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Letter dated 19 March 1985 from the Chairman of the Committee on the
Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People to the
Secretary-General

In my capacity as Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, it is my responsibility to bring once again to your attention the Committee's grave concern at renewed acts of repression by the Israeli authorities against Palestinians in the occupied West Bank. Of further concern are recent actions taken by the Government of Israel under its policy of establishing Jewish settlements in the occupied territories.

It has come to the attention of the Committee that, according to news items in the Jerusalem Post and The New York Times of 4 March 1985 and Al-Fajr of 8 March 1985, Israeli troops carried out night raids on the two campuses of Bir Zeit University on 1 March, seizing hundreds of posters, books and other materials to be used in a Palestinian cultural exhibit. Fifty-three students and their guests were detained for questioning. Eight of them are still being detained in Fara'a prison in Nablus without charge. Tel Aviv Radio reported on 8 March that still further detentions are expected.

Immediately after the raids, the Bir Zeit campuses were declared closed military areas and the entrance was barred to all. A week later, as reported by UPI on 11 March, the Military Governor of the occupied West Bank decided to close the new campus of Bir Zeit for a period of two months. The Bir Zeit University Board of Trustees denounced these new Israeli actions as "a new link in a series of recurrent infringements on academic freedom which aim at obstructing university education and development of the Palestinian Arab society". The closure reportedly comes at the end of the first semester, causing disruption of the academic schedule, interruption of laboratory experiments and costly delay of the building programme at the university.

I wish, also, to express the profound concern caused to the Committee by yet further grave action taken by the Israeli Government in flagrant violation of basic human rights, it was reported by the Bethlehem Press Office on 12 March 1985 that 35 youths from the Dheisheh refugee camp, who were arrested on 31 January 1985 during a night raid on the camp, are still being detained for interrogation and without charges by the occupying military government. Two of the detainees are reported to have been tortured by electronic devices; the others were continually beaten and humiliated. Some 300 Palestinians from the occupied West Bank have been detained at Fara'a prison since January 1985.

At the same time, the Committee is gravely concerned at the Israeli Government's continued application of the policy of establishing settlements in the occupied territories. On 6 March 1985, Ha'aretz reported that the Israeli Housing Ministry had begun the construction of three permanent settlements: Azmona, on the Gaza shore; Kaddim, on the northern West Bank; and, Naan in the Jordan Rift Valley. Settlers are already living in temporary accommodations in all three new settlements.

As on previous occasions, this information is being brought to your attention so that you may be kept informed of the continuing danger to international peace and security posed by the policies of the Israeli Government towards the illegally occupied territories in violation of the resolutions of the United Nations and of its obligation under the Fourth Geneva Convention.

Clearly, a new, resolute approach to the search for a just, comprehensive and lasting solution of the question of Palestine is urgently required. To that end, I wish to reiterate the Committee's firm conviction that the early convening of the proposed international peace conference on the Middle East is of critical importance.

In conclusion, I wish to request that the text of this letter be distributed as a document of the General

Assembly, under item 33 of the preliminary list, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Massamba SARRE
Chairman of the
Committee on the Exercise
of the Inalienable Rights
of the Palestinian People

* A/40/50 and Corr.1.

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