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QUESTION OF THE VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE OCCUPIED ARAB TERRITORIES, INCLUDING PALESTINE

Written statement* submitted by the Federation of Associations for
Defence and Promotion of Human Rights, a non-governmental
organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[30 January 2003]

*This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

Palestine and the implementation of the U.N. resolutions

It is the year 2003 and not only has the suffering of the people of Palestine not come to a halt but has worsened. The occupied territories have turned into a huge concentration camp with all the severity and cruelty that its meaning bears, as well as bringing back to memory those past times which were said at the time would never take place again.

At present, the Palestinian population's fundamental rights are still being denied: the right to freedom of movement, the right to work as well as free access to their jobs. In short, people are right to dignity. Farming lands have been destroyed, hundreds of homes have been demolished and plots of land have kept on being expropriated in order to have illegal settlements built on them and the separation wall, which could be labelled as the Berlin or the Palestinian Apartheid Wall, are turning thousands of Palestinians into homeless. The restrictions to work and trade have impoverished the Palestinian citizens, many living under wretched conditions. The diseases and hunger resulted from their poverty have placed the Palestinian population on the verge of a humanitarian catastrophe.

Similarly, the Palestinian National Authority (PNA), symbol of the national consciousness of the Palestinian people, has been permanently attacked and humiliated to the extent of having all its infrastructures and power to exercise its authority destroyed.

In the face of the absence of the Palestinian people's fundamental right to life, which they are currently struggling to preserve, a number of Palestinian groups have become more radical and have been making use of violence against Israeli civilians. These groups are neither representative nor belong to the Palestinian legitimate representatives of the PNA, democratically elected, no matter how much the Israeli forces of occupation insist on them taking responsibility for such actions, condemned by the PNA itself.

The United Nations, the sole representative of all countries and nations of the world, is showing itself to be seriously powerless in the face of the dramatic situation of the Palestinian people, who have reached the limit of their strength against the barbarity of the occupying force. Let us not allow them to lose faith and hope in the message of justice, equality and peace of this organization.

The United Nations is obliged to help and protect the Palestinian people from the repeated aggressions inflicted by Israel, as the occupying power. Occupation has no justification whatsoever, being the violence that is practised on a daily basis the result of that occupation and the attempt of the strong to subdue the weak. The United Nations has always acted forcefully towards those States that practise permanent violence by implementing the Security Council's resolutions so as to punish and force them in an answer for their actions.

The ongoing situation in Palestine is absolutely contrary to the United Nations' message and it is incomprehensible the incapability this organization is proving in the face of the seriousness of the situation on this matter. Throughout these five decades, the U.N. Security Council and General Assembly's resolutions have reiterated their condemnation upon Israel.

The Federation of Associations for the Defence and Promotion of Human Rights **for quite some time has been asking** the international community to put into action the mechanisms to guarantee the compliance of the United Nations Security Council and General Assembly's resolutions on

Palestine and for the United Nations to be the framework in which the endorsed agreements between Palestinians and Israelis are to be implemented. The Federation believes that all the States that make up the U.N. are obliged to cooperate together and with the organization itself to ensure the compliance with its aims and resolutions. There are more than enough reasons to force Israel into withdrawing from the occupied territories occupied in 1967 and put an end to the dramatic situation of the people of Palestine. It is therefore necessary to act so as to make the State of Israel definitely proceed in order to give way to the establishment of the State of Palestine, as the result of the exercise of the right to self-determination. As a consequence of the aforementioned, the Federation of Associations for the Defence and Promotion of Human Rights requests the member States of the United Nations:

1. To state clearly that they are for the establishment of the independent State of Palestine, sprung from the exercise of the Palestinian right to self-determination, a fully sovereign state entitled to the right of its territorial integrity and political independence as well as to be protected by all the regulations of international law.
2. That in the face of an Israeli refusal, the State of Palestine be recognised on the basis of the international borders corresponding to the occupied territories in 1967.
3. To intensify all their efforts to adopt measures to make Israel comply with international law, the United Nations' resolutions in particular, and specifically the Geneva Convention regulations on the protection of civilians in occupied territories.
4. That in the event of an armed attack on Iraq, to set up an international Committee of Observers to go to the Palestinian occupied territories under the likelihood that the Israeli forces of occupation take advantage of the circumstances to carry out mass deportations of Palestinian population.
5. That in case of a military intervention against Iraq, to send and distribute gas masks among the Palestinian civilian population as well as immediate financial and food aid to the population, who will suffer lengthy curfews just as it happened during the Gulf War in 1991.
