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**REPORT OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL
ON
THE CAUSE OF PALESTINE, AL QUDS AL SHARIF
AND THE ARAB ISRAELI CONFLICT**

**SUBMITTED TO
THE ANNUAL COORDINATION MEETING OF
FOREIGN MINISTERS OF
THE OIC MEMBER STATES**

UN HEADQUARTERS - NEW YORK

**25 SEPTEMBER 2006
2 RAMADAN 1427 AH**

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1. The Palestinian issue has witnessed important and serious developments during recent weeks with the escalation of the Israeli aggression and extension of its scope to include all aspects of life in Palestine. Already deteriorating humanitarian conditions hit an all-time low in the Palestinian territories since the Palestinian Legislative elections as a result of the stranglehold imposed by Israeli measures and suffocating the lives of Palestinians. Israel has been tightening its blockade on all crossings, which severely exacerbated the humanitarian situation in the Palestinian territories dismembered by hundreds of Israeli military barriers. The humanitarian situation worsened dramatically as result of many international agencies cutting off their assistance to the Palestinian people, Israel's adamant refusal to pay up the Palestinian tax returns, and the difficulty of delivering Muslim and Arab assistance because of the Israeli blockade imposed on the Palestinian territories. The dangerous developments that have shattered the Palestinian territories may be summarized as follows:

- Israel used the capture of one of its soldiers as a pretext to escalate its aggression against the Palestinian people to wage a campaign of massacres against civilians, leading to hundreds of Palestinian martyrs and wounded victims. The number of Palestinian martyrs and wounded has increased considerably as hundreds of Palestinian martyrs fell during the months after the legislative elections.
- Israel kidnapped scores of Palestinian officials, including the Chairman of the Legislative Council, the Deputy Prime Minister, as well as twenty-eight members of parliament and eight ministers, besides a number of elected presidents and members of municipal councils. In addition, Israel deported many members of the Legislative Council from the occupied city of Al-Quds, preventing them from living in their city. The Israeli measures were met with large-scale international condemnation with many international parties calling on Israel to release the Palestinian officials it kidnapped.

- Israel perpetrated large-scale destruction of Palestinian ministries, public, infrastructure facilities, an electrical power plant, Gaza airport, as well as roads, bridges, and factories.
- Israel extended the scope of its invasions and incursions into the territories of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, repeatedly raiding cities, towns, and refugee camps and carrying out the killing of Palestinians and demolition of their homes and institutions.
- Israel has started to expand the disengagement plan for the Palestinian road network by preventing the Palestinian vehicles from using on the roads used by Israeli settlers in the West Bank. This plan includes the confiscation of huge areas of the Palestinian territories in order to build roads, bridges and underground passages, as well as establishing barriers on roads to prevent Palestinians from using them.
- The humanitarian situation in the Palestinian territories has witnessed a severe deterioration since the Palestinian elections as a result of the harsh Israeli measures against the Palestinians. Furthermore, the cutting of international assistance and Israel's refusal to pay up Palestinian tax returns has caused serious damage in all aspects of life in Palestine. The poverty rate in Palestinian territories increased as a result of the Palestinian Authority's failure to pay its staff salaries after the cutting of international assistance and the Israeli measures. Officers working in the service of the Palestinian National Authority represent 37% of the total workforce in the Gaza Strip and 14% of the total manpower in the West Bank. The number of Palestinian citizens whose livelihood is directly dependent on the salaries paid by the Palestinian Authority is 942,000 or 25% of the overall population. The rate of poverty within the society will increase even further as more family members come to depend on the salary of one employee of the Authority. It is worth noting that the Palestinian private sector has been severely affected by the Israeli measures that have made it incapable of absorbing the unemployed. Hence the Palestinians' increased need for international support, given the fact that 1.4 million Palestinians (more than 1/3 of all Palestinian citizens) depend on food assistance from international relief agencies.
- In a grave escalation of the situation, Israel took a number of preliminary measures to destroy Al-Maghariba Gate Tal connecting Al-Buraq Precinct to the Blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque, in a bid to alter the demographic character of Al-Quds and to judaize it. These Israeli

measures are aimed at paving the way to establishing a bus and railway station right at the corridor linking the southern perimeter of the occupied Al-Quds city and the neighboring town of Sulwan as part of a scheme to intensify Jewish settlements in this area, which has been subjected to a feverish drive to alter its demographic identity and to judaize it.

- The Israeli occupation authorities have intensified the excavation works in the area between the southern wall of the blessed Al Aqsa Mosque and the adjacent village of Sulwan. The Settler association "Alad" is carrying out large-scale excavations that threaten the foundations of Al Aqsa Mosque and the neighboring Palestinian buildings. These excavations fall within a large settlement project in the region of Sulwan whose history Israel is trying to falsify pretending it is the historical City of David.
- Israel has pressed ahead with the isolation of the occupied city of Al Quds by means of military barriers and the Apartheid Wall. Israel has completed the full isolation of the City from the rest of the occupied West Bank with the Zaem barrier, to the east of the Holy City, turned into a crossing point with several alleys and check points .Israel has in this way completed the construction of 11 crossings around the City, thus cutting off a number of villages that are part of the city.
- Parallel to the activities aimed at isolating the City of Al Quds from its Palestinian environment, Israel has continued with its attempts to link up the settlement conglomerations with Al Quds through the use of an underground passage network, highways and railway lines. Within the framework of this attempt, Israel has concluded a contract with two French companies, namely Connex and Alstomi for the construction of an underground railway network to link up the settlements of Gilo, Pisgal Zaef and Ma'aleh Adumim in the West Bank with Al Quds/Jerusalem, which represents a breach of the Geneva Agreements and a violation of international law.
- The United Nations Security Council met more than once to consider the grave developments witnessed by the Palestinian territories but was unable to take measures or resolutions to condemn the Israeli aggression, which encouraged Israel to push ahead with its policy of murder and aggression.

Efforts of the OIC Secretary-General (Since the 33rd Session of ICFM)

- The OIC Secretary-General issued his directives to the Permanent Observer of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) in New York to convene a meeting of the Islamic Group in order to consider the explosive situation in the Palestinian territories. Consequently, the Islamic Group held a meeting on 5 July 2006 at the Headquarters of the Permanent Mission of Palestine and examined the developments in the occupied Palestinian territories caused by the continuing Israeli aggressions. At the end of the meeting, the Islamic Group issued a statement calling on the UN Security Council to take the necessary measures and resolutions to put an end to the Israeli aggression against the Palestinian people, secure the release of the Palestinian officials who were detained, find a diplomatic solution to the issue of the captured Israeli soldier, and provide protection for the Palestinian people and their institutions from the Israeli aggression.
- Based on a draft resolution submitted by the Islamic and Arab Groups, the Human Rights Council adopted a resolution on 6 July 2006 on the serious conditions in the Palestinian territories as a result of the Israeli aggressions. In this resolution, the Human Rights Council called on Israel, the occupying force, to end its aggression, refrain from imposing collective punishment against the Palestinian people, and strictly comply with the provisions of international humanitarian law. The Human Rights Council also decided to dispatch an urgent fact-finding mission headed by the United Nations Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in the Palestinian Territories.
- The OIC Secretary-General issued a statement in which he condemned Israel's shelling of the Palestinian Prime Minister's Office with missiles and its bombardment of a school and other vital and civilian facilities. He considered these aggressions as a flagrant violation of international law and the Fourth Geneva Convention and emphasized that they constituted war crimes requiring immediate international initiatives to end them. The Secretary-General charged Israel with the full responsibility for the serious consequences of this and other crimes it is perpetrating on a daily basis against the Palestinian people, government, national institutions,

and infrastructures. He called on the international community to work to prevent Israel from acting as a state above the law and compel it to end its crimes and practices in contravention of international law. He called for the immediate release of the detained members of the Palestinian Government and the Legislative Council.

- The Secretary-General made a series of contacts with international officials and members of the Quartet—including the Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation, and Javier Solana, EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy – demanding that the Israeli aggression be brought to an end. Through his contacts with the Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation, the Secretary-General also called for the OIC position to be conveyed to the G8 Ministerial Meeting, which was held in Moscow on 29 June last.
- The Secretary-General addressed letters to the members of the Quartet calling on them to put an end to the Israeli aggression, secure the release of the Ministers and Members of the Palestinian Legislative Council who were kidnapped by Israel, and to find a diplomatic solution to the issue of the captured Israeli soldier.
- The Secretary-General made several contacts with the Palestinian leadership in which he discussed the developments on the Palestinian stage resulting from the continuing Israeli aggression. He expressed the support of the OIC for the efforts exerted on the Palestinian national dialogue process and the Reconciliation Document reached between the Palestinian factions.
- The Secretary-General issued a number of press releases condemning the measures and violations perpetrated by Israel in the occupied Palestinian territories, including the killings and destruction of Palestinian facilities and infrastructure.
