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Letter dated 3 October 1984 from the Permanent Representative of Jordan
to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour, in my capacity as Chairman of the Arab Group, to request that the attached letter, addressed to you by Mr. Zehdi Labib Terzi, Permanent Observer of the Palestine Liberation Organization, and its annex be circulated as an official document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 33, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Abdullah SALAH
Ambassador, Permanent Representative

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ANNEX

Letter dated 3 October 1984 from the Permanent Observer of the
Palestine Liberation Organization to the United Nations
addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: English]

I am instructed by Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization, to transmit to you the attached appeal from the Palestinian prisoners and detainees in Zionist prisons and detention camps.

(Signed) Zehdi Labib TERZI
Permanent Observer

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APPENDIX

[Original: Arabic]

From the prisoners of the revolution in the central prison of Nablus to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Perez de Cuellar, and the representatives of the States which are permanent Members of the United Nations.

Greetings from the prisoners of the Palestinian revolution in Zionist prisons:

We the prisoners of the Palestinian revolution address you in order to make clear the detrimental and inhumane conditions of our detention in Zionist prisons, in the hope that you will support our just and legitimate struggles for the provision of living conditions appropriate to the humanity of man. For 17 years, in our Palestinian national movement held prisoner in Israeli jails, we have been struggling for the provision of living conditions appropriate to the humanity of man as regards treatment, food, newspapers and magazines, alleviation of intolerable overcrowding in the prisons and non-retention in small overcrowded cells for 22 hours a day (the daily recreation period in the prison yard does not exceed two hours a day), extension of the prison visiting hours for our relatives to more than half an hour, an increase in the permitted frequency of visits and the provision of a dining room, instead of our being obliged to eat in small overcrowded residential cells; for the lifting of the cultural blockade and the information blackout imposed upon us and the removal of the ban on the acquisition of transistor radios and on watching television programmes; and for an end to be put to the savage acts committed by the prison authorities against defenceless prisoners, such as striking with clubs and spraying with gas, sometimes for the most trivial reasons and at other times in response to our legitimate demands and our claim to humane conditions during the term of our sentences. We are struggling to have the occupation authorities desist from persecuting us with deliberate provocations and, in particular, from attacking the manifestations of our collective life and trying to disrupt it through the policy of isolation and imposed segregation among prisoners in the same jail. We are struggling against the performance of intelligence functions by Zionist prison administrations, in defence of our national and human identity and for tolerable detention conditions. Our struggle has been waged unceasingly for more than 17 years. We have tried all legitimate and legal means in our struggles to press our claims, but there is no life for anyone who cries out, and we have paid with our blood and our nerves and have kept silent, amid immeasurable sufferings for the great abiding cause. The number of hunger-strike days in Israeli prisons in protest against the inhumane living conditions of Palestinian prisoners has totalled more than 600 during the past 17 years. For a number of years, we have refused visits from our relatives in protest against the intolerable conditions in the prisons. Throughout the years of detention, we have been presenting our demands to the International Red Cross, appealing to international institutions and the international community to fulfil our legitimate humanitarian demands, but there is no life for anyone who cries out.

The struggles of our nation and our people and its national institutions in support of our demands has met with disregard and derision on the part of the competent authorities and the Israeli general administration of prisons. During

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our hunger-strikes, three prisoners met martyrdom in the Ashkelon and Nafha prisons in 1970 and 1980. The prisoner, Umar al-Shalabi, met martyrdom through chastisement and torture at the hands of the Director of the Ashkelon prison, named Westerfeld, in 1973. Many prisoners have met martyrdom during interrogation, as a result of torture, and more than 50 Palestinian prisoners in Zionist prisons have met martyrdom as a result of the intolerable living conditions and deliberate medical neglect on the part of the repressive authorities. There are hundreds of prisoners suffering from severe and chronic ailments such as ulcers, diabetes, haemorrhoids, diseases of the eye, partial paralysis and unextracted splinters, as well as widespread emaciation, low resistance to contagious diseases and more than 20 cases of incurable nervous breakdown resulting from deliberate neglect of treatment. We find ourselves called upon to set forth the names of some Palestinian militants whose cases correspond to those which we have mentioned:

Hasan Abdullah Dahshan:	Amputation of one hand and one foot; injuries to parts of the body.
Muhammad al-Hazzi:	Amputation of one hand and injuries to all parts of the body.
Jamal Mahmud Daraghimah:	Paralysis of the right leg; a back injury.
Mahmud Abd al-Latif al-Dik:	Injury to the pelvis and one hand; splinters in the body.
Jamal Muhammad al-Huzaimi:	Head injury; paralysis of both legs.
Fawzi Shanar:	Injury to and paralysis of right leg.
Ali Abd al-Fattah Kawawisah:	Pain in the spinal column; paralysis of the legs.
Yusuf al-Awawidah:	Loss of memory.
Muhammad Abdullah Abu Daar:	General emaciation; sensitivity of the stomach.
Abdullah Ayyash:	Loss of consciousness and paralysis of the extremities as a result of interrogation.
Abd al-Qadir Alawiyah:	Nervous debility; psychological tension.
Muhammad Mahmud Samakirah:	Nervous debility; psychological tension.
Sami Yusuf Qatir:	Nervous state, loss of ability to speak and swelling in the right breast as a result of injuries during interrogation.

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Ibrahim Tawfiq Yusuf:	Heart ailment; severe pains in the spinal column (discs).
Umar Ahmad Qawasimah:	High blood pressure; pains in the back of the neck.
Ziyad Arif Rustam:	Severe inflammation of the bones.
Ali Hamdan Halayiqah:	Diabetic.
Badi Saninah:	Heart.
Azmi al-Atrash:	Heart.
Ahmad Ibrahim Abu Hudbah:	Psychological and mental illness.
Atiyah Muhammad Jawabirah:	One kidney removed; paralysis of the other.
Ismail Mahmud:	Stomach and intestinal ailments; anaemia.
Shuaib Ibrahim al-Hayik:	Stomach ailments; intestinal inflammation.
Mahmud Hazzah al-Mawasi:	Foot injury; anaemia.
Muhammad Farid Matar:	Nervous tension; psychological illness.
Sulaiman Ubaydah:	Nervous tension; psychological illness.
Muhammad Ibrahim al-Uzzah:	Nervous tension; psychological illness.
Mustafa Mahmud Abu Jayyab:	Nervous tension; psychological illness.

This is a mere sample of the cases of ill and injured Palestinian prisoners. This is in addition to the fact that 80 per cent of the prisoners suffer from various ailments and conditions of neglect. However, the arrogance of the Zionist military institution does not lead us to despair. On the contrary, it increases our resolve and determination to continue our struggle to procure the constituents of our national and human life. The silence of the international community in the face of this tragedy and its lack of serious support for our struggles to press our claims has perhaps led the Zionist military institution to derive encouragement from this position, since it further consolidates the poor living conditions in its prisons, thus redoubling the inhuman sufferings of the Palestinian prisoners.

What we hope for is life amid humane conditions, at a time when approximately 1,000 prisoners have just been transferred from the various Israeli prisons to the Nablus central prison on the West Bank. However, we have been assailed by the chronic problems from which we have so long suffered while awaiting the new prison, which the Zionist information organs and major officials such as the Minister of

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the Interior, Yosef Burg, and Prisons Commissioner Wertheimer have tried to depict as finally providing the solution to the chronic problems existing in Israeli prisons since the time of the British Mandate. The truth, however, was the very opposite of that in so far as relates to our living conditions. The Minister of the Interior of the Zionist entity boasted greatly as he reviewed the repressive televisory and electronic control apparatus in the new prison and expatiated on the high security facilities which are unparalleled in any prison in the world, while the prisoners have been accorded only savage treatment inconsistent with contemporary humanity and international instruments on the treatment of prisoners and men. The development of which Burg spoke is nothing but a combination of conventional and electronic means of repression for use against the prisoners of the Palestinian revolution in a desperate attempt on his part to kill our militant human spirit.

Leaving aside the problems of the sick, which have been mentioned in this document and which no longer exist in the new prison, it is appropriate for us to use the language of figures and statistics to give an account of our poor conditions in the new prison, in refutation of the claims of the Zionist authorities and in order to show the extent of the injustice inflicted on the prisoners of the Palestinian revolution.

1. The problem of overcrowding in the prisons and in the cells

It is clear that the problem of overcrowding in Israeli prisons has been resolved at the expense of Palestinian political prisoners for the benefit of Israeli terrorist and criminal prisoners. The cells in the new prison mostly have an area of 4 x 6 sq m, which include sanitary facilities, bath and washbasin. The prison authorities have proceeded to cram 18 or 14 Palestinian prisoners into each such cell by force, and in such cases, it is difficult for the inmates to sit on the ground to eat their poor and deficient meal, and it is difficult to move about in the cells, because of the confined space and the fact that they are crowded with inmates for 22 hours a day. The cells in sections 3, 6, 5 and 4, where 145 prisoners are confined in each section, have the windows sealed with asbestos sheets, which deprives us of natural ventilation in the tiny cells and also of natural light. Most frequently, the inmates of these sections are confused about the time, for it should be noted that the asbestos-sealed windows are the only windows in the cells, which requires that the electric light be kept on throughout the day; otherwise the cells would be submerged in darkness.

2. Recreation yard

There are three yards in the prison - one yard for every three sections - and each section is taken to walk around the yard for two hours a day, no mingling among the prisoners or moving between sections being permitted. Even the exchange of greetings and books or a meeting between two brothers from different sections is forbidden, so that the one prison becomes nine prisons and the recreation time becomes tantamount to punishment and a source of psychological tension because of the poor and inhumane conditions imposed in the recreation yards. The main yard measures 24 x 12 sq m. It has a sunken floor around which 145 prisoners walk and which is surrounded by 5 m high walls. It has no courts for basket-ball, tennis or

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volley-ball, as is the case in the other prisons, although such an area would be insufficient for 140 prisoners in addition to the courts. It appears that the repressive authorities designed the yard in such a way as to render the practice of sports impossible. This malevolent purpose appears more clearly in two yards designed in the form of a triangle with equal sides of 20 sq m each and an area of 200 sq m each. One hundred and forty-five prisoners are assigned to each recreation period. These two yards have a sloping surface. The yards have no seats for the sick and elderly to rest on or anything to provide shade from the burning rays of the sun or from rain. What is more, the prison administration harasses us with loudspeakers during the recreation period, exactly as the Nazis did with their prisoners during the Second World War.

3. Medical treatment

Clearly, there are the adverse conditions of detention and their accumulated effects over 17 years, and there is brutal treatment, including premeditated murder, the infliction of serious injury through the use of clubs, tear-gas and means of psychological torture and murder. This is to say nothing of the intentional neglect of pathological cases on the part of clinics and medical staff, for instead of performing their humanitarian duties they exploit our pain, sickness and suffering in a horrifying manner, resorting to blackmail by treating patients with contempt and telling prisoners that they must either collaborate with the authorities or remain untreated. All of this has led to the death of about 50 prisoners through the aggravation of pathological and mental cases which it would have been possible to treat at the right time, but which have today become chronic. In the West Bank central prison, there are more than 30 such cases in addition to dozens of other chronic pathological cases which require treatment but which are neglected. Additional factors are the speed with which contagious diseases spread in conditions of overcrowding, little exposure to the sun, malnutrition and the lack of periodic medical examinations of prisoners.

4. Cultural needs

Throughout the years of detention we suffer a cultural blockade and an information blackout. The restrictions imposed by the repressive authorities on books are numerous. They withhold from us newspapers, books and magazines published in the occupied areas and refuse to let us own transistor radios or to watch television programmes, as do criminal prisoners and the terrorist followers of the racist Meir Kahane. We have a right to know of the events going on around us in the world and, consequently, to develop our potentialities so that we may contribute to the advance of civilization. Man, even in prison, does not live by bread alone. We demand the removal of the restrictions, the lifting of the blockade imposed on nationalistic, cultural and humanistic books and on newspapers and magazines, and that we be allowed to own transistor radios and to watch television programmes.

5. Food

The kitchen, doubtless, is the belly of the prison, and any defects or shortcomings in quantity, quality or preparation have acute repercussions on the

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prisoners three times a day. Clearly, the quantities of bread, meat, rice and sugar allocated to prisoners are low and do not meet their minimum basic needs. We are not, moreover, permitted to prepare our own food in the prison kitchen in order to make it palatable. The quantities of fruit and vegetables allocated to us are also small, we receive them rarely, and they are of poor quality, especially vegetables. For 17 years in the Zionist prisons, there have been numerous varieties of vegetables which are plentiful in our country and which we have not seen. The terroristic prison authorities impose upon us a diet in keeping with their Jewish religious practices, particularly on their holidays when, for example, they provide us with matzo instead of bread at Passover. Likewise, they impose upon us disgusting meals on the Sabbath on the grounds that their custom does not allow them to light fire. This is in addition to the fact that there is no assurance that suitable food will be provided to those suffering from ulcers or diabetes. The necessities of human life, which are at a minimum in prison, require that a dining-room be provided for prisoners, since we are obliged to eat on the floor of rooms in which we sleep, eat and perform our bodily functions around the clock and for long years, packed into rooms resembling sardine cans.

6. Visiting

The visiting time allocated to each prisoner has been half an hour a month throughout the prisoner's term, recently increased to half an hour every two weeks. This, combined with visiting conditions in rooms where space is confined and where a steel mesh separates the prisoner from his kin, is insupportable. This is in addition to the lack of ventilation in the cramped visiting rooms where asbestos sheets block off the only windows and prevent the circulation of air. As against that, we note that the members of the Jewish terrorist organization in Tel Mond prison and the Kahane group of racists in their prisons enjoy privileges which have no counterpart in other prisons. The report of the Knesset members who visited the Tel Mond prison on 30 August 1984 indicates that the Zionist terrorists there enjoy freedom of movement and are provided with means of relaxation and entertainment. Their living conditions are such that they have spacious rooms and they can spend hours with their relatives who supply them with all their needs, to the extent of luxury. These privileges exceed those granted to Jewish criminal prisoners, although the latter enjoy a standard of life and conditions of detention which are much better than those granted to the prisoners of the Palestinian revolution. Further, the Palestinian revolution treats Zionist prisoners in accordance with the international conventions and even provides them with conditions of detention which are such that it is difficult to distinguish between them and the living conditions in a hotel, as Zionist prisoners have themselves acknowledged and as the International Committee of the Red Cross has confirmed. In spite of our repeated demands over more than 17 years for equality between our conditions of detention and the living conditions granted to Jewish criminal prisoners, we meet with a response which is represented by special treatment of the seventh degree in order to satisfy the sadistic propensity of Zionism and its savage spirit of vengeance. Perhaps the clearest proof of that is to be found in the traces of beatings and the wounds seen by officials of the International Committee of the Red Cross, during their visit to our place of detention, on the bodies of the prisoners, our freedom fighters, and that after more than 17 years of detention in Zionist prisons. It is such bloody and

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terroristic treatment, basically beatings and brutal murder, that characterizes the manner in which Zionist prisons are administered, and we have, from the beginning, been combating this murderous policy for more than a decade and a half. Nevertheless, we see it embodied in the new prison in all its brutal dimensions. We are today entering the eighteenth year of our detention, and the Zionist authorities have inaugurated that year by beating us with clubs and spraying us with gas, and many of the prisoners, our freedom fighters, have been afflicted with chronic disabilities, wounds and fractures because of the savage beatings. The response of the prison administration to our just demands has been, and continues to be, to increase the savage repression, to constrict our internal movement in order to prevent our associating with each other, to conduct provocative searches on grounds of security and to proceed to restrict the water supply to prisoners, on a regular basis, to four hours a day in order to save it for their settlements. Furthermore, in less than two months, the prison authorities have twice used gas and clubs in collective repression operations which have caused the wounding of a number of prisoners and seizures of choking and an inability to breathe. The Zionist authorities place the Palestinian prisoner against the wall and set about killing him in accordance with their criminal policy and, if he shows resistance - and he does in fact show resistance to the policy of material and moral murder - the response of the criminal authority comes in terms of abuse and insults against the national and human dignity of the prisoner.

In submitting to you this document setting forth the living conditions in Zionist places of detention in general and conditions in the central prison in Nablus in particular, we hope, Mr. Secretary-General of the United Nations and distinguished Members of the General Assembly, that you will lend your weight to our legitimate, just and lawful demands, as stipulated in international instruments, in order to preserve the humanity of man and dispel the nightmare of the inequities suffered by prisoners of the Palestinian revolution at the hands of the executioners of our people. We hope that you will make use of the great material and moral power that you enjoy in the international community in favour of the prisoners of the Palestinian revolution. We look to you with hope and trust that you will not disappoint that hope.

Long live the struggle for the just and legitimate demands of the Palestinian prisoners in the Zionist prisons. Greetings to you from the prisoners of the Palestinian revolution in the Zionist prisons.

On behalf of the prisoners of the
revolution in Nablus central prison,
West Bank
