 1987, the General Assembly took up consideration of the question of Palestine. The debate began with a statement by the Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. The Rapporteur of the Committee then introduced the Committee's report. The full text of both these statements are presented below:

Statement by the Chairman (interpretation from French): 1/ "Every delegation that has participated in the general debate at this session of the General Assembly has taken the opportunity to raise the problem of Palestine and evoke the need to find a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to it. It is also worth noting that the passion and subjectivity to which we have become accustomed have given way to logic and objectivity. This new approach to the question should be a source of reassurance to us and should prompt us now to commit ourselves to working out in concrete deeds the common goal upon which we all - or almost all - agree, namely, the organization of an international peace conference on the Middle East. In his report on the situation in the Middle East, in document A/42/714, the Secretary-General invites us to do so, and states:

"[There is widespread agreement on the part of the international community that] the convening of such a conference, under United Nations auspices, offers the best chance of successfully negotiating a comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israel conflict. Moreover, my decision to make a special effort this year was endorsed by leaders of all parties to the conflict. These two factors - international backing and the support of the parties, have provided an important basis for the several rounds of consultations that have been held thus far and will undoubtedly be crucial to future progress. ...

"... I am encouraged by the fact that the past year has seen favourable developments in the political environment, both in terms of the level and frequency of the contacts between the permanent members of the Security Council and between them and the parties. I am also encouraged by the fact that the idea of an international conference under United Nations auspices has been given high priority among the Arab parties to the conflict, and has been the subject of lively debate within Israel. These positive trends, combined with the growing international consensus in favour of the early convening of a conference, demand of us that we consolidate and build on the foundation that has so far been established." (A/42/714, paras. 32 and 34)

"On the basis of those considerations, considerations that are the result of a long process of various approaches, and on the basis of the purposes and principles set forth in our Charter, nothing should any longer prevent the achievement of our goal, namely, the establishment of peace in the Middle East through the restoration of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, in particular their right to self-determination and their right to

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independence. To those who might raise as a prior question the "right to existence" of all States in the region, I refer to paragraph 3 (f) of General Assembly resolution 38/58 C concerning the Geneva Declaration of 1983, which provides for:

"the right of all States in the region to existence within secure and internationally recognized boundaries, with justice and security for all the peoples ...".

"Once again I have the honour, on behalf of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, to speak before this Assembly to report on the work carried out by the Committee in this past year in fulfilment of the mandate given it by the General Assembly and to give an assessment of the present situation with regard to our action with a view to bringing about a settlement of the question of Palestine.

"The year 1987 marked the anniversary of several significant events in the history of the Palestinian people, while we are continuing to follow developments with regard to the situation in the region and to organize activities with a view to mobilizing international public opinion at all levels in support of the recommendations of the United Nations designed to bring about a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine.

"The events include the celebration next week of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, which will coincide with the fortieth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 181 (II), by which the General Assembly decided upon the partition of Palestine into two States. As we all know, only one of those States, namely Israel, came into being, and the creation of the other, the Palestinian State, remains to be realized. Misunderstandings and lack of comprehension to which we have been witness for almost 40 years have thus far prevented the implementation of the second phase of that resolution.

"Last June we observed the twentieth anniversary of the 1967 Middle East war, which ended in the occupation by Israel of the West Bank, including the eastern part of Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip and led to the denial to the Palestinian people of their right to self-determination. In a press release issued in the name of our Committee on that occasion, I launched an appeal to the international community to redouble its efforts to bring about a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine, which is the primary cause of the Arab-Israeli conflict in the Middle East.

"The celebration of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People will provide an opportunity for Governments, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations to renew their commitment to intensify their efforts to attain the goal that our Organization has not yet achieved. It is clear that the injustice and suffering inflicted upon the Palestinian people have lasted far too long. The absence of tangible progress towards a negotiated settlement must not be considered as resignation or as the acceptance of a fait accompli.

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"It is in this spirit that the Committee has in the course of this year given absolute priority to the convening, at the earliest possible date, of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East under the auspices of the United Nations, in conformity with the guiding principles laid down by the General Assembly in resolution 38/58 C of 13 December 1983. The Committee is of the firm conviction that this Conference is the most appropriate and timely way to bring about a just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine. The Committee was convinced of this opinion by events that took place during the year and by the overwhelming consensus in favour of the Conference which emerged during various activities organized under the Committee's auspices.

"As in preceding years, we organized three intergovernmental regional seminars: one in New Delhi, thanks to the kindness of the Indian Government; another in New York for the North American region; and a third, which is now being prepared and is to take place next month in Havana, at the kind invitation of the Government of Cuba, the Vice-Chairman of our Committee. The programme of conferences and meetings for non-governmental organizations has also continued; thus regional conferences were held in New Delhi and New York and an international meeting was held in Geneva, where we had the honour of hearing a responsible, positive address by President Arafat. Our Rapporteur, the representative of Malta, will provide more detailed information on these various activities when he presents the report of the Committee. I will simply say that our Committee is continuing to insist that the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East is to be the primary goal of international action.

"Our Committee was encouraged by the interest shown by some influential organizations, political personalities and molders of public opinion, many of whom were from Israel and the Jewish community in North America, with regard to the settlement of the question of Palestine. The meetings of journalists organized by the Department of Public Information have continued to provide the information media with all the data necessary on the problem and with information on the recommendations of our Committee. I am happy to note that the movement is growing and that public opinion is mobilizing in favour of a negotiated settlement in keeping with our Committee's recommendations. Strengthened by this encouraging experience, the Committee intends to intensify its action in favour of the convening of the International Peace Conference and to make that the central element in its programme of work for the coming year. In this regard the Committee counts upon the full support of the Secretary-General and the devoted staff of the Division for Palestinian Rights and the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat, who have already contributed so much to our activities.

"The urgent need for concrete progress towards a peace process is rendered all the clearer by the growing tension and violence in the occupied territories and the destruction of Palestinian refugee camps, with the loss of many innocent lives. Several times during this past year, I have, in my capacity as Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, brought these disturbing events to the

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attention of the General Assembly and the Security Council, requesting that all the parties concerned give further proof of the political will needed to accelerate the peace process advocated by the United Nations. The present situation of instability and steady worsening, which threatens to degenerate at any moment into a major confrontation, can only delay this process further.

"After 40 years of war it is high time for us resolutely to commit ourselves to the peace of the brave. To be lasting this peace must not be exclusively a Palestinian one, an Arab one or an Israeli one. It has to be a peace that is both Israeli and Arab. Weapons have proved ineffectual in the settlement of all conflicts. History reminds us of this at every turn. Therefore the only objective way out for us is the full implementation of the peace plan adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 38/58 C of 13 December 1983.

"Taking comfort in the events of this year - the evident desire for a negotiated-peace process - the Committee once again calls upon all parties concerned or interested to rise above certain considerations and re-evaluate the situation in the well-understood interests of all States and peoples of the region. The peaceful settlement of this conflict by the achievement of justice and security for all on the basis of the exercise by the Palestinian people of their inalienable rights is at the same time a duty and a responsibility of the United Nations, which will thereby be making a major contribution to the establishment of peace and stability throughout the region.

Statement by the Rapporteur: 2/ "In my capacity as Rapporteur, I have the honour to present to the General Assembly the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People on its activities and work in 1987.

"During 1987, the Committee has made every endeavour to carry out its mandate on the basis of the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly. It continued to keep the situation relating to the question of Palestine under review and to promote the implementation of the Assembly's recommendations for the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. It also continued to give priority to the early convening of an international peace conference on the Middle East in accordance with General Assembly resolution 38/58 C. In chapter I of its report, the Committee gives a brief overall assessment of the situation in the year under review and of the need for further efforts by all concerned.

"Chapters II and III of the report describe the Committee's mandate and organization of work and are therefore procedural in content.

"The action taken by the Committee during the year is described in chapter IV of the report. In section A.1 a review of the situation, the Committee expressed its increasing concern at the fact that the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories continued to deteriorate. The Committee expressed its concern at the continued Israeli policy of confiscating Arab land in the occupied territories and of expanding its settlements and at the

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imposition of its iron-fist policy. The Committee was also gravely concerned at the fact that Israel had continued to take administrative, economic and other measures further to entrench its control over the occupied territories, thereby impeding their autonomous development. At the same time, the Committee noted with appreciation that consensus had been reached on a programme of assistance to the Palestinian people by the United Nations system and that efforts would now turn to its implementation.

"Section A.2 contains a summary of the letters addressed by the Chairman of the Committee to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council drawing their attention to events affecting the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and urging appropriate action on the basis of United Nations resolutions. As this section reflects, on repeated occasions, the Chairman expressed grave concern at the persistence and intensification of attacks on Palestinian refugee camps in South Lebanon and at a number of serious incidents in the occupied territories, such as the shooting of Palestinian demonstrators by Israeli troops, arrests, deportations, the closing of schools and universities and the imposition of curfews in several areas.

"In addition, the Committee followed closely the activities of the Security Council on matters related to the Committee's mandate and participated in the Council's debates whenever necessary. The Security Council met at the request of members of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries to consider the situation in the Israeli-occupied Palestinian and other territories, including Jerusalem. The Council, in resolution 592 (1986), reaffirmed the applicability of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, to the Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967, including Jerusalem, and called upon Israel to abide immediately and scrupulously by it. The Council strongly deplored the death and wounding of defenceless students and called for the release of all persons detained.

"As I have already mentioned, the Committee has continued to give the highest priority to the early convening of an international peace conference, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 38/58 C. Its efforts in this respect are set forth in section A.3 of chapter IV, as well as in subsequent chapters. The Committee continued to follow closely and with appreciation the efforts of the Secretary-General in that regard.

"The Committee participated, through its representatives, in 13 international conferences and meetings organized by United Nations organs, intergovernmental organizations, the Palestine National Council and others. Their resolutions and conclusions were followed by the Committee with keen interest. The Committee was greatly encouraged by the fact that there was growing sentiment and momentum in favour of its recommendations and, in particular, the recommendation for the convening of an international peace conference on the Middle East. The full list of all such meetings and the relevant final documents is provided in paragraphs 54 and 55 of the report.

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"Section B.1 describes the activities organized by the Committee in its continuing efforts to expand its contacts with non-governmental organizations and to co-operate with them in their contribution towards heightening international awareness of the facts relating to the question of Palestine and in creating a more favourable environment for the implementation of the Committee's recommendations. Two regional symposia for non-governmental organizations were held in Asia and North America, and an international meeting of non-governmental organizations was held at Geneva. Two preparatory meetings were also held. The meetings were attended by a much larger number of non-governmental organizations than in previous years, including several from the occupied territories and from Israel itself. In particular, the international non-governmental organizations meeting, at which the Committee had the pleasure of welcoming Chairman Arafat, was attended by a total of 270 non-governmental organizations, an unprecedented number. The meeting was also attended by several prominent political personalities, an indication of the growing international concern over this issue and of the growing support for the recommendations of the Committee.

"The Committee was greatly encouraged by the fact that, in the various declarations adopted at those meetings, the non-governmental organizations reaffirmed the need for and urgency of convening an international peace conference on the Middle East, in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 38/58 C and 41/43 D, and pledged further efforts by the international non-governmental-organization community to promote that objective. In this regard, the Committee was further encouraged by the commitment of the European non-governmental organizations to work towards increased support for the conference by their Governments, particularly by the States members of the European Economic Community.

"As set forth in detail in section B.2, seminars were held in the Asian and North American regions, with a Latin American seminar scheduled to take place in Cuba next month. Prominent political personalities, parliamentarians and policy-makers, as well as persons from the academic community and other experts, participated in those seminars. The Committee was pleased that, in their conclusions and recommendations, the participants in the regional seminars reaffirmed that the question of Palestine was the core of the Middle East conflict and that no comprehensive, just and durable peace could be achieved in the region without the realization by the Palestinian people of their inalienable rights in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the United Nations. The participants also reaffirmed the need for the convening of the international peace conference on the Middle East under the auspices of the United Nations in accordance with General Assembly resolution 38/58 C.

"Section B (3) of chapter IV contains information on the activities of the Secretariat Division for Palestinian Rights in the field of studies, research and the collection of information, and on the commemoration of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, which have continued in support of the Committee's objective to mobilize the widest possible constituency.

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"Chapter V of the report deals with the activities of the Department of Public Information, which continued its information programme on the question of Palestine with a view to furthering the world-wide dissemination of accurate and comprehensive information on the question. The information programme included press and publication activities, radio-visual coverage, a fact-finding mission to the Middle East for journalists, and a series of national and regional journalists' encounters.

"In its recommendations, contained in chapter VI, the Committee concludes that during the year under review international understanding of the question of Palestine and support for the attainment and exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people have continued to grow. At the same time, the Committee expresses its most serious concern that tension and violence will continue to increase, with possible disastrous consequences for the region, unless progress is made towards a negotiated settlement of the question of Palestine. The Committee considers that a new phase has been reached which necessitates renewed and intensified collective efforts to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting solution, and it calls for urgent positive action by the Security Council on the recommendations formulated by the Committee in its first report and on those adopted by the International Conference on the Question of Palestine, held at Geneva in 1983. The Committee further reaffirms that the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, held in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 38/58 C and 41/42 D, would make a major contribution towards the realization of a solution, and it intends further to intensify its efforts towards that objective and make it the focal point of its work programme again in the coming year."

III. EXCERPT FROM FINAL DECLARATION ISSUED BY THE EXTRAORDINARY
ARAB SUMMIT CONFERENCE HELD AT AMMAN, JORDAN,
8-11 NOVEMBER 1987

The Conference discussed the subject of the Arab-Israeli conflict and reviewed the developments that had taken place at the Arab and international levels. It reaffirmed that the question of Palestine was the core and basis of the conflict and that peace in the Middle East region would only be achieved through the recovery of all the occupied Arab territories, foremost among them the Holy City of Jerusalem, the restoration of the inalienable national rights of the Palestinian people and the resolution of the Palestine issue in all its aspects. The Conference declared that the consolidation of the power, inherent strength and solidarity of the Arabs and an effective common stand were basic elements for tackling the Israeli danger, which threatened the entire Arab nation, affronted it and placed its existence and future at risk.

In the context of promoting peaceful efforts and endeavours seeking to achieve a just and durable peace in the Middle East region in accordance with international legality and the resolutions of the United Nations and on the basis of the return of all the occupied Palestinian and Arab territories and the restoration of the national rights of the Palestinian Arab people, the leaders supported, as the only

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appropriate means of settling the Arab-Israeli conflict in a peaceful, just and comprehensive manner, the convening of an international peace conference under the auspices of the United Nations and with the participation, on an equal footing, of all parties concerned, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian Arab people, and the permanent members of the Security Council. They saluted the Palestinian people in the occupied Arab territories, commending its steadfastness, sanctioning its struggle and its adherence to its land and renewing their commitment to its support and assistance. 3/

Notes

1/ See A/42/PV.78, pp. 2 to 11.

2/ Ibid., pp. 11 to 17.

3/ See A/42/779-S/19274, pp. 4 and 5.
