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GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Item 37 of the provisional agenda*
QUESTION OF PALESTINEForty-third session SECURITY COUNCIL
Forty-third year**Letter dated 19 August 1988 from the Acting Chairman of
the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights
of the Palestinian People addressed to the Secretary-General**

In my capacity as Acting Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, I wish to express the Committee's most serious concern at the further intensification of severe measures of repression by the Israeli authorities in efforts to crush the Palestinian uprising in the occupied Palestinian territories.

The New York Times of 18 and 19 August 1988 reported that Mr. Yitzhak Rabin, Minister of Defense of Israel, has announced a new pre-emptive policy under which the army would seal off certain areas, sometimes even large areas, such as the Gaza Strip, and move in force to prevent and suppress protest demonstrations. The Gaza Strip was reportedly placed under complete and total curfew from 14 to 18 August, meaning that most residents were confined to their homes 24 hours a day and outsiders, including journalists, were not permitted into the area. Only the most essential supplies were allowed into the refugee camps, and women were permitted to leave their homes for a couple of hours a day to buy food. Separate curfews remain in effect in a number of areas. Another part of the army's new strategy has been to outlaw the "popular committees" established in the course of the uprising to keep civic affairs running. A Defense Ministry official was reported to have disclosed that more than 250 members of the committees have been jailed recently.

Despite the new stringent measures, protest demonstrations have taken place across the Gaza Strip, and five people were wounded by gunfire on 17 August. At least 50 others were taken to hospitals to be treated for injuries suffered in beatings or for tear-gas inhalation. A day earlier, about 80 persons were treated for injuries received in beatings, and one man died from tear-gas inhalation. According to a report recently released by Amnesty International, the policy of beatings has resulted in thousands of injuries and at least eight deaths during the past eight months.

The Christian Science Monitor reported on 18 August 1988 that at least 247 Palestinians have been killed since last December. Two Palestinians were shot to death on 16 August at Ketziot prison camp, in the Negev desert, where some 2,500 Palestinians are being held under six-month administrative detention without charges or trial. The two Palestinians were apparently killed during a protest against the inhumane conditions at the prison, such as severe overcrowding, extreme heat and lack of food and water. Detainees are currently on hunger strike demanding that the prison be closed. The shooting has been condemned by the International Committee of the Red Cross, which stated that Israel is violating the Fourth Geneva Convention of 12 August 1949.

The Committee is also extremely concerned that, despite international protests and in defiance of Security Council resolutions and the Fourth Geneva Convention, Israel has intensified its policy of deporting Palestinians from the occupied territories. Another four Palestinians were deported to Lebanon on 17 August 1988. They were identified by the Associated Press as: Mohammed Gharableh, Ahmed Abu Muailek, Yusri Darwish al-Hums and Fathi Ibrahim Shakaki, all Gazans. The total number of Palestinians expelled on charges of inciting violence and organising the uprising has now reached 34. Another 25 Palestinians from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip have reportedly been issued deportation orders.

In view of the gravity of these events, the Committee wishes once again to protest vigorously the continued armed repression in the occupied Palestinian territories and appeals to you and to all concerned to take all possible measures for ensuring the safety and protection of the Palestinian civilians under occupation, and to intensify all efforts towards the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 38/58 C.

I should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter distributed as a document of the General Assembly, under item 37 of the provisional agenda, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Oscar ORAMAS-OLIVA
Acting Chairman
Committee on the Exercise
of the Inalienable Rights
of the Palestinian People

*A/43/150.