



**General Assembly
Security Council**

Distr.
GENERAL

A/37/153
22 March 1982

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Thirty-seventh session
Item 34 of the preliminary list*

THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Letter dated 19 March 1982 from the Permanent Representative of Jordan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to forward to you the enclosed letter at the request of Mr. Zuhdi labib Terzi, the Permanent Observer of the Palestine Liberation Organization, concerning Israel's forcible seizure and dismantling of the elected municipal council of Al Bireh, a town to the north of Jerusalem.

This unlawful and reckless act has aggravated tensions throughout the occupied Palestinian territories and the Palestinian population has declared a three-day protest strike beginning on Friday and ending on Sunday.

Needless to state, Israel's abominable practices against the civilian population under occupation will have serious consequences not only within the occupied Palestinian territories but also in the entire Middle East region, and far beyond.

I request, Excellency, that this letter and its enclosure be circulated as an official document of the General Assembly under item 34 of the preliminary list.

(Signed) Hazem NUSEIBEH
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

* A/37/50

ANNEX

Letter dated 18 March 1982 from the Permanent Observer of the Palestine Liberation Organization to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I am instructed by Chairman Yasser Arafat to bring the following to your immediate attention with the expressed hope that immediate action be taken to prevent the further exacerbation of the already explosive situation in the occupied Palestinian territory of the "West Bank and Gaza". The Israeli forces have this morning committed another act of state-terrorism against the Palestinian people - such acts constitute more than violations; they are provocations that prompt action by the international community, precisely by the Security Council and the United Nations, and also justify any action by the Palestinians in the legitimate exercise of our right to self-defence and survival. Such acts are over-taxing our patience.

Our immediate demand for the respect of and compliance with the decisions of the Security Council and compliance with the provisions of the IV Geneva Convention is called for.

Details of the most recent act of state-terrorism are as follows: On the morning of March 18, 1982, Commander Nissim Bar Kovba and four Jewish civilians broke into the Municipality of Al-Bireh while a contingent of Israeli armed troops surrounded the building. A letter was presented to the elected Mayor, Mr. Ibrahim Al Tawil. When the elected mayor refused to comply he was forcibly evicted from the municipal building.

The letter contained an order designated "Order Regarding the dissolution of Al Bireh Municipal Council (Temporary Instructions)". The order was signed by Professor Menahem Milson, Head of the Civillian Administration, dated 18 March 1982, written on a paper with the heading Israel Defence Forces, and reads:

"Order regarding extension of Municipal Council duties - Samaria and Judea Order Nr. 830 - year 5740/1980

"Order regarding the Dissolution of Al Bireh Municipal Council (Temporary Instructions).

"Based on the powers vested in me as Head of Civil Administration and in accordance with the Municipalities Law Nr. 29 for the year 1955 and Article 2 of the order regarding the extension of Municipal Council duties (Judea and Samaria Nr. 830 of the year 5740/1980) and all my powers by virtue of law and security legislation and because I believe the order is necessary to implement normal rule and public order I order the following:

1. Dissolution of the Council of Al Bireh Municipal Council.
2. The Al Bireh Municipal Council will stop functioning from the date of publication of this order.
3. Start of order - This order will be in effect from the moment it is signed.
4. This order will be named "Order regarding the dissolution of the Al Bireh Municipal Council (Temporary Instructions)".

Signed Menachem Milson
Head of Civilian Administration

As could be expected the spontaneous reaction by all Palestinians under occupation and the elected Municipal Councils is reflected in mass demonstrations against the forces of Israeli occupation, a general strike is declared for 3 days (Friday, Saturday and Sunday). Municipal Councils, organizations, unions of the Palestinian people under occupation are currently consulting what concrete action to take to confront this latest of acts of state-terrorism and violation of rights and conventions.

Once again, I am asked to call upon your Excellency to take the most immediate action in order to avert and prevent the aggravation and exacerbation of the situation.

The Palestine Liberation Organization does have the duty to defend and safeguard the Palestinian people everywhere and cannot stand idly by.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest esteem.

Zuhdi Labib Terzi
Permanent Observer

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