



**DIVISION FOR
PALESTINIAN RIGHTS**

**UNITED NATIONS NORTH AMERICAN
REGIONAL NGO SYMPOSIUM
ON THE QUESTION OF PALESTINE
United Nations Headquarters, New York
21-23 June 1989**

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INTRODUCTION

1. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 43/175 B of 15 December 1988, the Sixth United Nations North American Regional NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine was convened, under the auspices of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, at United Nations Headquarters in New York, from 21 to 23 June 1989. The theme of the Symposium was "The inalienable rights of the Palestinian people".

2. One hundred and six non-governmental organizations (NGOs) from Canada and the United States of America, 35 of these as observers, participated in the work of the Symposium. Ten expert panelists and 28 workshop facilitators and resource persons attended the Symposium and its eight workshops.

3. The Symposium was opened by H.E. Mrs. Absa Claude Diallo of Senegal, who addressed the Meeting on behalf of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. In her statement, Mrs. Diallo, Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, said the North American Co-ordinating Committee for Non-Governmental Organizations on the Question of Palestine (NAOC) was an important partner of the United Nations in the search for a solution of the Palestine question. She said the past year had presented a number of events which had created a favourable climate in North America in support of the struggle of the Palestinian people. The intifadah, in its nineteenth month, was continuing despite violent repressive policies including the use of live ammunition, cruel beatings, arbitrary arrests and deportation. The Palestinian people was struggling with courage and determination to preserve its identity and culture and to exercise its inalienable rights in a free and independent territory.

4. The historic declaration of the State of Palestine, recognized by over 90 countries, and the peace initiatives of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) had given a new meaning to the struggle of the Palestinian people. These events were followed by the opening of a dialogue between the PLO and the Government of the United States as well as a growing support for the early convening of an international peace conference on the Middle East. There could be no peace in the region as long as the Palestinians were denied their rights.

5. The situation in the occupied territory was deteriorating at an alarming rate, Mrs. Diallo proceeded. The "iron-fist" policy of Israel continued to be carried out against the elderly, women and children, resulting in hundreds of deaths, thousands of injured and incalculable suffering. It was important that an end be put to the intolerable acts of the occupying Power. Measures should be found that help implement resolutions on giving the Palestinian people its inalienable rights. The Palestine question could be resolved only through a political settlement taking into account all aspects of the problem and the concerns of all the parties.

6. Mr. Zuhdi Labib Terzi, Permanent Observer of Palestine, read out a message from H.E. Mr. Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the PLO. The message is reproduced in annex IV. He added that the planned workshop on

on mobilizing concern and support for Palestinian children was particularly welcome, and expressed the hope that "effective, implementable programmes" would be worked out during the Symposium.

7. H.E. Dr. Clovis Maksoud, Permanent Observer of the League of Arab States, said that the work of NGOs had contributed enormously to raising the consciousness of world public opinion about the struggle of the Palestinian people. One of the major tasks of NGOs in the United States was to expose the discrepancy between United States policy and public opinion on the Middle East. There had been a slight improvement in United States policy but that was not enough. The challenge for NGOs was to work to influence United States policy in support of the Palestinian people.

8. Ambassador Maksoud also said that it was not sufficient for the United States to criticize certain actions of Israel while at the same time condoning its occupation of southern Lebanon, and the killing of Palestinian people in the occupied territory. The Palestine National Council had committed itself to a two-State solution of the Palestine problem, but that commitment would not be final until Israel agreed to it. He called on the United States to mediate a solution based on the two-State principle. The intifadah had put in focus for the Israeli people the outrage committed by their Government in the occupied territory. Elections in the occupied territory proposed by the Israeli Government could only be welcomed if they were aimed at articulating the will and aspirations of the Palestinian people and included the convening of the proposed International Peace Conference on the Middle East under the auspices of the United Nations.

9. Ms. Jeanne Butterfield, Chairman of NAOC, said that at the North American NGO meeting held in June 1988 those gathered had reaffirmed their support for the goals of the intifadah which had then been in its seventh month. During the past year, there had been increased communication and co-ordination within the international NGO community and the establishment of the "action alert telephone network" in North America, a bi-weekly conference call of NGOs aimed at enhancing the ability to respond to emergency situations, such as the closure of Inash Al Usra. An initiative directed at the United States Congress urged the convening of open public hearings on the human rights situation in the West Bank and Gaza. A second initiative was aimed at gathering a quarter of a million signatures to present to Congress and the White House calling for recognition of the PLO and the State of Palestine.

10. NGOs in North America had been extremely active, but the situation in the West Bank and Gaza was also extremely serious and called for ever greater efforts. The challenge was to develop strategies for action that would bring peace "not just one step closer, but several miles closer". The "Government-in-exile" of the people of Palestine had launched a major peace initiative, while Israel continued to pursue a policy of force. Also, while Canada had begun to talk with the PLO, the United States continued to pour more than three and a half billion dollars a year into Israel. It was important to make the Symposium an opportunity to develop joint plans for action. Differences should be put aside. The shared rage at injustice being done and a sense of compassion for those who are suffering should encourage efforts that help bring about a just and lasting peace for the people of Palestine and the people of Israel.

11. Two panels and eight workshops were established. Panel I was entitled "The intifadah: creating a new context for peace". The following panelists made a contribution:

Ms. Zahira Kamal, Chairman, Palestine Federation of Women's Action Committees;

Mr. Meir Amor, graduate student, Tel Aviv University;

Rev. Elias Chacour, Melkite priest, Galilee, Israel.

Panel II was entitled "Convening the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, in accordance with United Nations General Assembly resolution 43/176: implications for Israel and the United States of the proclamation of the State of Palestine, the Palestinian peace initiative, and the intifadah". The following panelists made a contribution:

Mr. Mahdi Abdul-Hadi, founder of the Arab Thought Forum, President, Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs, Jerusalem;

Mr. Mattityahu Peled, Professor of Arabic literature, Tel Aviv University;

Ms. Margaret McCormack, a political consultant from the United States.

12. Eight workshops, grouped under two sub-themes, addressed the following topics:

Mobilizing public awareness in North America:

- (a) Mobilizing concern and support for Palestinian children;
- (b) Mobilizing concern and support for Palestinian medical and health services;
- (c) Mobilizing concern and support for the victims of punitive violations of the Fourth Geneva Convention;
- d) Mobilizing concern and support for Palestinian workers and their conditions of labour.

Development of action-oriented strategies for better co-ordination and organization in North America:

- (a) People-to-people campaigns;
- (b) Electoral initiatives and mobilizing public opinion;
- c) Humanitarian and material aid projects;

13. The Symposium unanimously adopted a declaration and plan of action, the text of which is reproduced in annex I. Also, two resolutions were adopted by majority vote, the text of which can be found in annex II.

I. PANEL DISCUSSION

"The intifadah: creating a new context for peace"

14. Zahira Kamal, Chairman, Palestine Federation of Women's Action Committees, said the intifadah was the natural outcome of the Israeli occupation, which had disrupted the Palestinian economy, identity, and physical and demographic make-up. The united popular leadership of the uprising guided Palestinian opposition to the occupation and established committees to take care of the needs of the people in such fields as agriculture, health and teaching, thus replacing the occupying authorities.

15. The occupying authorities had imposed restrictive measures regarding schools and teachers; those measures should be rescinded. Restrictive food measures had caused the Palestinian economy to suffer, and it was in danger of being annexed permanently to the Israeli economy. She called upon the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) to render support in that area. She also cited the role of the health committees - which were particularly important in view of the increasing numbers of victims of the occupying forces - and called upon the World Health Organization (WHO) to render support in that area.

16. She rejected the Israeli elections plan since it did not provide for the independence of the Palestinian people and called for pressure on Israel to accept an international peace conference on the Middle East.

17. Meir Amor, a graduate student at Tel Aviv University, said that Arab Jews were those who could bring peace because of their interest in changing the conditions of their lives. Oriental Jews and Palestinians shared the same position in Israeli society. The interests of the Israeli nation were different from those of Jewish communities in other parts of the world. Also, Palestinian society was undergoing a great social change, with women participating fully in the struggle for their rights. Young people had taken the lead, dictating local politics with world-wide implications. Moslems and Christians, rich and poor alike, were all involved in the struggle. No one could be deaf today to the message of the Palestinians, and the longer the occupation and suppression lasted, the louder the demand for liberation and independence.

18. He said that the culture of war needed to be countered with one of peace. The future of Israelis and Palestinians was intertwined and they should take the chance of creating a reality of peace. To achieve this, new actors were required; to date, Oriental Jews had not been heard from as promoters of peace, and it was important for Palestinians to learn the dynamics of Israeli Jewish society.

19. Elias Chacour, a Melkite priest from Galilee, said that Palestinians as a people had a link with Palestine and were discriminated against in Israel because they refused to be "reduced to denominational entities". They were deemed in Israel as "simply Arab" - the only group in the world to be so labelled. "The dream" of Greater Israel had ended, he said, but "both dreamers", Israel and the United States, failed to recognize that "might cannot forever be right". The only solution was two States for two peoples - an independent Israel and the Palestinian State, which, as allies, might transform the Middle East. He appealed to all people who were "hungry and thirsty for justice" to "dirty [their] hands" with work to make peace possible.

B. Panel II

"Convening the International Peace Conference on the Middle East in accordance with United Nations General Assembly resolution 43/176: implications for Israel and the United States of the proclamation of the State of Palestine, the Palestinian peace initiative, and the intifadah"

20. Mahdi Abdul-Hadi, President, Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs, said that the Palestinian people would accept elections proposed by the Israeli Government on the condition that Israeli troops withdraw from the occupied territory, that those supporting the PLO and Palestinian residents in Jerusalem were not excluded from the electoral process, and that Palestinian nominees and democratic principles were guaranteed.

21. He said the electoral proposal was a ploy by the Israeli Government to abort the ongoing intifadah and to create an alternative leadership to the PLO, which was the historic and sole representative of the Palestinian people. The Palestinian people would not vote under threat and denial of its democratic rights. The intifadah was changing the status quo and building a new society. It had gone through several phases since it began in December 1987, growing in strength and more popular support. Among the intifadah's many achievements were the building of self-reliance and forging Palestinian identity. The intifadah had entered a second chapter which could see the escalation of the Palestinian resistance and acts of self-defence to meet the increasingly violent Israeli "iron-fist" policy, and could also witness a civil war between Israeli settlers and Government troops.

22. Mattityahu Peled, Professor of Arabic literature at Tel Aviv University, said that the intifadah was a legitimate form of non-violent resistance to 22 years of Israeli occupation and enjoyed world-wide support and sympathy. Even within Israel, public opinion showed an increasing abhorrence towards measures taken to deal with the situation. Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir's

initiative, generally known by the misleading name of the "proposal to hold elections", sounded new, but precluded any chance for a just solution and peace. It had no "addressee", and its avowed purpose was "achieving peace with Jordan". It called for Palestinian elections without making any provision for political platforms or candidates. It rejected negotiations with the PLO or any "change in the status of Judea, Samaria and Gaza" and opposed the establishment of "an additional Palestinian State". Also, the proposal called for elections, but required that candidates be approved by Israel, thus precluding the endorsement by candidates of a Palestinian State or recognition of the PLO.

23. The Israeli proposal, he said, was a "non-starter". "Blowing into the air colourful bubbles such as elections, self-government, peace negotiations" with the goal of prolonging the occupation and avoiding a just solution would fool no one. A just solution would be reached only through an international peace conference on the Middle East as called for by the General Assembly.

24. Margaret McCormack, a political consultant from the United States, said that the recent policy statement by the United States Secretary of State, James Baker, on the Palestinian question did not represent a change in the United States policy towards the occupied territory. It was a public relations "game" and NGOs had to work hard to change that policy. Palestinians now existed in the consciousness of Americans, and the PLO had achieved some legitimacy. There was need for grass-roots networking to maintain the new positive image and affect decision-making in Washington to further the Palestinian cause.

II. CLOSING STATEMENTS

25. Before the closing statement on behalf of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was delivered, the Declaration and Plan of Action of the Symposium as well as resolutions were adopted and the following speakers addressed the Symposium.

26. Mr. Donald Betz, Chairman of the International Co-ordinating Committee for Non-Governmental Organizations on the Question of Palestine (IOCP), said that the international movement of NGOs was expanding rapidly, and he called on North American NGOs to attend international meetings on the question of Palestine.

27. Mr. Jean-Marie Lambert, Executive Director of IOCP, said that IOCP was a co-ordinating committee established to help NGOs "to do their job in their countries". To that end, IOCP provided documentation and information to assist NGOs in lobbying Government and the media. A new campaign of IOCP aimed at obtaining an advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on whether the Fourth Geneva Convention was applicable to the Palestinian situation, and whether Israel was, for example, liable to pay compensation. Also, it was assisting in preparations for meetings and travel in the occupied territory for lawyers, physicians and fund-raising organizations. He noted that a network of 145 NGOs in Latin America would be meeting soon.

28. Mr. Mikko Lohikoski, Chairman of the European Co-ordinating Committee for Non-Governmental Organizations on the Question of Palestine (ECCP), said that some Western European Governments and the United States Administration were the stumbling blocks to a settlement of the Middle East problem and that NGOs had to work to influence the policies of these Governments. He informed the Meeting that a seminar on the role of foreign assistance in Palestinian development was to be held in Vienna on 27 August 1989 organized by ECCP, ICCP and the Society for Austro-Arab Relations. He also announced that an international peace march to Palestine had been planned by ECCP and European peace groups from 29 November - the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People - to 9 December 1989, the second anniversary of the intifadah. The march, with the theme "Two States, Two Peoples", would start from Tel Aviv and end in Jerusalem. He said broad participation was expected.

29. Ms. Jeanne Butterfield, Chairman of NAOC, commended to the Committee the Declaration and resolutions adopted by the NGO participants. She said the participants had, among other actions, condemned the election proposals of the Israeli Government, called for the reopening of educational institutions and for the convening of an extraordinary meeting of the General Assembly to sanction an immediate deployment of an international peace-keeping force to replace Israeli forces in the occupied territory. They had also called international attention to the plight of Palestinian children. She said the message received from PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat would encourage them in their work towards influencing the policies of their Governments to further the cause of the Palestinian people. She pledged their determination to work until the Palestinian question was resolved.

30. Rev. Ibrahim Ayad, President of the Palestine Committee for Non-Governmental Organizations, said the "iron-fist" policy of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir was creating three to four Palestinian martyrs and 30 to 40 injured Palestinians a day. The Symposium aimed at reconciling the two peoples of the Holy Land, who were tired of war and its consequences, and longed for the peace which could eradicate all enmity, a peace that was true, spiritual and loving. Each should live with equal dignity in their own independent State. Unfortunately, life and love were "strongly crushed" in the occupied territory, where death and destruction reigned. Israel was using means prohibited by law, including gas bombs which killed young children and old people and caused miscarriages. There were now over 30,000 detainees, including teenagers, and that number was increasing daily. Universities, colleges and schools had been closed for almost two full academic years and teachers who tried to give lessons in their homes had been arrested and imprisoned. Countless children were being psychologically traumatized by this intolerable situation.

31. Rev. Ayad said that Israeli Prime Minister Shamir had declared that there would never be a Palestinian State. Also, the deportation of Palestinians had continued. The United States Administration encouraged Israel to continue those practices through such actions as their recent veto of a Security Council resolution which supported the Palestinian cause. If the roles were reversed, with Israel as the victim and Palestine as the victimizer, the whole world would be horrified, he said.

32. In the words of the prophet Isaiah, "Only justice will bring about peace". But, "intoxicated by American support and weapons", Israel continued to cling to its intransigent position. Even though the United States Secretary of State James Baker had called the establishment of new Israeli settlements "an obstacle to peace", the United States continued to finance those settlements. Noting that there was growing protest within Israel regarding government policies in the occupied territory, he said that a recent poll revealed that 56 per cent of Israel's people favoured talks with the PLO. He referred to the intifadah as "the road for peace", and called for the implementation of United Nations resolutions on the question of Palestine.

33. The Symposium agreed to have its Chairman forward a protest in writing to the Government of Israel against its failure to issue laissez-passers to several individuals from the occupied Palestinian territory who had been invited to take part in the Symposium.

34. The Symposium also noted the passing away of Mr. Omar Al-Qassem, referred to as "the Palestinian Nelson Mandela", who died recently after decades of imprisonment, and endorsed the dedication of the Symposium to his memory.

35. Participants also agreed to send a copy of the book entitled "The Cost of Freedom", which describes Israeli military policies and practices in the occupied Palestinian territory, to all elected national representatives in the United States Congress and the Canadian Parliament.

36. H.E. Mrs. Maria de los Angeles Florez Prida of Cuba said, on behalf of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, that the situation in the occupied territory had deteriorated alarmingly and required immediate action by the international community. The recognition of the State of Palestine by more than 90 Governments, the launching of a dialogue between the United States and the PLO and the many campaigns and actions in support of the Palestinian people were encouraging signs of the solution of the Palestinian question. Despite those developments, the task ahead was still difficult. But with the support of NGOs there was no doubt that the Palestinians would move ahead along the path they had chosen until peace and justice finally prevailed in the Middle East. She commended the work of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in improving conditions of the Palestinian population, particularly Palestinian children in the occupied Palestinian territory.

Annex I

DECLARATION AND PLAN OF ACTION ADOPTED BY THE NORTH AMERICAN
REGIONAL NGO SYMPOSIUM ON THE QUESTION OF PALESTINE

We, the non-governmental organizations (NGOs) participating in the Sixth United Nations North American Regional NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine, wish to thank the United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for making this Meeting possible. We are indeed honoured by the reception, and the presence of the members and observers of this distinguished United Nations body.

We wish also to thank the Chief of the Division for Palestinian Rights and are especially grateful for his enthusiastic support throughout our deliberations. We wish to thank also the Liaison Officers, the staff of the Division and the Department of Conference Services for their invaluable assistance in the preparation and execution of this Meeting.

We are encouraged that about 90 member states of the United Nations have recognized the State of Palestine, and encourage our own Governments to join this international consensus.

We note with satisfaction the record attendance and participation in this year's Symposium, and the commitment to Palestinian rights and a just and lasting solution to the Israeli/Palestinian conflict that such participation represents.

We wish also to voice our appreciation to the distinguished expert panelists, workshop organizers, resource persons and facilitators who offered their invaluable insights into the question of Palestine and the potential central role to be played by NGOs in North America. The practical suggestions and strategies developed in the workshops assisted us in formulating future collaborative efforts in North America and in linking our efforts to a broader global network.

We resolutely reaffirm the international consensus that the PLO is the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian People. We affirm the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people in conformity with all relevant United Nations resolutions, including the right to self-determination without external interference, the right to establish an independent Palestinian State on its own national territory under the leadership of the PLO, and the right of return. We resolutely reaffirm the international consensus as expressed through General Assembly resolution 43/177 acknowledging the proclamation of the State of Palestine by the Palestine National Council and the recognition throughout the United Nations system of "Palestine" in place of the designation "Palestine Liberation Organization".

We welcome the Palestinian peace initiative as a concrete contribution to the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the region. We call upon the Governments of the United States and Israel to accept this initiative by supporting the immediate convening of the international peace conference in accordance with General Assembly resolution 43/176. We also call upon the

Government of Canada to support unequivocally the International Peace Conference Conference and to use its influence within the Security Council to secure unanimous support for that conference. We condemn the Shamir "election" proposal as a mere pretext and transparent public relations ploy to cover Israel's illegal occupation and intensified repression of the intifadah.

We believe this Meeting contributed to the constructive interaction between the United Nations and the North American NGO community concerned to promote the implementation of General Assembly resolution 43/176 of 20 December 1988, calling for an international United Nations sponsored peace conference in the Middle East.

We reaffirm our unwavering commitment to support the Palestinian people and its struggle for self-determination. We call for the immediate withdrawal of Israeli forces from the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem and other occupied Arab territories.

We honor the victims of Israel's brutal and senseless repression of the popular Palestinian uprising, including the many hundreds fatally shot, beaten, gassed and otherwise brutally murdered. We also honor the scores of thousands wounded and imprisoned under inhuman conditions in violation of international law.

We undertake to intensify our efforts to alleviate the suffering of those who have been the targets of Israeli violence, especially the children, many thousands of whom have been maimed, permanently disabled and emotionally traumatized. We call upon United Nations agencies, especially UNICEF, UNRWA, WHO, the United Nations Centre for Human Rights (UNCHS) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), to intensify their efforts to address the educational, medical and general economic and social needs of the Palestinian people in co-operation with Palestinian grass-roots organizations. We call upon Member States of the United Nations to increase their contributions and support for such efforts.

We further commit ourselves to provide moral, political, and material support for the intifadah. We recognize that independent statehood for Palestine, as demanded by the Palestinian people, led by the PLO, is the expression of Palestinian self-determination as well as a basic necessity for the preservation of the entire Palestinian people.

We call upon the United Nations Security Council and the Secretary-General to seek to arrange an Extraordinary Session of the United Nations General Assembly to discuss the protection of the Palestinian people in the occupied territory. We further call upon this Extraordinary Session of the United Nations General Assembly to dispatch an interim international peace-keeping force to replace the Israeli occupying forces in order to provide protection and ensure respect for the human and political rights of the Palestinian population of the West Bank and Gaza. In case of an impossibility to obtain such a force, we call upon the United Nations General Assembly to request an Advisory Opinion to the International Court of Justice on the applicability of 1949 Geneva Convention and the obligation to pay compensation for violations of the Convention. In addition, we urge an expansion of UNRWA's Refugee Affairs Officer Program which provides some measures of protection by monitoring behavior towards the Palestinians by Israel, the occupying Power.

We recognize and express our concern for the role that racism, both de facto and de jure plays in the situation and treatment of Palestinians inside and outside the 1967 occupied territory. State actions directed against Palestinians by the Israeli Government, supported by continued United States aid to Israel in violation of United States law, as made clear in the United States State Department human rights report on Israel and the occupied territories, shows clearly that racism serves as a buttress for denial of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. This is of growing immediate concern as the number of house demolitions, land and water confiscations are increasing, both within Israel and within the occupied territory, under the pretext of suppression the intifadah.

We are particularly alarmed at the recently uncovered Israeli Ministry of Interior document directing the implementation of the 1986 (Markowitz) Government commission report which calls for the eradication of tens of so-called "unrecognized" Palestinian villages within the green line. We also support the urgent appeal from IOCP and will work with IOCP to protest the currently proposed amendment to the Israeli Prevention of Terrorism Ordinance which may become law by the end of June. By empowering the Government to seize arbitrarily the property of, and shut down, community service organizations, on the pretext that the sources of their funding may be "tainted", this amendment threatens the ability of the Palestinian community to defend itself, among other things, against the final phase of the Judaization process. The amendment will also seriously threaten the existence of Palestinian social and national institutions in East Jerusalem and can threaten the rights of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip as well.

We note with appreciation the increasing numbers of Israeli individuals and organizations who decry racism, support a political solution, and support the national and human rights of the Palestinian people. Actions such as resistance to military service in the occupied Palestinian territory, public demonstrations, peace caravans, visits to Palestinian towns and villages which have been attacked by soldiers and settlers, and the many other actions and initiatives of Israeli peace forces are essential elements in changing official Israeli policies and practices towards Palestine.

We are encouraged by resolution 43/178 adopted by the United Nations General Assembly for its actions taken to empower the Commission on Human Settlements to engage a committee of experts in consultation with the PLO for the purpose of a comprehensive development plan in the occupied Palestinian territory. We welcome the Commission's resolution condemning Israel's demolition of Palestinian homes and decrying Israel's alteration of the demographic character of the 1967 occupied territories.

We are also encouraged that the Commission on Human Rights has actively taken up the issues of Palestinian rights in the occupied territory and would welcome the Sub-Commission on the Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities to take up the issue of the inequality of Israeli citizenship that disadvantages the Palestinian Arab minority within Israel.

We acknowledge the Economic and Social Council's resolution 1988/54, requesting the international community, organizations of the United Nations system, intergovernmental organizations and NGOs to sustain and increase their assistance to the Palestinian people in close co-operation with the PLO.

The aim of this meeting is to develop practical organizing strategies and support projects for concerted action by North American NGOs. Our primary work was conducted in workshops and we receive their recommendations as appended below, and commend them to all NGOs for their careful consideration and implementation.

Workshop 1: Mobilizing concern and support for Palestinian children.

Recognizing that the children of occupation have been the particular targets and victims of the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and that their suffering and denial of rights is in violation of internationally recognized conventions and standards and noting that this suffering has included severe physical abuse such as beating, shootings, poisoning by gas and death; psychological and emotional abuse caused by the physical suffering and accompanying fears; the assault on children caused by the closure of their schools for nearly two years; and the damage to children caused by the occupation and destruction of their families and society, therefore:

The participants in the children's workshop of the Sixth United Nations North American Regional NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine call upon the Israeli Government to respect all relevant resolutions on human rights and children, including the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of the Child; to participate in a United Nations-sponsored international peace conference leading to an end to the occupation and the formation of a Palestinian State.

We urge national organizations to ensure that the children of North America be included in the struggle for the rights of Palestinian children. We also urge the Government of the United States to condition future United States aid to Israel on its conformity with international human rights declarations and laws.

We also urge NGOs of North America to work for the permanent re-opening of schools and universities in the occupied territory and to support the development of alternative and remedial education, to supplement and reform the government schools; and urge NGOs of the United States to organize support for resolution 124 of the United States House of Representatives sponsored by Representative Howard Nielsen (R-Utah).

We further urge North American NGOs to enlist the support of teachers' organizations in North America to help Palestinian educators develop alternative and remedial curricula and to mobilize support among North American teachers and students for Palestinian students and teachers whose rights have been violated.

The participants in the workshop on organizing support for Palestinian children urge NACC to form a subcommittee of NGOs to work with the appropriate United Nations agencies, particularly UNRWA, UNICEF, WHO and UNESCO as well as other suitable non-United Nations agencies and the Palestinians in the occupied territory to develop an immediate and long term psychological services programme.

The participants further exhort the NGOs of North America to strive to highlight and bring about a raised awareness in the North American public about the horrible conditions under which the Palestinian children live especially by:

(a) Organizing tours for Palestinian children from the occupied territory in North America;

(b) Promoting congressional and parliamentary inquiries or hearings into the conditions of these children;

(c) Sponsoring fact-finding delegations to the region;

(d) Developing a humanitarian aid campaign to emphasize the desperate conditions and to relieve the suffering of the children of occupation by supporting grass-roots emergency health and medical organizations as well as women's committees who are working with children. An example of such a fund-raising programme could be the United Holy Land Fund's "Stone the White House" project.

Workshop 2: Mobilizing concern and support for Palestinian medical and health services.

We, the participants in the workshop on Palestinian medical and health services urge NAOC to facilitate contacts with progressive grass-roots Palestinian and Israeli health organizations, including the development of bilateral communication, information on the need for transfer of resources and the enhancement of awareness of the relation of medical and health issues to the occupation and the struggle for independence.

We further urge NGOs to channel medical and health support through Palestinian institutions and organizations as one method of supporting the development of a Palestinian infrastructure leading to the future independent Palestinian State.

We encourage North American NGOs to lobby UNICEF, WHO, UNDP, and other United Nations bodies to increase support and co-operation with Palestinian health and medical organizations. We further urge the North American NGOs to lobby their own Governments to instruct their missions to the United Nations to support United Nations humanitarian aid for Palestine and to endorse the right of the State of Palestine to be represented on all United Nations bodies and agencies and especially WHO.

We also urge North American NGOs to demand congressional and parliamentary hearings on human rights violations in the occupied territory including with a particular focus on the medical and health rights and needs of the Palestinian people, with provision for expert testimony from Palestinian health care workers and medical personnel.

Workshop 3: Mobilizing concern and support for the victims of punitive violations of the Fourth Geneva Convention.

The participants in Workshop 3 recommend that NAOC develop campaigns to disseminate to NGOs information and action alerts for grass-roots activity concerning the violations of Palestinian human rights within the following initiatives:

(a) The adoption and sponsorship by individuals and NGOs of political prisoners, students and/or families (especially in cases of house demolitions expulsions/family reunification). We recommend beginning with the following cases:

- (i) Mohammed Ahmad Raja Nouweirat, 62 years old, 13 years in prison (currently the longest held prisoner) needs immediate operation; Israelis have scheduled operation for November 1990. Action: all NGOs to intervene in his behalf, call for formation of emergency international medical team to examine him and determine appropriate medical care;
- (ii) Fatma Abu Bakra, arrested 23 November 1986, still not charged, last brought to court in February 1988, sexually harassed and tortured in prison. Action: NGOs demand her immediate release and due process; appeal to legal community for investigation of her conditions, of sexual harassment and torture by interrogators;

(b) The endorsing and organizing around United Nations resolutions, specifically against house demolitions in the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and inside the green line;

(c) We further urge NGOs to frame the issues and analyse the problems and injustices related to Israeli taxation of Palestinians under occupation (taxation without representation), and provide more information to NGOs and other national opinion-makers on the subject;

(d) We encourage United States NGOs to lobby for the implementation of the accountability clause of the United States Foreign Assistance Act which requires curtailment of aid to countries which violate human rights; to participate in Congressional hearings convened by Congressman Lee Hamilton to send any relevant resolutions from the 1989 North American NGO Symposium to all United States Congressional representatives. We urge all North American NGOs to provide materials to NGOs to continue lobbying individual representatives of Congress and Parliament on these issues.

Workshop 4: Mobilizing concern and support for Palestinian workers and their conditions of labour.

The participants attending Workshop 4 recommend that:

(a) NACC establish a Palestinian Unemployment Fund which would provide material aid from North America to unemployed Palestinian workers in the occupied territories.

The participants in Workshop 4 further encourage North American NGOs:

(b) To strengthen their relationships with both Palestinian and North American union movements, working on the question of Palestinian trade unions

and workers and their conditions of work, intervening especially in behalf of trade union activists whose rights are violated, as well as consciously and consistently doing outreach to labour organizations in the United States in their communities;

(c) To educate the North American union movement about the racist policies of the Histadrut in denying proper representation, protection and benefits to Palestinian workers, including the Histadrut's endorsement of Israeli discriminatory policies and punitive measures against Palestinians;

(d) To urge North American unions to acknowledge and grant recognition to the Palestinian trade union movement and establish full solidarity and support for Palestinian unions; and to reassess institutional linkages between the Histadrut and North American labour organizations;

(e) To take part in the building of labour committees on the Middle East in North American cities in solidarity with the Palestinian trade union movement;

(f) To sponsor tours of Palestinian trade unionists to North American cities and send delegations of North American trade unionists to the occupied territory, in order to develop linkages between the trade union movements and to build solidarity in practical ways.

Workshop 5: People-to-people campaigns.

Participants in Workshop 5 recommend that:

(a) NACC form a Middle East Speakers Bureau to include two categories of speakers:

- (i) Those already in the United States;
- (ii) Those outside the United States.

To facilitate this, NACC should draft a questionnaire to be completed by NGO groups in regard to those speakers available both in their own organizations and elsewhere. Data should be included about speakers regarding their area of competence and expertise, their availability (times and location), required fees or honoraria, and biographical information. Organizations can then select appropriate speakers as needed;

(b) NACC appoint a subcommittee to develop a manual for delegations, to assist organizers to put together effective trips and to enhance delegation members' efforts upon their return by providing:

- i) Advice on recruitment and selection of individuals and target groups, and how to promote the tour;
- ii) Pre-departure preparation;
- iii) Suggested delegation itineraries;

- (iv) Follow-up upon their return with specific ideas for programmes and communication;
- (v) Pitfalls to be avoided.

The Workshop also recommends that NGOs work to set up:

(a) Tours of Israelis and Palestinians selected to mobilize and address the concerns of specific communities; for instance, an Israeli and a Palestinian would address mainstream Jewish audiences and the Palestinian and Arab communities, trade unionists to address trade unions, women organizers to address women's groups, and the like;

(b) Speakers should be prepared to address American audiences, for instance to speak from the heart and draw upon personal experience, to make links with local and international struggles, and to provide concrete things to do, for example, organizing public pressure for the recognition of Palestine and cutting aid to Israel.

The Workshop also recommends that NGOs encourage twinning projects to match United States groups and institutions with groups and institutions in the occupied territory with similar needs and goals. Possible twinning projects for appropriate NGOs include day care centres, teachers, churches, schools, professional groups such as lawyers, doctors, engineers, clergy.

Workshop 6: Electoral initiatives and mobilizing public opinion.

Workshop 6 urges that NGOs throughout North America endorse and carry out the "Peace for Palestine and Israel in 1989" petition campaign.

We call upon North American NGOs to launch and co-ordinate local ballot and other political initiatives in 1990 concurrently throughout North America, such as twinning cities, calling for a two-State solution, linking United States aid to Israel to Palestinian human and legal rights, and other actions as appropriate to the locale.

We further encourage NGOs to adopt and disseminate the Middle East Peace Campaign, calling for United States recognition of the Palestinian right to a State alongside Israel, materials available from the Middle East Peace Network in New York.

We urge the members of concerned NGOs to become actively involved in the work of political parties of their choice to promote appropriate foreign policy changes towards Israel and Palestine.

We call upon the North American NGO community to support the establishment of an NACC North American office to carry out this programme of action.

In order to facilitate the exchange of information among NGOs, this workshop reiterates the need to publish an NGO Resource Guide. We further urge that the NACC Newsletter include a regular section describing the activities of North American NGOs in influencing United States and Canadian Middle East policies.

Workshop 7: Humanitarian and material aid projects.

Those gathered in the Humanitarian and Material Aid Workshop support Palestinian grass-roots organizations and their continuing development of economic and social infrastructures which will become the basis of the future Palestinian State.

We urge co-ordination and co-operation among North American NGOs, relevant United Nations agencies such as UNWRA, UNESCO, UNDP and WHO, and indigenous and grass-roots organizations.

Therefore, we strongly recommend the development of and support for the following projects:

- (a) Organizing North American unions to establish a fund for unemployed Palestinian workers;
- (b) Medical aid programmes to provide specialists in neurology, hematology and others to provide emergency treatment and to train medical workers;
- (c) Financial support for women's production projects;
- (d) Campaign to send vegetable seeds to Palestinian farmers.

Deeply concerned about the closure of educational institutions in Palestine, we urge NGOs to organize in their communities by issuing news releases concerning the impact of school closures on Palestinian children, lobbying elected and appointed officials and supporting House of Representative resolution 124.

We urge North American NGOs to lobby their national elected officials to increase funding by the Governments for UNWRA and other relevant United Nations humanitarian aid organizations.

We urge North American NGOs to notify their constituencies to inform them about the Israeli Prevention of Terrorism Ordinance and the outlawing of the Palestinian popular committees by the Israeli military authorities and lobby national elected officials to stop such immoral Israeli practices.

Workshop 8: Congressional and Parliamentary strategies: human rights, foreign policy and foreign aid.

Participants in Workshop 8 recommend that:

- (a) NAOC continue its co-ordinating activities in North America by undertaking monthly conference calls among its members to provide information on the status of human rights in the West Bank and Gaza and the status of pertinent legislation pending in Washington and Ottawa. Further, NAOC should designate a sub-committee to be drawn from its members or other NGOs who may be based in

Washington, D.C. or Ottawa to serve as resource organizations regarding Congressional and Parliamentary matters.

(b) NGOs attending the North American Symposium on the Question of Palestine work to develop a long-term national campaign on the question of United States aid to Israel. This campaign should first focus on research and education that clarifies for the public the linkage between foreign aid and the lack of development aid; the linkage between foreign aid and the decrease in funding for social programmes in the United States; and the linkage between foreign aid and the escalating violations of Palestinian human rights in the West Bank and Gaza. Importantly, the 1989 United States State Department report on human rights relating to Israeli practices in the occupied territories provides an opening to call for Congress and the NGO community to provide consistent and effective oversight of United States aid to Israel. Subsequently, based on this research and the linkages, Congress should be lobbied to reduce United States aid to Israel by the amount equal to that used to continue the occupation as a challenge to the legitimacy of Israel's continued receipt of United States foreign aid.

Based on a compelling concern for human rights of the Palestinians, NGOs call for the immediate focus on the issue of reopening schools in the West Bank and Gaza. NGOs should work collectively to educate and influence the public, teachers organizations, and the Congress to support legislation such as the Nielsen bill. NGOs attending the North American Symposium on the Question of Palestine should assume leadership roles in working with Congress.

NGOs should work for open, public Congressional hearings on human rights violations in the West Bank and Gaza. NGOs should lobby for hearings that include representatives from the occupied territory. NGOs of North America should support efforts to broaden the United States-PLO dialogue and to avoid restrictions impeding the convening of the International Peace Conference.

NGOs note with concern the Helms Amendment to the 1990-91 State Department authorization bill that is ambiguous about the future location of the United States Embassy in Israel and emphasize their support for the United States law that prohibits relocating the United States Embassy from Tel Aviv in Israel to Jerusalem.

Annex II

RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY THE NORTH AMERICAN REGIONAL
NGO SYMPOSIUM ON THE QUESTION OF PALESTINE

Resolution 1 - Israeli violations of labour rights of Palestinians
under occupation

WHEREAS Israel has violated the rights of trade unions in the occupied territory through its policy of closing union headquarters and banning union meetings, raiding and closing union offices, interfering with union elections, arresting and detaining unionists without trial, harassing and deporting union activists, and refusing to recognize trade unions;

WHEREAS Palestinian workers from the West Bank and Gaza who are employed within Israel and in the settlements in the occupied territory are treated in a discriminatory way denying the fair and adequate union representation, in that deductions are taken from their pay-checks for benefits which they do not receive and, in addition, a one per cent deduction for Histadrut dues is taken from their wages even though they are not eligible to hold office or to vote in elections of the Histadrut or national trade unions;

WHEREAS Jewish residents of the settlements in the occupied territory, whether or not they are Israeli citizens, are eligible for all the workers' benefits offered to citizens, while Palestinian workers from the occupied territory are denied some of these benefits;

WHEREAS Palestinian workers from the occupied territory are banned from staying overnight inside the pre-1967 boundaries, and are forced thereby to commute long distances daily, and those who do stay overnight, either with special permits or illegally, are forced to stay in unsanitary and unsafe conditions;

TAKING SPECIAL NOTE of the policy recently introduced by Defence Minister Rabin banning any Palestinian from the West Bank or Gaza from entering Israel unless he or she obtains a special identity card which is refused to any person with a record of political activity against the occupation, thereby effectively denying the right to work in Israel to a majority of the population in the West Bank and Gaza;

TAKING NOTE ALSO of the building of a fenced compound by the Tel Aviv suburb of Petah Tikva in which Palestinian workers will be confined while seeking employment, and noting the dehumanizing effects of such measures;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Sixth North American Regional NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine:

CONDEMNS these violations of trade unions and workers' rights and requests that NACC send a letter to Representative Lee Hamilton, Chairman of

the Europe and the Middle East Sub-Committee of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, urging that the investigation of these violations be included in the next hearings to be held on the question of Palestine, and further.

The Symposium requests that NACC send letters expressing concern about these violations to the House Human Rights Sub-Committee, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Secretary of State James Baker, the International Labour Organisation conference meeting in June 1989 in Geneva, the Department of International Affairs of the AFL-CIO, the Secretary of State for External Affairs of the Government of Canada, the Right Honourable Joe Clark, the Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee for Human Rights of the Canadian Parliament, the Presidents of the Canadian Labour Congress, the Confédération Syndicaliste Nationale and the Confederation of Canadian Unions.

Submitted by:

AMERICAN-ARAB ANTI-DISCRIMINATION COMMITTEE
PALESTINE HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN

Resolution 2 - United States aid to Israel

WHEREAS the Palestinian people in November 1988 declared statehood for the State of Palestine;

WHEREAS the Palestinian people have a right to self-determination which includes a right to statehood;

WHEREAS Israel uses United States aid to deny to the Palestinian people its right of self-determination and statehood;

WHEREAS the United Nations General Assembly, in recognition of Israel's denial to the Palestinian people of its right to self-determination, has called on all countries to suspend military and economic aid to Israel;

WHEREAS United States Public Law 94-329 prohibits providing foreign aid to any country where "a consistent pattern of gross violations of international human rights" occurs and Israel's treatment of the Palestinian people constitutes such violation, as documented by the United States Department of State human rights report issued in February 1989;

WHEREAS Israel violates international law under the 1949 Geneva Convention in its treatment of civilians in the occupied territory, including its confiscation of land, deprivation of water rights, collective punishment, punitive demolition of homes, torture of detainees, deportations and refusal to permit reunion of families;

WHEREAS Israel allocates at least \$150 million annually for settlement expansion in the occupied territory in violation of the 1949 Geneva Convention;

WHEREAS Israel violates international law in its unlawful transfer of at least 5,000 Palestinians to Ansar III, a detention centre in the Negev desert where Palestinians are held in detention without charges for months, with limited access to lawyers and confined in overcrowded and inhuman conditions;

WHEREAS the Government of Israel adopted in 1987 an official policy of using physical force to extract confessions from Palestinians suspected of security violations;

WHEREAS Israel, as the world's sixth largest nuclear Power, violates international law in its refusal to disclose or allow monitoring of its stockpile of nuclear weapons at Dimona or to sign a non-proliferation treaty, exacerbating the potential for nuclear war, and Israel's disregard for international law is evidenced by the kidnapping and secret trial of Mordechai Vanunu who exposed to the world the extent of Israel's nuclear arsenal;

WHEREAS Israel subverts global democratic forces through its past and present military and financial aid to the Nicaraguan Contras and such aid to such anti-democratic States as South Africa, Chile, Haiti and Guatemala;

WHEREAS the United States Government devotes more than one-fifth of its total foreign aid budget to the State of Israel (roughly \$4 billion annually), averaging \$700 per each Israeli citizen, while the per capita to impoverished Black Africa has never been more than \$1 per person;

WHEREAS unlike other countries receiving United States aid, Israel receives outright grants (since 1985) and, unlike other countries, Israel is not accountable for its allocation of funds received from the United States, and this United States aid is the critical factor that enables Israel to maintain its occupation of the West Bank and Gaza and violation of Palestinian human rights;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Sixth United Nations North American Regional NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine:

1. Calls on the United States Government to reduce its aid to Israel by an amount equal to the sum expended by Israel in maintaining its belligerent occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, including East Jerusalem;
2. Calls on the United States Government to reduce its aid to Israel by an amount equal to the sum expended by Israel for settlement maintenance and expansion in the occupied territory;
3. Calls on the United States Government to reduce its aid to Israel by an amount equal to the sum expended by Israel to violate the human rights of the Palestinians, as documented by such reports as the United States Department of State's human rights report on Israel issued in February 1989;
4. Calls on the United States Government to reduce its aid to Israel by an amount equal to the sum expended by Israel to maintain Ansar III;

5. Calls on the United States Government to reduce its aid to Israel by an amount equal to the sum expended by Israel to develop and stockpile an unmonitored nuclear arsenal;

6. Calls on the United States Government to reduce its aid to Israel by an amount equal to the sum expended by Israel in providing military and financial assistance to anti-democratic States, specifically, South Africa, Chile, Haiti and Guatemala;

7. Calls on the United States Government to treat aid to Israel in the same way it treats other countries receiving United States aid, i.e., that Israel be given loans instead of grants and that Israel account for its use of funds by being subject to monitoring;

8. Urges the dissemination of this resolution to all other human rights organizations and NGOs involved and concerned with the question of Palestine.

Submitted by:

THE NATIONAL LAWYERS' GUILD
PALESTINE AID SOCIETY
PALESTINE SOLIDARITY COMMITTEE
INTERNATIONAL JEWISH PEACE UNION - New York Chapter
AMERICAN-ARAB ANTI-DISCRIMINATION COMMITTEE
COMMITTEE FOR DEMOCRATIC PALESTINE
AMERICAN JEWISH ALTERNATIVES TO ZIONISM
LABOR COMMITTEE ON MIDDLE EAST
INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF DEMOCRATIC LAWYERS
NAJDA - WOMEN CONCERNED ABOUT THE MIDDLE EAST
ARAB PALESTINIAN ASSOCIATION OF ONTARIO
ASSOCIATION OF PALESTINIANS FOR RETURN
GENERAL UNION OF PALESTINIAN STUDENTS - United States Chapter
PALESTINE HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN
COMMITTEE FOR ACADEMIC FREEDOM IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

Contact Person: Colleen McGuire, National Lawyers' Guild (Sponsor)

Annex III

1989-1990 NORTH AMERICAN CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE
FOR NGOS ON THE QUESTION OF PALESTINE

American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC)

1731 Connecticut Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20009
U.S.A.

c/o Adaab M. Abed
920 71st St.
Brooklyn, NY 11228
U.S.A.

General Board of Global Ministries - United Methodist Church

c/o Ethel Born
6995 Malinda Road
Salem, VA 24153
U.S.A.

c/o Mia Adjali
Church Center for the U.N.
777 U.N. Plaza
New York, NY 10017
U.S.A.

International Jewish Peace Union (IJPU)

c/o Mr. Jonathan Bojarin
141 East 3rd St. (3D)
New York, NY 10009
U.S.A.

c/o Deena Hurwitz
1002 N. Branciforte Avenue
Santa Cruz, CA 95062
U.S.A.

Jews for a Just Peace of Toronto, Canada

P.O. Box 647, Station 'P'
Toronto, Ontario
Canada M8V 1N8

NAJDA: Women Concerned About the Middle East

c/o Audrey Shabbas
2137 Rose St.
Berkeley, CA 94709
U.S.A.

c/o Tamara Kohns
P.O. Box 1362
Princeton, NJ 08540
U.S.A.

National Lawyers' Guild

c/o Barbara Dudley
853 Broadway, Room 1705
New York, NY 10003
U.S.A.

c/o John Quigley
Ohio State University
1659 North High St.
Columbus, OH 43210
U.S.A.

Near East Cultural and Educational Foundation of Canada (NECEF)

c/o Jim Graff
106 Duplex Avenue
Toronto, Ontario
Canada M5P 2A7

Palestine Aid Society (PAS)

c/o Ms. Mansour
432 W. 120th St., Apt. 33
New York, NY 10027
U.S.A.

c/o Saleh Fawaz
964 59th St.
Brooklyn, NY 11219
U.S.A.

Palestine Human Rights Campaign (PHRC)

c/o Don Wagner
220 South State St.
One Quincy Court, No. 1308
Chicago, IL 60604
U.S.A.

c/o Dr. Donald Betz
Northeastern University
Tahlequah, OK 74464
U.S.A.

Palestine Solidarity Committee (PSC)

c/o Rehab Hadi
609 W. 188th St., Apt. 3F
New York, NY 10040
U.S.A.

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A)

c/o Jo Bales Gallagher
341 Ponce de Leon Avenue, N.E.
Atlanta, GA 30365
U.S.A.

c/o Margaret Orr Thomas
475 Riverside Drive, Room 1151
New York, NY 10115
U.S.A.

Annex IV

MESSAGE TO THE SYMPOSIUM FROM H.E. MR. YASSER ARAFAT,
CHAIRMAN OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE
PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION

I am delighted, as you hold your annual symposium on the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, to address to you, to all our distinguished brothers and friends who are members of the Committee, and to those of our friends who are taking part in the Symposium, particularly the representatives of NGOs in North America, sincere greetings and respects on behalf of myself personally, of the Government and people of Palestine and of the PLO. I also convey to you our profound thanks for and great appreciation of the valuable efforts and activities which your esteemed Committee has undertaken, and is continuing to undertake, for the purpose of enabling our Palestinian people to recover and to exercise its inalienable national rights.

I also take advantage of this opportunity to express my deep gratitude for and extensive recognition of the continuous intensive efforts and endeavours undertaken by the United Nations, under the leadership of its Secretary-General, our brother and friend Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, to support and back the just struggle being conducted by our people under the direction of the PLO, its sole legitimate representative, with a view to securing its freedom and national independence. Allow me also to salute and to express my deep appreciation of the major constructive role played by NGOs in North America, particularly in explaining and clarifying the just nature of our people's struggle to American public opinion and its effective political forces, in order to help our people to achieve its full national independence on the soil of its homeland.

This year your annual symposium coincides with the beginning of the nineteenth month of our Palestinian people's uprising, which is more firm and resolute than ever. By means of this uprising, our struggling people affirms its determination and resolve to defend its territory and national and human dignity, by declaring that it holds fast to its identity and inalienable national rights in the blessed land of Palestine. Our people also affirms its united national will by maintaining its defiance and heroic bold resistance against the "iron-fist" policy, measures of repression and organized official terrorism and racist practices of detention and torture carried out against it by the Israeli occupation authorities in an endeavour to crush its vigorous popular uprising and erase and eliminate its identity and national rights.

Now, since the Israeli occupation authorities have proved unable to subdue our people's revolution and uprising inside our occupied Palestinian territory by means of military force, the authorities are trying to achieve that same end by means of suspect political proposals and plans, the latest being that put forward by Yitzhak Shamir, the Prime Minister of Israel, calling for the holding of elections for the Palestinian population of the occupied territory.

The intention of this and other plans is simply to circumvent the great achievements and victories won by our people's uprising under the leadership of the PLO, to subdue the uprising and suppress it altogether and then to deceive international public opinion by appearing to take an initiative towards securing peace in the region. However, our struggling people, both inside and outside our occupied territory, has announced its categorical rejection of this spurious plan, which is hostile to its objectives and to its noble national aspirations for freedom and independence. At the same time, our people has declared its strong adherence to and respect for the concept of elections as a democratic process, provided that such elections are held subsequent to the withdrawal of Israeli forces from the occupied Palestinian territory, and under international supervision, as part of a comprehensive peace process, so that our people may exercise self-determination in complete freedom and without any outside intervention.

Our struggling Palestinian people has frequently affirmed its sincere desire to bring about a just and lasting peace in our region in accordance with the momentous and historic resolutions adopted at the nineteenth extraordinary session of our Palestine National Council, held at Algiers in November 1988. It has further confirmed this desire by means of the Palestinian peace initiative announced in my address on the question of Palestine, delivered to the forty-third session of the United Nations General Assembly at Geneva in December 1988. This initiative is based on the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, under the auspices of the United Nations, with the participation of the five permanent members of the Security Council and all parties to the conflict, including the PLO, on an equal footing. There can be no doubt that the just peace which we desire cannot be brought about and made to prevail in the Middle East region - which is of such vital importance in the world - unless our people is permitted to recover and to exercise its inalienable national rights, including the right to return and the right to self-determination and the establishment of its own independent State with Jerusalem as its capital.

As you are aware, the Palestinian peace plan which I have mentioned is consistent with international law and with the international position concerning the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East. Furthermore, the PLO is the only party to have presented a complete peace plan, based on logical and reasonable premises and supported by international law and resolutions, including Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), and the right of our people to self-determination. We therefore register our profound astonishment that the United States should side with Israel in raising insurmountable obstacles to the efforts undertaken by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, and by the Security Council and the international community, to ensure the convening of the Conference and thus to bring about a comprehensive and just peaceful settlement in our region. In spite of the attitude of the United States, the PLO confirms that it welcomes the current dialogue with the United States Administration and urges the Administration to develop and enhance that dialogue in the interests of making progress towards the achievement of a just peace in the region.

The duty of maintaining international peace and security in the world means that the international community as a whole, the United Nations and all freedom-, justice- and peace-loving forces and organizations in the world, have a responsibility to exert effective and palpable pressure on the United

States Administration with a view to persuading it, firstly, to adopt an equitable and unbiased policy towards all parties in the region and, secondly, to allow its attitudes towards our people's cause and national rights to evolve by expanding its concept of our people's political rights to incorporate the right to self-determination.

The United States of America, as a major Power, bears particular responsibilities for the maintenance of international peace and security in the world. By constantly rejecting the International Peace Conference on the Middle East and placing various obstacles in the way of international efforts to ensure that the Conference is convened, it is helping to prolong the sufferings and agonies of our people under Israeli occupation and also to prolong the conflict in the region, thus threatening international peace and security in the world and the stability of the region.

As it continues its just struggle and glorious popular uprising at this momentous and critical stage of the combat process, our Palestinian people is fully confident that you, as friends of our people and its national cause, will increase your support and backing until such time as victory is achieved by ending the Israeli occupation of its territory, securing its national independence, and establishing its independent Palestinian State with Jerusalem as its capital.

In conclusion, I convey to all of you my best regards and hopes for the success of your Symposium.

Annex V

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS AND OBSERVERS

NGO participants

Arab American Institute (AAI)
Afro-Asian Peoples Solidarity Organization (AAPSO)
America-Israel Council for Israeli-Palestinian Peace
American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC)
American Arab Relations Committee
American Educational Trust (AET)
American Friends Service Committee
American Israeli Civil Liberties Coalition
American Jewish Alternatives to Zionism (AJAZ)
Arab Palestine Association of Ontario-Canada
Arab Women's Council
Association of Arab-American University Graduates Inc. (AAUG)
Association of Palestinians for Return
Canadian Arab Federation
Canadian Council of Churches
Capital District Committee for Palestinian Rights
Catholic Near East Welfare Association
Catholic Relief Services
Centre d'études arabes pour le développement (CEAD)
Center for Peace Learning
Christian Peace Conference/North American Christian Peace Conference
Church of Humanism
Church Women United - U.N. Office
Clergy and Laity Concerned
Committee for Academic Freedom in the Israeli Occupied Territories (CAFIOT)
Committee for a Democratic Palestine
Confédération des syndicats nationaux (CSN)
Database Project
Episcopal Diocese of North Western Pennsylvania
Federation of American-Arab Organizations
General Board of Global Ministries - United Methodist Church
General Union of Palestinian Students (GUPS)
International Association of Democratic Lawyers (IADL)
International Jewish Peace Union (IJPU)
International Movement for Unity Among Races and Peoples (UFER)
International Organization for the Elimination of All Forms
of Racial Discrimination (EAFORD)
Jewish Committee for Israeli-Palestinian Peace
Jewish Peace Fellowship
Jews for a Just Peace
Labour Committee on the Middle East (LOOME)
League of Arab American Women

MADRE/Women's Peace Network
Mercy Corps International
Middle East Children's Alliance
Middle East Fellowship of Southern California
Middle East Justice Network
NAJDA: Women Concerned About the Middle East
National Association of Arab-Americans
National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States -
 Middle East Office
National Lawyers' Guild
Near East Cultural and Educational Foundation of Canada (NECEF)
New Jewish Agenda
Palestine Aid Society (PAS)
Palestine Human Rights Campaign (PHRC)
Palestine Solidarity Committee (PSC)
Peace and Justice Commission
People's Anti-War Mobilization
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
Princeton Middle East Society
Resources for Change in the Middle East/Middle East International
Save the Children Federation (Middle East/North Africa Region)
Union of Palestinian American Women
Union of Palestine Women Associations
United Church of Christ - Office for Church in Society (UCC-OCIS)
United Church Board for World Ministries
United Holy Land Fund
War Resisters International
Women's International Democratic Federation (WIDE)/
 Women for Racial and Economic Equality (WREE)
Women's International League for Peace and Freedom
World Muslim Congress
World Peacemakers

NGO observers

Advisory Associates International
African Co-ordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine
American Council for Palestine Affairs
American Friends of Neve Shalom/Wahar Al Salam
American Professors for Peace in the Middle East (APPME)
Clergy for Peace
Committee for a Democratic Palestine
Confederation of Canadian Unions
European Co-ordinating Committee of NGOs on the Question of Palestine
Fairness and Accuracy for Reporting
Ford Foundation
International Center for Peace in the Middle East - U.S. Office
International Co-ordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine
International Development and Refugee Foundation

Jewish Women's Committee To End the Occupation
Middle East Outreach Council
Middle East Peace Network
New Outlook
New York Association of American Soviet Friendship
Organisation canadienne pour la solidarité et le développement
Palestine Affairs Center
Palestine Committee for NGOs
Palestine Democratic Youth Organization
Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs (PASSIA)
Palestinian-American Friendship Association
Palestinian American Youth
Parliamentary Association for Euro-Arab Cooperation
Popular Committee for Health Services
Progressive Arab Women's Committee
Service universitaire canadien outre-mer (SUCC)
The Generation After
Union of Agricultural Work Committee
Union of Palestinian Medical Relief Committees
Union of Palestinian Women's Committees in the Occupied Territories
Union of Palestinian American Women (UPAW)

Panelists

Mahdi Abdul-Hadi, founder of the Arab Thought Forum and President of the
Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs,
Jerusalem

Meir Amor, graduate student, Tel Aviv University

Mordechai Bar-On, research fellow, Ben-Gurion Center and member of Peace Now

Rev. Elias Chacour, Melkite priest from the Galilee

Zahira Kamal, Chairman, Palestine Federation of Women's Action Committees

Latyr Kamara, Honorary Ambassador of Senegal since 1987

Umaiye Kamash, physician and specialist in public health; one of the
founders of the Medical Relief Committees

Margaret McCormack, political consultant from the United States

Hani Mohd, trade unionist and former secretary of the Progressive Trade
Union Labour Front (PTULF)

Mattityahu Peled, Professor of Arabic literature, Tel Aviv University

Workshop facilitators and resource persons

Mia Adjali
Ann Barhoum
Khaled Al Hidmi
Andrea Barron
Don Betz
Louise Cainkar
Jim Graff
Deena Hurwitz
Eileen Kuttub
Guy Levi
Janis Lewin
Barbara Lubin
Julie Nalibov
Nacmi Nim

Jeff Perry
Nasen Rantissi
Sara Roy
Sheila Ryan
Jay Schnitzer
Kathrin Silver
Hilda Silverman
Fred Soloway
Jaime Veve
Don Wagner
Ingrid Washinawatok
Daniel Weaver
Marvin Wingfield
Corinne Whitlach

Members and observers of the Committee on the Exercise
of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

Afghanistan (member)
Cuba (member)
Egypt (observer)
Jordan (observer)
League of Arab States (observer)
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya (observer)
Malta (member)
Palestine (observer)
Senegal (member)
Sierra Leone (member)
Syrian Arab Republic (observer)
Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic (member)

Intergovernmental organizations

League of Arab States

National liberation movements

African National Congress
Palestine