



DIVISION FOR PALESTINIAN RIGHTS

NINETEENTH UNITED NATIONS SEMINAR ON THE QUESTION OF PALESTINE
(FOURTH EUROPEAN REGIONAL SEMINAR)

Theme: "The inalienable rights of the Palestinian people"

Berlin, German Democratic Republic
25-29 April 1988

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INTRODUCTION

1. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People accepted the offer of the Government of the German Democratic Republic (GDR) to hold the Nineteenth United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine (Fourth European Regional Seminar) entitled "The inalienable rights of the Palestinian people". The Seminar was held at the Palasthotel, Berlin, from 25 to 29 April 1988, in accordance with the terms of General Assembly resolution 42/66 B of 2 December 1987.
2. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was represented by a delegation consisting of Mr. Alexander Borg Olivier (Malta), Rapporteur of the Committee, head of the delegation; Mr. Tom Obaleh Kargbo (Sierra Leone); Mr. Alberto Velazco-San José (Cuba); Mr. Dirk Hielscher (GDR); and Mr. Zehdi L. Terzi (Palestine Liberation Organization). Mr. Borg Olivier served as Chairman, Mr. Velazco-San José as Vice-Chairman and Mr. Kargbo as Rapporteur of the Seminar.
3. The opening session of the Seminar was attended by the President of the forty-second session of the General Assembly, Mr. Peter Florin.
4. Eight meetings were held and 14 panelists presented papers on selected aspects of the question of Palestine. In addition, representatives of 37 Governments, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), 3 United Nations organs, 4 United Nations specialized agencies and bodies, one intergovernmental organization as well as observers of 5 non-governmental organizations (NGOs) attended the Seminar.

I. OPENING STATEMENTS

Statement of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the German Democratic Republic

5. The opening session of the Seminar was addressed by Mr. Oskar Fischer, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the GDR. In his statement, Mr. Fischer emphasized that the socialist German State, commemorating the fortieth anniversary of its foundation next year, had in many ways received and exercised international solidarity and would continue to do so. Its citizens had always felt linked in solidarity with the peoples in the struggle for the implementation of their rights, in their longing for peace and their aspirations for a happy future. The people of the GDR exercised active solidarity with the Palestinian people which, under the leadership of the PLO, was waging a truly historic struggle for the exercise of its right to self-determination, including its right to the establishment of a State of its own.
6. The dastardly assassination of a member of the PLO leadership, Khalil al-Wazir, an indefatigable fighter for the rights of his people, had given rise to great anger and indignation. The GDR resolutely condemned the Israeli course of action, which was incompatible both with international law and respect for the rights and dignity of man. The present situation in the Israeli occupied territories dramatically illustrated the urgent need for a just and lasting solution to the Middle East conflict. The GDR supported the

early convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East under the auspices of the United Nations. All interested sides, including the PLO and Israel, as well as the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, should participate in that Conference. The Conference had to work out binding provisions on all aspects of the Arab-Israeli conflict. A peaceful, political solution could only be achieved if all parties involved moved closer to each other in good faith, working constructively toward the necessary balance of interests. That included above all the resolution of the question of Palestine, the withdrawal of Israel from the Arab territories occupied during the armed conflict of 1967, and international guarantees for the exercise of the right of all States of the region to live and develop in peace, as provided for in the relevant United Nations resolutions. Preparatory consultations, for which advantage could be taken of the opportunities available to the Security Council, could doubtlessly help expedite a settlement along those lines. Therefore, the GDR believed that the proposal of the Soviet Union for that purpose to convene a session of the Security Council at the level of foreign ministers was a highly topical one.

7. More than 40 years had passed since 1947, the year in which the United Nations, in adopting General Assembly resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947, had come out in favour of the establishment of a Palestinian and an Israeli State. It was high time to remove at last all the obstacles that remained in the way of the establishment of a Palestinian State. International conditions for accomplishing that task were favourable. With the signing of the treaty for the elimination of intermediate and shorter-range missiles of the USSR and the United States, a process of genuine disarmament was underway for the first time. It encouraged the forces of common sense and realism to step up their efforts toward a healthier international situation and, consequently, the political settlement of existing conflicts. The GDR welcomed the new summit meeting between General Secretary Gorbachev and President Reagan in Moscow at the end of May and expected it to produce further steps toward real disarmament and thus toward a recovery of the international situation.

Message from the Chairman of the Council of State of the German Democratic Republic

8. The Seminar received a message by the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany and Chairman of the Council of State of the GDR, H.E. Mr. Erich Honecker, which was read out by the Chairman of the Seminar. In the message, it was stressed that active solidarity with the Palestinian people in its struggle for the exercise of its legitimate rights formed an integral part of the GDR's policies. The people of the GDR were very much involved in supporting the just struggle waged by the Palestinian people and in promoting the idea of peace in the Middle East. The activities of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People were highly appreciated in the GDR. In particular, the GDR shared the belief that a lasting and just settlement of the Middle East conflict could only be attained if and when the Palestinian people was guaranteed the exercise of its right to self-determination. It was imperative to take urgent measures in order to move closer towards peace in the Middle East through a collective effort under the aegis of the United Nations. The International Peace Conference, with the participation of all the parties concerned, including the PLO, Israel and the five permanent members of the

United Nations Security Council, could work out binding provisions on all aspects of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Statement of the representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations

9. The opening session was also addressed by the representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Under-Secretary-General Joseph Verner Reed. In welcoming the participants, Mr. Reed stressed that the Seminar was taking place in the wake of extremely tragic events which had started in December 1987 in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The Security Council, in its resolution 605 (1987) of 22 December 1987, had strongly deplored the policies and practices of Israel in the occupied territories. The Council had reaffirmed that the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, was applicable to the Palestinian and other territories occupied by Israel since 1967, including Jerusalem, and had called upon Israel to abide immediately and scrupulously by the Convention. The Secretary-General, in his report of 21 January 1988, had described the existing situation and indicated action which could be taken by the international community to alleviate the sufferings of the Palestinians under occupation.

10. The situation in the occupied territories remained a matter of serious international concern. Attempts to resolve the problem in the occupied territories by force could only lead to greater tragedy. The cycle of continued violence and human sufferings had to come to an end. That objective could be achieved only if a political solution could be found through an international peace conference with the participation of the five permanent members of the Security Council and the parties directly concerned. A viable political solution had to recognize the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people in the context of a just, lasting and comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

11. Another development of profound importance to the United Nations was the adoption by the United States of the legislation affecting the maintenance of the PLO Permanent Observer Mission in New York. The resolutions adopted by the reconvened forty-second session of the General Assembly had reaffirmed that the Permanent Observer Mission of the PLO was covered by the provisions of the Headquarters Agreement and that the PLO had the right to establish and maintain premises and adequate functional facilities. The Assembly had also confirmed that a dispute existed between the United Nations and the United States, and that the dispute settlement procedure provided for under section 21 of the Agreement should have been set in operation. The Assembly had also urged the host country to abide by its international legal obligations, and to desist from taking any action inconsistent with the rights of the PLO. The matter had also been referred to the International Court of Justice for an Advisory Opinion. It was the hope of the international community that the dispute would be resolved in accordance with the provisions of the Headquarters Agreement and on the basis of the general principles of international law.

12. The continuing and persistent efforts of the United Nations had, over the years, produced a consensus on the fundamental elements required for a comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Such a settlement had

to meet the following conditions: the withdrawal of Israel from Arab territories occupied since 1967, respect for and acknowledgement of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of all States in the area and their right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries, free from threats or acts of force and, finally, a just settlement of the question of Palestine based on the recognition and the exercise of the legitimate rights of the people of Palestine, including the right to self-determination. In that connection, the question of Jerusalem remained of primary importance. It was the intention of the Secretary-General to continue the search for a comprehensive settlement through a negotiated process, under United Nations auspices, with the participation of all the parties concerned, including the PLO.

Statement of the Chairman of the Seminar

13. Mr. Borg Olivier, Chairman of the Seminar, emphasized that the situation in the Middle East had again been brought into sharp focus since 9 December 1987, when the Palestinian uprising had begun in the occupied territories in reaction to the Israeli occupation. It confirmed in no uncertain terms that the Palestinians were determined to resist and reject Israeli domination and occupation. They were engaged in a desperate struggle to preserve their identity and their land. In doing so, the Palestinian people was striving to attain its inalienable national rights to self-determination and the creation of an independent State of its own.

14. The situation called for immediate emergency measures and also meaningful action to resolve the basic causes of the crisis. Medical supplies and personnel were needed to tend to the injuries and broken limbs suffered by a large number of Palestinians. International humanitarian agencies could not remain indifferent to that situation and were called upon to undertake every effort to make available the much needed humanitarian assistance. There was also an urgent need to provide more resources to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).

15. The situation also called for effective and sustained collective international efforts to address the core of the problem - the ending of the Israeli occupation of Palestinian and other Arab territories and the exercise of its inalienable rights by the Palestinian people, including the right to return and the right to self-determination and to the creation of a State of its own in Palestine. It was encouraging to note that almost the entire international community supported the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East in conformity with General Assembly resolution 38/58 C. That opinion was expressed not only in the United Nations, but also in the decisions and statements that had been issued by a large number of intergovernmental organizations, such as the League of Arab States, the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the European Community, as well as by statements of individual countries, including the USSR.

16. For forty years, the United Nations had continued its efforts to bring about a just and lasting peace to the Middle East. As part of that effort, the United Nations had established, in 1976, the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and had entrusted it with the

task of taking steps towards the exercise by the Palestinian people in Palestine of its inalienable rights. In the discharge of its functions, the Committee, in 1976, had formulated a set of recommendations which included a two-stage plan for the return of the Palestinians to their homes and property, a timetable for the withdrawal of Israeli forces from the occupied territories, and endorsement of the inherent right of the Palestinians to self-determination, national independence and sovereignty. By its resolution 31/20 of 24 November 1976, the General Assembly had endorsed the recommendations of the Committee. They had been endorsed every year since 1976 by the Assembly with an ever-increasing vote. However, those recommendations could not be implemented since the Security Council was not able to adopt them.

17. The international community had again been confronted with an outrageous act. On 16 April, Mr. Khalil al-Wazir, Deputy Commander-in-Chief of the Palestinian armed forces, had been assassinated in Tunis. The Committee, at its meeting on 21 April, had condemned the assassination and the violation of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Tunisia. Members of the Committee had held Israel responsible for that act, expressed their condolences to the family of Khalil al-Wazir and reaffirmed their support for the cause of the Palestinian people.

Message from the Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization

18. A message from Mr. Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the PLO, was read by Mr. Isam Kamel Salem, Ambassador of the PLO to the GDR. In the message, it was emphasized that the Palestinian people, under Israeli occupation, was in the 140th day of its heroic uprising. It was demonstrating to the world its resolve to maintain and escalate its just struggle against the prolonged occupation of its homes and its country, its struggle to retrieve its inalienable rights, to regain its dignity and to enjoy freedom in its independent and sovereign Palestine. Israel, on the other hand, persisted in its repressive measures of the "iron-fist" policy. Israel persisted in denying the fundamental rights of the Palestinian people - the inalienable right to self-determination without external interference, and the right to independence and sovereignty.

19. Israeli treated the reaction and condemnation of the international community with utter contempt. That behaviour should have not been surprising. The Government of the United States encouraged Israel to persist in its policies. The United States had just signed a revised Memorandum of Understanding with Israel. Strategic, military, economic and political joint interests and malicious plans were developed and strengthened. The selected timing to revise and renew the Memorandum of Understanding was one form of declaring unconditional support of the policies and practices of Israel.

20. The continued occupation of parts of Lebanon, the continuing acts of aggression - by air, land and sea - against Lebanon, the incessant bombing and shelling of Palestinian refugee camps affirmed that Israel's policies and practices were a threat to international peace and security. An act of aggression and terrorism had been committed against peaceful Tunisia in 1985. On 16 April 1988, Israeli gunmen, supported by intelligence and co-operation

from imperialist forces, had assassinated a leader of the struggle of the Palestinian people - Abu Jihad. The Israeli leaders openly threatened similar criminal and terrorist acts against all Palestinians, particular leaders and symbols of the struggle.

21. The holding of the Seminar in Europe carried great relevance and asserted the responsibilities of the European States and peoples to contribute to the just solution of the conflict. The PLO recognized that Europe had been trying, but more was expected and needed in that respect in order to bring the message across to Washington. The President of the United States should have been called upon to reconsider the policies of the United States with a view to joining in the peace efforts undertaken by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, in pursuance of General Assembly resolution 38/58 C. The United States could not talk about peace missions in the Middle East and at the same time enact a law declaring unlawful any move in the United States to further the interests of the Palestinian people. It further took steps to close the PLO Permanent Observer Mission to the United Nations in New York. The PLO was certain that the action taken by the General Assembly and the International Court of Justice would guarantee the independent functioning of the United Nations, as well as that of the PLO Permanent Observer Mission to the United Nations in New York.

Statement of the Secretary-General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference

22. Mr. Syed Sharifuddin Pirzada, Secretary-General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, noted that the Palestinian people, armed with only stones from its holy land, an unbending will and strong belief in the justice of its causes, had continued its struggle against decades of occupation, oppression, indignity and bondage to achieve its inalienable national rights, including its right to return, to self-determination and to the establishment of an independent Palestinian State on its national soil.

23. The Palestine question was the pivotal issue in the Arab-Israeli conflict. Since its inception, the Zionist entity had committed repeated aggression against its neighbours as well as distant Arab States. It had also committed constant aggression against the Palestinian people, both inside the occupied territories and outside, in order to break its will to resist the Israeli occupation and domination.

24. Israel was a State constantly engaged in terroristic policies and practices. The most outrageous, callous, inhuman assassination of Abu Jihad on 16 April was only the latest in a series of assassinations carried out by the Israeli agents against Palestinians. Even the United States had been forced to condemn that assassination as political murder.

25. There were certain unchangeable principles accepted by the entire international community on which any just, lasting and comprehensive solution had to be based and without which there could be no peace and security in the region. Those were as follows: the complete and unconditional withdrawal of Zionist occupation forces from all Palestinian and Arab territories, including Al-Quds Al-Sharif, and the exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable national rights, including its right to return, to

self-determination and to establish its own independent Palestinian State in Palestine under the leadership of the PLO, its sole and legitimate representative.

26. The decision of the United Nations to convene the International Peace Conference on the Middle East was supported by all States with the exception of Israel. The Organization of the Islamic Conference was convinced that the holding of that Conference would offer an opportunity for the return of peace to the region.

Other statements

27. Mrs. Shi Yanhua (China), representing the United Nations Council for Namibia, stated that efforts of the international community in support of the Palestinians had been largely futile in the face of Israel's persistent expansionist designs and acts of aggression and continuing hostility against the Palestinian people. Zionist punitive operations against the Palestinians had spilled over into many areas of the Middle East. Terrorism had been raised to the level of State policy. But those acts had strengthened the will of the Palestinians to survive and to reinforce international efforts to bring peace to the area.

28. Israel was bent upon rejecting the principle of equal rights and self-determination. Despite that, there was reason for optimism. Non-aligned solidarity with Palestinian nationalism and aspirations had remained steadfast. The rights of the Palestinian people and the role of the PLO had come increasingly to be widely recognized. The time was ripe to move forward in the peace process. Genuine peace was attainable through negotiations, provided all the parties to the problem participated actively and there existed the necessary political will. The proposal for the International Peace Conference under the Geneva Declaration, adopted by the International Conference on the Question of Palestine (ICQP) in 1983, provided such an opportunity. The United Nations Council for Namibia was convinced that the convening of the International Peace Conference under United Nations auspices was an effective way to seek Middle East peace. The people of Palestine and Namibia shared common misfortunes. Those two countries were the only remaining former League of Nations Mandated Territories being denied the inalienable right to determine their own destiny. Like the people of Palestine, whose land had been handed over by the British to the Zionists, the territory of Namibia had been given by British to South Africa. Above all, the two peoples were victims of the most vicious forms of racial discrimination - apartheid and zionism.

29. Mr. Emmanuel Douma (Congo), representing the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, emphasized the particular and urgent responsibility of the international community that justice should finally be served for the Palestinian people. The Special Committee knew full well what an essential weapon public opinion represented in the combat against injustice, oppression and foreign or colonial domination. It was undeniable that a just and equitable solution to the problem remained the sine qua non for lasting peace in the region. The full resolution of the problems of the Middle East necessarily called for the recognition of the inalienable rights

of the Palestinian people. A corollary to that was the active participation of that people and its representative, the PLO. It was necessary to work consistently to resolve the central element of the conflict, namely, the Palestinian problem, and to create conditions favourable to the establishment of a just and equitable peace in the region. Those conditions comprised the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, including the right to establish an independent State, and the right of all States in the region to existence and the strict observance of the principle of non-acquisition of territories by force. Only collective efforts and the integral application of the resolutions of the United Nations would allow the redress of the tragic injustices of which that people had for too long been the victim.

30. Mr. Dirk Hielscher (GDR), representing the Special Committee against Apartheid, stated that, in the face of recent developments, the Special Committee extended its full support and co-operation to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for its efforts in support of its just and legitimate cause as well as for the implementation of the relevant United Nations resolutions. For more than a decade, the Special Committee had been submitting a special report to the General Assembly and to the Security Council on recent developments concerning the relations between Israel and South Africa. It had more than once shown that their collaboration, especially in the military and nuclear fields, created most serious obstacles to the efforts of the United Nations, not only to eradicate apartheid, but also to prevent the further escalation of violence against the South African and Palestinian peoples. The Special Committee would keep the special relationship between the two régimes under constant review. It was imperative that effective action should urgently be taken in support of the oppressed peoples of South Africa and Palestine. Concerning the question of Palestine, the Special Committee always supported initiatives aimed at achieving a just and permanent solution to that conflict. The need for the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East under the auspices of the United Nations was therefore obvious.

31. Mr. Achim Reichardt, General Secretary of the Solidarity Committee of the GDR, stressed that the GDR Solidarity Committee was in the fortunate position of being in complete agreement with the official policy of the GDR Government which from the very beginning had unreservedly sympathized with and supported the just cause of the Palestinians. That support had a prominent place among the national as well as international activities of the Committee, designed to assist the peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America.

32. The GDR Solidarity Committee, as other organizations in the GDR, sympathized with and supported the popular uprising of Palestinians in the occupied territories. That qualitatively new stage in the struggle waged by the Palestinian people made higher demands and required more intense efforts. The Solidarity Committee actively supported all initiatives launched to achieve a just and comprehensive settlement of the Middle East conflict which threatened world peace and at the center of which was the unresolved Palestinian issue. At the same time, it opposed all attempts, under whatever pretext, to exclude the PLO from the Conference and thus to withhold the right of self-determination from the Palestinian people. The Solidarity Committee would continue to work on a national as well as international level to achieve progress in settling the Palestinian question.

33. The Seminar also received a message by the Chairman of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Population of the Occupied Territories, Mr. Daya Perera.

Messages sent by the Seminar

34. The Seminar adopted messages to Mr. Erich Honecker, Chairman of the Council of State of the GDR (annex I) and to Mr. Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the PLO (annex II).

II. PANEL DISCUSSION

35. Three panels were established. These panels and their panelists were as follows:

(a) Panel I: "The Uprising in the Occupied Palestinian Territories: The Urgency of Convening the International Peace Conference on the Middle East in accordance with United Nations General Assembly Resolution 38/58 C":

Mr. Shafiq Al-Hout (Palestinian), Mr. Dragan Jovanic (Yugoslavia), Mr. Igor M. Khvorostiany (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic), Mr. Vladimir I. Kisselyov (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), Mr. Roberto Mesa (Spain) and Mr. Ingo Schoenfelder (GDR);

(b) Panel II: "The Role of the Palestine Liberation Organization":

Mr. Yusif Sayegh (Palestinian);

(c) Panel III: "The Question of Palestine and European Public Opinion":

Mr. Mikko Lohikoski (Finland), Mr. Ion Margineanu (Romania), Mr. Lothar Pilz (GDR), Mr. Mümtaz Soysal (Turkey), Mr. Jörgen Stromberg (Sweden), Mr. Paolo Ungari (Italy) and Mr. Nicolas Voulelis (Greece).

36. The expert members of the three panels agreed on summaries of the presentations and the discussions on the three topics. The Seminar decided to include those summaries in the report.

Panel I: "The Uprising in the Occupied Palestinian Territories: The Urgency of Convening the International Peace Conference on the Middle East in accordance with United Nations General Assembly Resolution 38/58 C"

37. The popular Palestinian uprising in the occupied Palestinian territories, including Jerusalem, which was essentially that of an unarmed people resorting to stone throwing, demonstrations and passive resistance, had provided another reminder to the world community that the Palestinian tragedy still continued. The Palestinian people was still prevented from putting into practice its inalienable national rights. Hundreds of thousands of Palestinians still had to carry on an almost daily anguished struggle for survival under the conditions of Israeli occupation or exile.

38. The growing participation of the Palestinian people in the struggle was an important feature of the uprising. The Palestinian people was conscious of its strength and the importance of unity. That was why it was a conscious protest against oppression, against the violation of rights and freedoms, against the régime of occupation. All that had confirmed that the Palestinian people's struggle was irreversible. A characteristic feature of the uprising was the mass participation of the youth and teenagers in it, who resorted to stone throwing.

39. It was worth noting in that context that, in the course of the uprising, not a single voice from the occupied territories had taken up any of the numerous ideas alternative to the call for a Palestinian State. All those alternatives had two major drawbacks: they did not envision sovereign rights for the Palestinian people and they lacked the small yet important word "self" when it came to the determination of the future political status of the occupied territories and of the Palestinians.

40. One could not help taking into account the qualitatively new stage in the development of the Palestinian liberation movement. The nationwide uprising in the occupied territories had produced a qualitatively new situation in the Middle East. It had given an impetus to the search for an urgent solution of the Palestinian problem.

41. It was quite obvious that the uprising was not the result of a premeditated plan merely to draw attention to the hardships suffered. The Palestinians did not aim at improving their general situation and living conditions under occupation but to put an end to the occupation itself. The message of the uprising was essentially to initiate and to accelerate the political action aimed at introducing peace in the region by removing the existing occupation.

42. On the dawn of the 130th day of the uprising, a highly distinguished Palestinian leader, Khalil al-Wazir (Abu Jihad), had been assassinated by the Israelis in the Tunisian capital, thousands of kilometers away from Palestine. It was a great loss, not only for the PLO and for Arabs and international movements, but for all peace-loving peoples as well. Contrary to expectations, the killing of Khalil al-Wazir, like all other criminal acts, did not and would never intimidate the Palestinian people in its struggle.

43. In an atmosphere of acute crisis, the Israeli military authorities had responded with terror and bloodshed. Thousands of police and military troops had been deployed using riot-dispersal weapons, rubber bullets, tear gas, water-cannon trucks, plastic shields and clubs. Even a new "battle doctrine" had been applied, a policy of beating protesters rather than "wasting" live ammunition on them. Unarmed Palestinian residents were confronted with heavily equipped Israeli troops determined to overpower and crush any disturbances and their perpetrators. Soldiers as well as armed settlers did not hesitate even to shoot at protesters. More than 150 Palestinians had been killed, an unaccounted number imprisoned and detained, among whom the most prominent were expelled and deported.

44. Israeli policies and discriminatory practices had been the subject of severe criticism all over the world and even in Israel, where certain

demonstrations against government policy had taken place. Though very distant from a positive response to the fundamental rights of the Palestinian people, some intellectuals and Oriental Jews had enlisted themselves in support of the Palestinians. Afraid of the danger of wider polarization among Israelis, the Israeli Government had utilized all its capabilities to suspend the consequences of the uprising in internal relations but with no perceivable results.

45. Nevertheless, the Government of Israel continued to rely upon strength and adventurism. Two trends of its actions were clearly seen. On the one hand, it undertook desperate attempts to suppress the uprising. Aggressors still hoped that they succeeded in drowning the uprising in bloodbath. And on the other hand, the threat of Israel's armed attacks on the neighbouring Arab countries - the Syrian Arab Republic, Iraq, Saudi Arabia - was escalating.

46. Developments in the region and particularly those affecting the fate of the Palestinians had given special urgency to the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East under the auspices of the United Nations. Vital interests of the peoples of the Middle East, as well as the interests of international peace and security urgently dictated the need for the speediest settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict. While the conflict embraced various dimensions, it was the suffering of, and injustice perpetrated against, the Palestinian people that were the core of that conflict. Lasting peace in the area was impossible without a just solution to the question of Palestine.

47. The question of Palestine and the Middle East crisis in general involved some of the most relevant principles of international relations. The inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force, the peaceful solution of the conflict, the rejection of de facto situations created by force, the denunciation of exploitation of natural and human resources in the occupied territories, the right to return and the right to self-determination, national security and independence for all people and many other principles created a basis for contemporary international law, politics and behaviour. The lack of their respect could endanger international relations in general.

48. The question of Palestine had been inseparably linked with the activities of the United Nations. On 29 November 1947, resolution 181 (II) was adopted by the General Assembly, by which the British Mandate was to end and two States, one Arab and one Jewish, were to be established. Jerusalem was to be a corpus separatum under a special international régime. Economic unity and safeguard of fundamental rights were to be ensured. But over forty years after its adoption, the resolution still awaited its implementation in full. That resolution had been implemented only as far as the creation of the State of Israel was concerned.

49. On 10 November 1975, the General Assembly had established the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. In its recommendations, approved by the Assembly at each of the sessions since 1976, the Committee had laid down a programme which would give effect to the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. As was known, the position of the United States had prevented the Security Council from following up these recommendations.

50. The ICQP, held at Geneva in 1983, had adopted a declaration and a programme of action. The Geneva Declaration listed the major guiding principles which should govern any concerted international action for the purpose of resolving the question of Palestine. In order to give effect to those guidelines, it was essential for an International Peace Conference on the Middle East to be convened, with the aim of negotiating and finalizing a comprehensive, just and lasting solution of the Arab-Israeli conflict. It had been agreed that the Conference had to be convened under the auspices of the United Nations, with the equal participation of all the parties directly involved, including the PLO as well as the United States, the USSR and other concerned States.

51. Both the Geneva Declaration and General Assembly resolution 38/58 C stated eloquently the objectives of the Conference which was aimed at achieving a comprehensive, just and durable solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict. And both had defined the political elements required as guidelines for that solution.

52. By accepting the provisions of General Assembly resolution 38/58 C, the PLO had offered compromise, sacrifice and had shown general flexibility in order to allow the desired peace in the Middle East.

53. The search for the Middle East settlement occupied a place of priority among the burning regional problems. The new approaches in world policy, based on the elements of new political thinking, constituted an important prerequisite for the settlement of that conflict. Under those circumstances, mankind has made a first significant step along the path of the liquidation of nuclear weapons, and the new approaches had led to the process of political settlement regarding Afghanistan. Those were good examples to be followed in order to settle other regional conflicts.

54. The majority of States, as well as major intergovernmental organizations, including the PLO, Arab States, the USSR and other socialist countries, China, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, the Organization of African Unity, the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the European Community, the Nordic countries and the States parties to the Warsaw Treaty, had expressed their strong support for, and endorsement of, the holding of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East. Support was also voiced for the establishment of a preparatory committee within the framework of the Security Council, with the participation of its permanent members. Support for the convening of the Conference had also been forthcoming by NGOs dedicated to peace and justice in the Middle East.

55. Resolutions adopted in previous governmental and non-governmental conferences had to be implemented. Special efforts had to be undertaken to awaken Israeli public opinion about the advantages of the International Peace Conference and the durable solution which it may produce. Israeli groups striving in that direction had to be rewarded with higher recognition of their activities which should be widely publicized. Israeli anti-war voices had to be made heard all over the world, particularly in the United States and among its Jewish community.

56. The early months of 1988 were marked by a number of practical actions of individual countries, the United Nations, intergovernmental organizations and NGOs in support of the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East. The holding of an ad hoc meeting of the Arab League in Tunisia in January 1988, which discussed the situation in the Israeli-occupied territories in connection with the Palestinian uprising was significant in that context. The proposal by the USSR of holding consultations among the members of the United Nations Security Council on the issue of convening the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, stated in the letter of 20 January 1988 by the Soviet Minister of Foreign Affairs, E. A. Shevardnadze, to the United Nations Secretary-General, had received wide attention. Another noteworthy factor was the support expressed by the seventeenth session of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, held at Amman on 20 March 1988, for the convening of the Peace Conference.

57. Participants were of the view that the Soviet Union and other socialist countries played a major part in the practical activities of advocating an early convening of the International Peace Conference. In their approach to settling the Arab-Israeli conflict, the Soviet Government, public and scientific circles proceeded from the concept of a comprehensive settlement that covered all its basic aspects and took into account the interests of all parties involved in the conflict, including the Palestinian people.

58. A serious obstacle on the way to the search for a comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict was the position of the State of Israel or rather of its present Government. Fully in the spirit of old thinking, that Government continued to rely on the occupation of the Arab lands and the "solution" of the Palestinian problem by military means - by force. But that policy of the Israeli Government had increasingly come into conflict not only with the spirit of time, but also with the interests of the Israeli people themselves. It was not accidental that the Palestinian uprising increasingly threw the Israeli society into ferment, intensified the internal strife between the advocates of a continuation of the "iron-fist" policy and those who supported a peaceful solution on the basis of talks with the PLO and recognition of the Palestinian right to self-determination.

59. Among the parties involved in the Middle East conflict, Israel and the United States were still rejecting that resolution. The first, being a party directly involved in the conflict, and the other, being a super-Power, made their participation indispensable for the convening of the Conference. It was very regrettable to notice that the United States was still following its old policies in the Middle East in spite of all the failures, the dangers and the complications they had led to. Instead of supporting the emerging Israeli peace forces, it was still backing the remnants of Israeli leadership contemplating the dream of a "Greater Israel". How could anyone consider seriously the present so-called American efforts of mediation for peace in the Middle East when the United States denied the Palestinian people its right to self-determination.

60. The United States proposals were initiated at the moment of an active and broad impact of the Palestinian uprising on the occupied territories and the indignant reaction in the whole world, including the United States. Under those circumstances, Washington seemed to understand the seriousness of the

situation and to be in a position to meet the demands of the world public. But the American proposals disappointed the hope of the world's nations. Those proposals put forward a deliberately unacceptable postulate - granting the Palestinian people living in the West Bank and Gaza Strip the so-called administrative autonomy.

61. The meaning of the United States diplomatic activity became understandable if one took into account that it was undertaken in the context of the refusal of the United States Administration to convene the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, of the refusal to collaborate and have any contacts with the PLO and, lastly, in the context of the unprecedented decision of the United States, contrary to international law and world public opinion, to close the Permanent Observer Mission of the PLO to the United Nations.

62. Participants emphasized the urgent need for additional concrete and constructive efforts by all Governments in order to convene the Conference without further delay and supported the call for setting up a preparatory committee, within the framework of the Security Council, with the participation of the permanent members of the Council, to take the necessary action to convene the Conference.

Panel II: "The role of the Palestine Liberation Organization"

63. The role of the PLO derived from the inalienable right of the Palestinians to Palestine, their right to identify with it, to live on its soil as a community and a national entity, with its own social structure and its own economic life. It derived from the collective will of the Palestinians, both under occupation and in dispersal, that the PLO was and should continue to be their legitimate and sole representative. Those two factors were the source of the legitimacy of the PLO and the determinant of the complex role it had to play. The record of the PLO had confirmed and solidified that legitimacy and had won the recognition, first of all the Arab States, and in due course of more than 100 other States, that the PLO was the legitimate and sole representative of the Palestinians. Among the exceptions to that significant development were Israel, the United States and South Africa.

64. The structure of the PLO had been built in order to embody the maximum degree of democracy and representativeness. It found its most notable expression in the Palestine National Council (PNC) which satisfied the broadest possible measure of representation of the geographical, functional, ideological-political, intellectual and socio-economic reality of the Palestinian people. The strong and unshakable recognition by the Palestinians under occupation of the PLO as their legitimate and sole representative acquired particular meaningfulness and credibility because it was manifested and expressed openly in the face and in defiance both of brutal Israeli repression and evasive prevarication.

65. It was only natural for the PLO to have and to endeavour to fulfil a multi-faceted role, not only within the Palestinian community, but also within the community of Arab States and the international community as well. The

components of that role could be identified as follows:

(a) The preservation, deepening and consolidation of the sense of Palestinian identity;

(b) The re-weaving of the fabric of a Palestinian society;

(c) The response by the organization to the basic human needs of the Palestinians;

(d) The provision of education and training opportunities for young Palestinians, and of support and encouragement for an older, already-formed generation of Palestinians, to be productive members of the societies and economies within which they lived and worked or expected to work, and of the Palestinian State to be;

(e) The understanding of armed struggle for liberation. The PLO was fully aware that there was a right time and place for armed struggle, and another for political and diplomatic activity, and a third for some well-calibrated combination of all those forms of struggle. It was also fully aware that armed struggle was a course of last resort, one which frequently made the course of political and diplomatic action necessary, feasible and credible;

(f) The shouldering and undertaking of political action aimed at the return of Palestinians outside their homeland, the exercise of independence and the enjoyment of statehood;

(g) The discharge by the PLO of the complex and far-reaching responsibilities falling in the field of international relations with political/diplomatic, economic and cultural substance and implications;

(h) The role as an actor and catalyst in soliciting aid for the Palestinians - economic, political, diplomatic or educational;

(i) The challenge to certain obfuscating or counter-productive political propositions or formulas set as guidelines or frameworks for the settlement of the Palestine problem. In all instances under reference, the propositions or formulas constituted or would have unavoidably led to incursion into or violation of basic Palestinian rights, and in all instances those propositions or formulas had been advocated by the United States and Israel.

66. One of those propositions or formulas related to Security Council resolution 242 (1967) which essentially targeted Israel and the Arab States involved in the war of June 1967. It had only partial, non-political relevance to the Palestinians inasmuch as it merely referred to them obliquely as refugees. It was silent on the political plight of the Palestinians who had been dispossessed, uprooted and displaced, as well as on the basic right of self-determination of the Palestinians.

67. Another illustration of the imposition of severe limitations on the natural and basic political right of the Palestinians to nationhood and statehood was encountered in the terms of the Camp David accord between Egypt

and Israel under United States patronage. That accord stipulated autonomy for the Palestinians which was understood by the Israelis and the Americans to exclude independence and sovereignty and to exclude the power to control and protect the land and its water resources.

68. The third illustration of obfuscation related to the concern by the United States for "the improvement of the quality of life of the Palestinians" under occupation. But what was basically needed was the ability by the population under occupation to control its own economic activity, to develop its own economy, to protect its resources. What neither the United States nor Israel had counted upon was the clarity of perception by the Palestinians and their ability to differentiate between the substance of the capability to develop their national economy and the pretense of the improvement of the quality of life.

69. The PLO could not discharge the various components of its role smoothly and easily; constraints and difficulties limited its ability to undertake its responsibilities effectively and satisfactorily. The more prominent of those included the inherent difficulty of achieving accommodation between the nature of a "revolution" and that of a "State" or Government; the shortage of financial resources at its disposal; the dispersion of the Palestinians and the necessity, yet the difficulty, of simultaneous movement in widely different political contexts and environments; the necessity to achieve balance in a large number of situations where there were forces pulling in opposite directions and most formidably, the alliance between Israel and the United States.

70. The PLO could not do much in the face of Israeli dispossession and repression in all its forms. But it could and had endeavoured to expose the various aspects of Israel's ideology, attitudes, policies, and measures that translated the objectives of the State and society into concrete hardship for the Palestinians. The endeavour took many forms in the international arena, within individual countries and inside the United Nations system. But the most effective way of exposure was the resistance by the Palestinians under occupation themselves through various forms of resistance and challenge. The current uprising in the occupied territories, which started on 9 December 1987, was the last but the most widespread, sustained and effective response to Israeli coercion and repression, and above all to occupation and the usurpation of the national and political rights of the Palestinians.

71. In spite of the reality and enormity of the constraints and difficulties which beset the discharge of the role of the PLO in its many ramifications, the PLO could call on and mobilize certain real and significant sources of strength. Among those sources were:

- (a) The determination of the Palestinian people and its readiness to accept hardship and sacrifice in the pursuit of its objectives and the recapture of its political, social and economic rights;

- (b) The large and growing number of supporters of the Palestine cause in and beyond the Arab region. Those supporters constituted a most valuable and highly appreciated reserve of moral and political support for the Palestinian people as a whole and for the PLO itself;

(c) The acknowledged credibility of the determination of the Palestinian people, expressed in its continued struggle for liberation and its ability to stand up to the large-scale invasion of Lebanon in 1982;

(d) The enjoyment by the Palestinians of the prerequisites and eligibility for nationhood, including awareness of a national identity, political consciousness, and the will to struggle in spite of hardship, dispersal and the passage of time;

(e) The readiness of the Palestinians to accept a settlement that satisfied only a part of their rights and demands, so long as it redressed a reasonable part of the injustice which the creation of Israel had inflicted upon them;

(f) The dynamism and ability to manoeuvre by the leadership of the PLO and its patience, realism and determination.

72. The PLO, as the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, had fully earned its many sided role and the right and the duty to discharge that role. It was therefore natural, right, logical and essential that the PLO had to be a full and active participant in any international conference empowered to discuss a settlement for the Palestine problem, on equal footing with the other regional participants.

Panel III: "The Question of Palestine and European Public Opinion"

73. The Seminar heard accounts of the role of public opinion in the Nordic countries, Romania, the GDR, Turkey, Italy, Spain and Greece. Although it was difficult, if not impossible, to discuss European public opinion in general because of the region's political, socio-economic and cultural diversities, the potential as well as the actual role of public opinion in the region was viewed as being of great significance.

74. It was noted that public opinion was an important and fundamental element that could contribute to and be utilized in the search for peace in the Middle East based on a just solution of the question of Palestine. That element therefore should be mobilized to inject the voice of reason into world affairs and should be enhanced by a deeper understanding and awareness of all the aspects of the question of Palestine. Public opinion formation should be the area of prime concern for those who were deeply involved in matters relating to the Middle East and who were, in particular, deeply concerned for the future of the Palestinians and who were involved in the endeavours to see that the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to return, to self-determination and to the establishment of a Palestinian State should come about in the near future. The objectives and concrete activities of NGOs, particularly those involved in the question of Palestine and the Middle East, were of great importance. The NGO community was of a great variety of different organizations and elements. It comprised churches and religious organizations, trade unions, solidarity and friendship associations, parliamentary associations, peace, women's, students' and youth's groups, human rights and professional organizations. Those organizations, to varying degrees, were in a position to influence government policies, supplement them

or promote their actual implementation. Moreover, they contributed to a greater understanding and awareness of the facts relating to the question of Palestine and its causes.

75. The media played a significant role in the formation of public opinion. Through the media, the public received information on events and developments regarding the Middle East and the plight of the Palestinian people. The way the information was prepared and reached the public, as well as the political and social environment to which the information was presented to, were significant. The Seminar was of the view that objective reporting was essential to mobilize public opinion in support of bringing about a just, lasting and comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

76. The Palestinian uprising in the occupied Palestinian territories had brought the question of Palestine into sharp focus. In Europe, and in particular in Western Europe, the reporting on the Palestinian uprising and especially the reaction by the Israeli forces of occupation, the use of brute force against an unarmed civilian population, had generated interest and activity to contribute to a settlement to that intolerable situation. The urgent need to convene the International Peace Conference on the Middle East was getting to be realized by people who did not in the past.

77. The Seminar expressed appreciation to those media representatives who, sometimes under difficult circumstances, contributed to that greater mobilization of public opinion in Western Europe. What was needed at that time was the combination of the continuation of that trend of reporting with the promotion of a deeper understanding of the underlying causes of the question of Palestine in all its complexities. At the same time, it was necessary for additional activities to translate that growing awareness of the question of Palestine into concrete action at the non-governmental and governmental levels to facilitate a solution to the question.

78. The gradual evolution of public opinion in Western European countries in favour of Palestinian human and national rights and a settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict in a comprehensive peaceful way should be encouraged and strengthened. That trend was due to a better perception of the consequences of the unresolved Arab-Israeli conflict and its core, the question of Palestine, for security in Europe. But much remained to be done to overcome misperceptions and prejudices. A more balanced and objective reporting, free of any bias and ambiguities, was needed in order to solidify positive trends.

79. The view was expressed that among the factors hindering that process were specific positions in Western Europe regarding Israel owing to political, historical, moral and religious factors. Certain attitudes on the question of Palestine were influenced in some countries by a certain guilt complex stemming from memories of anti-Judaism in the past. Another factor was the perception that Israel was part of the "European heritage" and the "only Western democracy" in the Middle East. The misuse of a number of Western European countries of religious sentiments towards Israel for purely political motives was regarded as another factor as was the Zionist influence in the media of certain countries. In addition, Israel had skillfully influenced those factors.

80. The major control of mass communication technology was in the hands of some large Western agencies which often, but with a few notable exceptions, emphasized "division among the Arabs", internal conflict and Palestinian "terrorism". More reporting on the hardships of the Palestinians under occupation, the daily oppression and the consequences of Israeli policies and practices was needed. It was particularly emphasized that more objective information was needed on the efforts to convene the International Peace Conference on the Middle East on the basis of General Assembly resolution 38/58 C so that not only the current newsworthy developments were depicted but also the ways and means to settle the conflict.

81. Segments of various European public opinion had labelled the legitimate struggle of the Palestinian people for the exercise of its inalienable national rights as terrorism. That image was a result of a sustained political campaign promoted by parts of the media to discredit the Palestinian people and the result of the application of a double standard regarding the right to resist by all means the Israeli occupation and the usurpation of Palestinian land and to struggle for the exercise of its inalienable rights in Palestine.

82. More publicity had to be given to the situation prevailing in the occupied territories - what the youth was doing, what women, workers, farmers, scientists were doing. Attention had to be given to the various issues of different sectors of the society. Journalists had to be mobilized against the arrest of colleagues in Israel or the occupied territories, intellectuals and artists had to be more aware of the persecution of an discrimination against Palestinian and Jewish intellectuals and artists for their positions in support of the Palestinian cause.

83. The view was expressed that Western Europe could play the role of an intermediary or mediator. Western Europe could play a major role not only in bridging the gap between Europe and the Arab world by a close association and working collaboration in helping the Palestinian people in the occupied territories, but also with the revival of the Euro-Arab dialogue on a sound basis and with concrete content, and mainly by taking a position to press actively for the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East.

84. The Seminar noted that public opinion in the socialist countries of Eastern Europe had always given firm support to the Palestinian people's just struggle and to its sole legitimate representative, the PLO. Public opinion in Eastern Europe stood for a just and permanent settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict and had expressed support for the Arab countries and the PLO in all their efforts and attitudes, including their support of peaceful negotiations and political solutions. It firmly denounced Israel's policies of aggression and expansion and its annexation of the Arab sector of Jerusalem and the Golan Heights. It called upon world opinion to denounce Israeli policies and practices in the occupied Palestinian territories. Moreover, it criticized the United States for supporting Israeli aggressive and expansionist policies and for establishing a strategic relationship with Israel. The USSR and other socialist countries of Eastern Europe were staunch supporters of a comprehensive political settlement of the conflict and acted consistently to convene the International Peace Conference on the Middle

East. A distinct feature of public opinion in those countries was that it was fully in line with official government policies and promoted and facilitated their practical implementation through active solidarity with the Palestinian people and its sole legitimate representative, the PLO. The mass media continuously promoted that process.

85. It was explained and recalled that among European members of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, there had been support for the struggle of the Palestinian people from the earliest stages and that specific attention had been paid to the question of Palestine and to solidarity with the Palestinian people. That support had been based on the fundamental and universal principles of peace, freedom, independence, justice and human rights upheld by the Movement.

86. The Seminar heard an account of the activities of the European Co-ordinating Committee for Non-Governmental Organizations on the Question of Palestine. The Seminar appreciated those activities as an important means to mobilize public opinion in the region, to co-ordinate a multitude of NGO activities and to facilitate the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East in accordance with General Assembly resolution 38/58 C. In that regard, the hope was expressed that the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the Division for Palestinian Rights of the United Nations Secretariat continued and expanded the co-operation and co-ordination with the European Co-ordinating Committee in accordance with the means at their disposal, among them the facilitation of contact between the Committee and European NGOs and the provision of updated and new publications on various aspects of the question of Palestine preferably also in other languages than official United Nations languages.

III. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

87. The Palestinian uprising in the occupied territories confirms that the Palestinians are determined to reject and resist Israeli domination and occupation. The Palestinian people is struggling to preserve and protect its identity and its land and to regain and freely exercise its inalienable national rights to return, to self-determination and to the establishment of an independent State of its own in Palestine.

88. While strenuous attempts have been made to bring about a solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict, the situation in the region remains intractable. It is further aggravated by Israel's reaction to the Palestinian uprising in using military might to quell the demands by the Palestinian people for the exercise of its inalienable human and national rights. Israel continues its policies of illegally maintaining and expanding Jewish settlements as well as confiscating Arab-owned lands and diverting scarce water resources to its own use in the occupied Palestinian and Arab territories. The "iron-fist" policy of Israel has further stifled all forms of political, cultural, social and economic expressions of the Palestinian people. Israel continues to strengthen its control over most aspects of life, with the objective of obstructing a self-sustained development of the Palestinian people in the occupied territories by turning those territories into a dependent entity with

the aim of their final absorption and annexation. Such policies are in violation of United Nations resolutions, the Geneva Conventions of 1949, in particular the Fourth Geneva Convention, and other norms of international law and exacerbate tension in the area, thus hindering attempts to find a peaceful solution to the question of Palestine.

89. The Seminar agreed that the role of the PLO derives from the inalienable right of the Palestinians to Palestine, their right to identify with it, to live on its soil as a community and national entity, with its social structure and its economic life. It derives from the collective will of the Palestinians, both on Palestinian territory and outside of it, that the PLO is their legitimate and sole representative. Those two factors are the source of the legitimacy of the PLO and the determinant of the complex role it has to play. The record of the PLO confirms and solidifies that legitimacy and has won the recognition, first of all by the Arab States and, in due course, by more than 100 other States, that the PLO is the legitimate and sole representative of the Palestinians. Among the exceptions to this significant development is Israel, the United States and South Africa.

90. The international community is becoming more deeply convinced of the need to find an immediate political settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict. That is evidenced by the growing support for the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East in accordance with General Assembly resolution 38/58 C as the only realistic and reliable means of achieving such a settlement. That support is clearly reflected in the position adopted by the PLO, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, the League of Arab States, the Organization of African Unity, the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the European Community, the Nordic countries, as well as by the USSR, China and other socialist countries. In that regard, the Seminar emphasized in particular the sustained and continuing support by the European socialist and non-aligned countries for the exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable national rights and the convening of the International Peace Conference on the basis of General Assembly resolution 38/58 C.

91. The Seminar appreciated the evolving position of Western European and Nordic countries in support of a comprehensive settlement and the convening of the International Peace Conference as expressed in the official statements by the European Community and the Nordic countries. It took also into account the position of the European Parliament in that regard and expressed the hope that the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People will undertake further endeavours with a view that the countries of Western Europe will play an even more active role in bringing about a comprehensive political settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, guaranteeing the exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights.

92. The Seminar concluded that the way to establish a just and lasting peace in the Middle East is by convening the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, under the auspices of the United Nations and in conformity with General Assembly resolution 38/58 C, which endorsed the Geneva Declaration adopted by the International Conference on the Question of Palestine, held at Geneva in 1983. There was concurrence that a careful examination of the components of that resolution, which was based on the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of international law, and took into account all

relevant United Nations resolutions, included the objective, the political elements, the framework of, and the participants in the International Peace Conference, and thereby ensured the credibility and applicability of that project to produce a durable solution. It is the only prescription that could claim to have the ingredients for a just solution to the conflict, for the transformation of the military conflict into peaceful political platforms. Among the parties involved in the Middle East conflict, Israel and the United States are the only ones rejecting that path.

93. The Seminar expressed its appreciation for the efforts undertaken by the Security Council of the United Nations to bring about a just, lasting and comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict and in particular, to facilitate the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East. Attention was drawn to the report of the Secretary-General to the Security Council (S/19443 of 21 January 1988), as requested by resolution 605 (1987) of 22 December 1987, describing the existing situation in the occupied territories and indicating action to be taken by the international community to alleviate the suffering of the Palestinian people under occupation and to rectify the causes of the present situation through a peaceful negotiated settlement. The Seminar urged the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People to take the necessary steps to facilitate the implementation of those action. Attention was also drawn to the report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly (A/43/272) on the current situation regarding the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East. In that context, the Seminar urged the Governments of Israel and the United States to reconsider their negative attitudes towards the convening of the Conference in conformity with General Assembly resolution 38/58 C.

94. The Seminar took note with appreciation of the efforts of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People to secure universal recognition of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, and its recommendations for ensuring the exercise by the Palestinian people of those rights. The Seminar expressed its satisfaction that the Committee had organized the Seminar for Europe and the suggestion was made that the Committee should intensify its efforts so that the next European Seminar could be held in a Western European country. The Seminar also noted with satisfaction the increased support at the United Nations for the programme of action undertaken by the Committee. It urged the international community to sustain and strengthen its support for the Committee's activities and endeavours, in particular its efforts for facilitating the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East. At the same time, all countries must act and make their own contributions towards the convening of the International Peace Conference.

95. Although Israel and the United States are not yet convinced of the usefulness of the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, overall international conditions for accomplishing that task are not unfavourable. Additional efforts toward the political, negotiated settlement of regional conflict are essential. The hope was expressed that the forthcoming summit meeting of General Secretary Gorbachev and President Reagan would lead to a healthier international climate and produce tangible progress for a political solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict and its core, the question of Palestine.

96. The Seminar condemned the brutal assassination by Israeli special forces in Tunis of Khalil al-Wazir, Deputy Commander-in-Chief of the Palestinian armed forces, and the open violation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Tunisia. In that regard, the Seminar was apprised of the deliberations of the Security Council and noted with appreciation the adoption of resolution 611 (1988) of 25 April 1988. The Seminar expressed its condolences to the PLO and the family of al-Wazir. It was of the view that that outrageous act of State terrorism, which has been condemned by the international community, would not deter the Palestinian people from its path to secure and exercise its inalienable rights.

97. The Seminar expressed its serious concern over the attempts by the United States Administration to close the Permanent Observer Mission of the PLO to the United Nations in complete disregard of its legal obligations under the Headquarters Agreement. The position of the General Assembly in its resolution on that issue was unequivocally supported. The hope was expressed that that dispute between the United States and the United Nations could be resolved in accordance with the provision of the Headquarters Agreement and on the basis of the principles of international law. The Seminar took note of the Advisory Opinion unanimously adopted by the International Court of Justice which affirmed that the United States was obliged to enter into the settlement procedure under article 21 of the Headquarters Agreement. The Seminar expressed the hope that the United States would act accordingly.

98. The Seminar recalled with appreciation the support that Governments and peoples of Europe have extended at the United Nations and in other forums to the Palestinian cause and for the achievement of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East. It agreed that efforts should be continued and intensified to mobilize official and public opinion in Europe, and in particular in Western Europe, as well as in other regions of the world, especially through the use of the media and activities of NGOs. The United Nations should undertake additional efforts to disseminate factual and up-to-date information on the question of Palestine, the plight of Palestinians under occupation or in exile, and the measures required to be taken for the achievement of a just solution to the question of Palestine on the basis of the attainment by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the Division for Palestinian Rights have an important role in the dissemination of such information. Moreover, the United Nations Department of Public Information should make every effort to ensure that accurate information on the question of Palestine received the widest possible dissemination and should ensure adequate representation of European journalists in its annual fact-finding missions to the Middle East.

99. The Seminar was apprised of the activities of the European Co-ordinating Committee for Non-Governmental Organizations on the Question of Palestine and expressed its appreciation for the manifold activities undertaken by that Committee. Regarding the co-operation of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People with the European Co-ordinating Committee and European NGOs in general, the following suggestions were made:

(a) To encourage the United Nations to strengthen its co-operation with the NGO community in all ways possible. In that respect, the decision that the United Nations is planning to organize regional European NGO symposia annually was noted with appreciation;

(b) To encourage visits by representatives of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People to national events organized by various NGOs;

(c) To foster efforts to produce and update existing factual information material on the question of Palestine about the various aspects of the life of the Palestinian people, its organizations, national identity, culture, etc.;

(d) To promote to the extent possible the translation of those publications in languages other than the official languages of the United Nations;

(e) To facilitate a closer dialogue between NGOs and Governments for exchange of information and views.

100. It is important that governmental media and international news agencies should play a more objective role in providing balanced reporting on the Middle East and, in particular, on the plight of the Palestinian people. The Seminar emphasized that intergovernmental organizations, institutions such as universities, colleges, research institutes, peace movements, churches and other religious establishments, as well as national and international NGOs, have a crucial role to play in the formation of public opinion, especially in Western Europe, the United States and Israel. Those institutions should be encouraged to give wider coverage and objective treatment to the question of Palestine.

Annex I

MESSAGE FROM THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE SEMINAR
TO THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL OF STATE
OF THE GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

The participants in the Nineteenth United Nations Regional Seminar on the Question of Palestine, being held from 25 to 29 April 1988 in Berlin, wish to express their sincere gratitude and appreciation for Your Excellency's message of warm support for the Palestinian cause and our Seminar. We are profoundly grateful to the people and Government of the German Democratic Republic for providing a venue for the Seminar, for the excellent arrangements made and for the gracious hospitality extended to all of us. The participants wish to convey their appreciation for the consistent support of the people and Government of the German Democratic Republic, an active member of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian people, for the just cause of the Palestinian people, under the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization, its sole legitimate representative. The participants are convinced that the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, in accordance with the pertinent United Nations resolutions, will bring about a just, durable and comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, the core of which is the question of Palestine. The participants of the Seminar highly value the consistent support expressed by the German Democratic Republic in this regard.

Annex II

MESSAGE FROM THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE SEMINAR TO
THE CHAIRMAN OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE
PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION

We, the participants in the Nineteenth United Nations Regional Seminar on the Question of Palestine, being held from 25 to 29 April 1988 in Berlin, wish to express our sincere appreciation for your important and warm message of support conveyed to the Seminar. At this crucial moment in the struggle against Israeli domination and occupation, we would like to reaffirm our solid support for the exercise by the Palestinian people, under the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization, its legitimate representative, of its inalienable national rights in Palestine to return, to self-determination and statehood. We sincerely hope that the results of this Seminar will contribute to the promotion of a just, lasting and comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict of which the question of Palestine is the core. The Palestinian uprising in the occupied territories increasingly demonstrates the urgent need to convene the International Peace Conference on the Middle East in conformity with pertinent United Nations resolutions.

Please accept our heartfelt condolences for the assassination of Mr. Khalil al-Wazir, Deputy Commander-in-Chief of the Palestinian armed forces. We extend our condolences also to the al-Wazir family.

Annex III

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS AND OBSERVERS

Delegation of the Committee on the Exercise of the
Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

Mr. Alexander BORG-OLIVIER	Permanent Representative of Malta to the United Nations, Rapporteur of the Committee
Mr. Tom Obaleh KARGBO	Permanent Representative of Sierra Leone to the United Nations
Mr. Alberto VELAZCO-SAN JOSE	Deputy Permanent Representative of Cuba to the United Nations
Mr. Dirk HIELSCHER	Third Secretary, Permanent Mission of the German Democratic Republic to the United Nations
Mr. Zehdi L. TERZI	Permanent Observer of the Palestine Liberation Organization to the United Nations

Panelists

Mr. Shafiq AL-HOUT (Palestinian)
Mr. Dragan JOVANIC (Yugoslavia)
Mr. Igor M. KHVOROSTIANY (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic)
Mr. Vladimir I. KISSELYOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics)
Mr. Mikko LOHIKOSKI (Finland)
Mr. Ion MARGINEANU (Romania)
Mr. Roberto MESA (Spain)
Mr. Lothar PILZ (German Democratic Republic)
Mr. Yusif SAYEGH (Palestinian)
Mr. Ingo SCHOENFELDER (German Democratic Republic)
Mr. Mümtaz SOYSAL (Turkey)
Mr. Jorgen STROMBERG (Sweden)
Mr. Paolo UNGARI (Italy)
Mr. Nicolas VOULELIS (Greece)

Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations

Mr. Joseph Verner REED	Under-Secretary-General for Political and General Assembly Affairs and Secretariat Services
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Member States

Afghanistan	Mr. Mohammad Akbar Yusufi Embassy to the GDR
Algeria	H.E. Mr. Youcef Kraïba Ambassador to the GDR Mr. Mokrane Djouadi First Secretary Embassy to GDR
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Bulgaria	Mr. Ilia Krastelnikov Foreign Ministry
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First Secretary
Foreign Ministry

Mr. Peter Vogel
Third Secretary
Foreign Ministry

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Mr. Zsigmond Paksi
First Secretary
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Indonesia

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Mr. Syamrudin Sidabutar
Third Secretary
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Iran (Islamic Republic of)

Mr. Mohammad Reza Valizadeh Ghavah Aghaji
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Iraq

H.E. Mr. Riyadh Al-Azzawi
Ambassador to the GDR

Mr. Abdul Wahab Aljawary
Counsellor
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Libyan Arab Jamahiriya

Mr. Kilani Abdullah Daw
Embassy to the GDR

Mr. Souleiman Mohamed Kamkoun
Embassy to the GDR

Mali

Mr. Theofile Sangari
Foreign Ministry

Mexico

H.E. Mr. Raul F. Valdes Aguilar
Ambassador to the GDR

Mr. Sergio Gomar Rocha
Counsellor
Embassy to the GDR

Morocco

Mr. Driss Chabi
Counsellor
Embassy to the GDR

Mr. Driss Rochdi
Secretary
Embassy to the GDR

Nigeria

H.E. Mr. E. Martins
Ambassador to the GDR

Mr. O. Fasehun
Counsellor
Permanent Mission to the United Nations
New York

Philippines

H.E. Mr. Rafael A. Gonzales
Ambassador to the GDR

Mr. Antonio C. Modena
Vice Counsellor
Embassy to the GDR

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Mr. Stanislaw Kozlowski
First Secretary
Embassy to the GDR

Somalia

H.E. Mr. Bazi Mohamed Sufi
Ambassador to the GDR

Spain

Mrs. Almudena Mazarrasa
Counsellor
Middle East Department
Foreign Ministry

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H.E. Mr. Omar M. B. Shouna
Ambassador to the GDR

Mr. Khalid Amir Elawi
Third Secretary
Embassy to the GDR

Syrian Arab Republic

Mr. Houssain Karahamo

Thailand

Mr. Thawatjai Thavisri

Tunisia

Mr. Mouldi Larabi
Secretary
Embassy to the GDR

Turkey	H.E. Mr. Hikmet Ozkan Ambassador to the GDR
Ukrainian SSR	Mr. Nikolay Kirichenko Foreign Ministry
USSR	Mr. S. A. Azymov Foreign Minister Uzbekh SSR
	Mr. A. S. Novoshilov First Secretary Foreign Ministry
	Mr. Nikolai W. Mitin Third Secretary Embassy to the GDR
Yemen	Mr. Saleh Al-Surahi Counsellor Embassy to the GDR
Zaire	H.E. Mr. Ikolo Bolelama Ambassador to the GDR
	Mr. N'Gambani Zi Mizele First Counsellor Embassy to the GDR

Non-member States represented by observers

Democratic People's Republic of Korea	Mr. Han Tae Hun Counsellor Embassy to the GDR
	Mr. Kim Ik Son Counsellor Embassy to the GDR
Holy See	Mnsgr. Diego Causero Permanent Observer Mission to the United Nations in Geneva

United Nations organs

United Nations Council for Namibia

Mrs. Shi Yanhua (China)

Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the
Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of
Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples

Mr. Emmanuel Douma (Congo)

Special Committee against Apartheid

Mr. Dirk Hielscher (German Democratic Republic)

United Nations specialized agencies, bodies and programmes

International Labour Organisation

Mr. Hans Gruber

United Nations Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Mr. A. Pavlovic

United Nations Industrial Development Organization

Mr. T. Al-Khoudayri

Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

Mr. Antoine Mansour

Intergovernmental organizations

Organization of the
Islamic Conference

Mr. Syed Sharifuddin Pirzada
Secretary-General

Mr. Nabil Taleb Maarouf

National liberation movements

Palestine Liberation Organization	H.E. Mr. Isam Kamel Salem Ambassador to the GDR
	Mr. Abdel Jabbar Hammad Counsellor Embassy to the GDR
	Mr. Abdel Menem Al-Amouri Military Attaché Embassy to the GDR
	Mr. Ahmed Meghari First Secretary Embassy to the GDR
	Mr. Abdullah Hijazi Second Secretary Embassy to the GDR
	Mr. Abdelhadi M. Abo Shark Third Secretary Embassy to the GDR
	Mr. Mohamed Shella
	Mr. Salah Himoud

Non-governmental organizations

GDR Friendship Committee with the PLO	Mr. Werner Kirchhoff
GDR League for Friendship with Peoples	Mr. Egon Winkelmann Mr. Dieter Wagner
GDR League for the United Nations	Mr. Gerhard Hahn Mrs. Felicitas Richter Mr. Kurt Olivier
Peace Council of the German Democratic Republic	Mr. Gunter Drehfahl Mr. Gerhard Lindner Ms. Christine Vieynk
Solidarity Committee of the German Democratic Republic	Mr. Achim Reichardt Mr. Willi Sommerfeld

Press

Mr. Siegfried Janke	Television
Mr. Jurgen Januszewski	Television
Mr. Karl Neugebauer	Television
Mr. Eberhard Schroter	Television
Ms. Margarete Adamczewski	Neues Deutschland/ADN
Mr. Hazem Ahmad	Neues Deutschland/ADN
Mr. Reiner Althaus	Neues Deutschland/ADN
Mr. Frank Fischer	Neues Deutschland/ADN
Mr. Thomas Morgenstern	Neues Deutschland/ADN
Mr. Leon Schmidtke	Neues Deutschland/ADN
Mr. Peter Wendt	Neues Deutschland/ADN
Ms. Gisela Kuplent	ADN/Zentralbild
Mr. Hans Peter Lochmann	ADN/Zentralbild
Mr. Frank Ludwig	ADN/Zentralbild
Mr. Hartmut Reiche	ADN/Zentralbild
Mr. Bernd Settnik	ADN/Zentralbild
Mr. Wolfgang Skillandat	ADN/Zentralbild
Ms. Karin Weber	ADN/Zentralbild
Ms. Elke Iris Zeise	ADN/Zentralbild
Mr. Peter Jacobs	NBI
Ms. Martina Doering	Junge Welt

Foreign Press

Mr. Sunil Dasgupta	Sangbad (Bangladesh)
Ms. Mercedes Ramos	Prensa Latina (Cuba)
Mr. Falah Razzoq	Al-Ofuk Weekly Magazine (Cyprus)
Mr. Charlos Eftathiou	Haravghi (Cyprus)
Mr. Werber Kern	AG Korrespondenten (Federal Republic of Germany)
Mr. W. Hauptmann	ARD/HF (Federal Republic of Germany)
Mr. S. Al-Sachi	Al Manar/Kul Al Arab (Iraq)
Mr. Ghassan Bou-Hamad	As-Safir (Lebanon)
Mr. Asadullah	Morning News (Pakistan)
Mr. Askari Amin	SANA (Syrian Arab Republic)
Mr. Wolfgang Kumm	Reuters (United Kingdom)
Mr. Martin Nesirky	Reuters (United Kingdom)
Mr. Nguyen Xuan	VNA (Viet Nam)
Mr. Amin Mouayed	WAFA
Mr. Said Doudin	WAFA
