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QUESTION OF PALESTINE

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Letter dated 10 November 1986 from the Chairman of the Committee  
on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People  
addressed to the Secretary-General

In my capacity as Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, I wish to put on record the Committee's grave concern at the persistence and the intensification of fighting in and around Palestinian refugee camps in Tyre, Beirut and Sidon, as reported by the United Nations Relief and works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and by the media.

According to those reports, fighting broke out on 30 September 1986 at the refugee camps of Rashadieh, El Buss and Burj el Shemali in the Tyre area. Rashadieh and Burj el Shemali remained under siege for two weeks, and Rashadieh has been again under attack since 20 October. Refugees are unable to leave or enter the camps and all, except El Buss, remain inaccessible to UNRWA staff. Casualties from the first round of fighting are estimated at 9 killed and 54 wounded, while no information is yet available on more recent victims.

The Committee wishes to express its utmost concern at the fact that UNRWA has been unable to deliver food or medicines to Rashadieh camp since the beginning of fighting and that, as stated recently by the Commissioner General, thousands of innocent women, children and old people are trapped in the cross-fire in the camp.

Fighting has also been reported at Burj el Barajneh in Beirut, as well as around the Ein el Hilweh and Mieh Mieh camps in the Sidon area. Burj el Barajneh has been surrounded and remains inaccessible. UNRWA has estimated the casualties at 12 killed and 50 wounded.

In the light of these grave developments, I wish to reaffirm once again, on behalf of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, that the United Nations, and in particular the Security Council, has a clear responsibility to ensure the physical safety of the Palestinians in the refugee camps. It is imperative that all necessary measures be taken urgently to put an end to the suffering and hardships of the Palestinians in the refugee camps and to provide the necessary emergency relief.

At the same time, the Committee urges you to renew your efforts to promote a just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine, the underlying cause of the conflict in the Middle East, since, in the absence of such a solution, violence will continue to intensify in the region, with disastrous consequences for international peace and security.

I would request that this letter be circulated as an official document of the General Assembly, under item 35 of the agenda, and of the Security Council.

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

