

UNITED NATIONS CONCILIATION COMMISSION FOR PALESTINE

COMMITTEE ON JERUSALEM

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Letter dated 1 August  
addressed by the Representative  
Committee of Christians of the Holy Places,  
Jerusalem, to the Secretary-General of the  
United Nations

The following letter is circulated for the information of the Committee:

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The contradictory reports concerning the Holy Places given daily by the press and radio are not reassuring to the Christians of Jerusalem and of the whole of Palestine, who already see the ruin of their sanctuaries, and disaster for themselves unless the United Nations puts into execution, promptly and energetically, the decision taken regarding the internationalization of the Jerusalem area.

Indeed, in spite of the fact that the United Nations General Assembly decided sometime ago in favour of internationalization by a large majority, which included Britain, Belgium, the United States, France and the Latin American Republics, and although the Arab States, wishing to see peace re-established, have adhered to this decision, we notice with some anxiety that the question remains in abeyance, to the detriment of the interests of all concerned.

We remain convinced that internationalization is the only equitable solution which could guarantee to the inhabitants of the Holy Places and to pilgrims of all religions and nationalities, free access to their sanctuaries and holy sites. As regards the partition of Jerusalem into two zones, one Arab and one Jewish, this is not only unworkable, but could not fail to occasion continual friction and clashes which might have very serious consequences.

From the economic point of view, the situation has already been studied by experts, who have proved statistically that the resources of the international territory would amply suffice to cover its budget and would even provide a surplus, due chiefly to the appreciable revenue from pilgrimages and tourist trade. In addition, an International City of Jerusalem

would certainly become an important centre of world trade, as it would serve as a point of contact between the Middle East and other countries. This advantageous situation, moreover, would be of great assistance in the regrouping of refugees driven from their homes by the war and on whom the attention of the whole world has been focussed.

It is therefore beyond question that internationalization is, from all points of view, not merely just but workable; at the same time, it would be a first step towards the re-establishment of effective peace in the Holy Land.

As the United Nations is about to meet and to take a decision regarding the régime to be set up for the Holy Places, the Christians of this area, who have more right than anyone to express their opinion on this subject, held a meeting in which representatives of all rites took part, and decided unanimously to request the United Nations to put into effect immediately the internationalization of Jerusalem (old and new cities) and the surrounding area.

Moreover, it seems to us highly desirable that a vote should be taken at the United Nations General Assembly regarding the internationalization of Nazareth and its surroundings.

We therefore take the liberty of entreating the Members of your Organization, in the name of Justice, Humanity and the Sacred Rights of Nations, to give serious consideration to our request, in order to put an end to the inhabitants' misfortunes and disasters and to avoid further complications, which we have the most right to fear.