



General Assembly Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

A/42/439 ✓

S/19013

31 July 1987

ENGLISH

ORIGINAL: ARABIC

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Forty-second session

Items 39 and 76 of the
provisional agenda*

THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST
REPORT OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE

TO INVESTIGATE ISRAELI PRACTICES
AFFECTING THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF
THE POPULATION OF THE OCCUPIED
TERRITORIES

SECURITY COUNCIL

Forty-second year

Letter dated 31 July 1987 from the Permanent Representative
of Jordan to the United Nations addressed to the
Secretary-General

I wish to draw your urgent attention to a new act of aggression carried out by the Israeli occupation authorities against an Islamic historic landmark in the city of Jerusalem whose origins go back to the Ayyubid era, in the context of the Israeli measures aimed at the Judaization of the Holy City in order to obliterate its historic landmarks that preserve their Arab and Islamic character. The implementation of these measures began immediately following the occupation of the Holy City in 1967.

This ancient Islamic landmark is the Tankiziyah Madrasah located at the Bab al-Silsilah in Jerusalem and built by the Mamluk Emir Tankiz in A.D. 1320 as an Islamic religious school. It was subsequently converted to the seat of the Islamic Supreme Court and remained so until the Israeli occupation of the city in 1967, when the Israeli army proceeded to use the rooms and roof of the building, on the pretext of the strategic nature of the location for observation of activity in the area of the adjacent Al-Aqsa Mosque.

* A/42/150.

Following the report carried by the Israeli newspaper The Jerusalem Post on Sunday, 21 June 1987, about cracking and collapse in part of the Tankiziyah Madrasah building, the Department of Islamic Awkaf in Jerusalem made the necessary contacts with officials in the Municipality, the Department of Antiquities and the Israeli police in order to enable a special committee of the Department of Islamic Awkaf, under the chairmanship of His Eminence the President of the Council of Awkaf and Islamic Affairs, to visit the building and ascertain the facts. The Department of Islamic Awkaf was promised by the Jerusalem Inspector of Antiquities that the visit could be made on the morning of 30 June 1987. However, this visit did not take place as scheduled, the excuse being that the necessary permit had not been issued by the Israeli supreme authorities. During this period, the Department of Awkaf contacted and made approaches to the competent authorities with a view to expediting the process of the issuance of the required permit. However, the operation failed. In view of the anxiousness of the Department of Awkaf to examine the situation at close hand and in the light of the available possibilities, the Deputy Director of Awkaf, the Assistant Director of Construction and Maintenance, the Chief of the Islamic Antiquities Division and the photographer of the Antiquities Division, accompanied by the Jerusalem Inspector of Antiquities, Mr. Dan Bahat, paid a visit to a part only of the Tankiziyah Madrasah, namely, the back of the western part adjoining what is known as the Wailing Wall (Al-Buraq) in the neighbourhood of the excavations that have been, and are being, carried out by the Israeli Ministry of Religious Affairs. The visit was limited to only one of the rooms located to the west of the south iwan of the Tankiziyah Madrasah. The group was not permitted to visit any other part of the Madrasah, in spite of the Department of Awkaf's emphasis on the need for a visit through the main entrance to the whole building. From the visit and inspection, the following was evident:

1. The collapse of a portion of the floor of the room located to the west of the south iwan over an area 2.5 x 3 square metres and to a depth of 4 metres approximately, so that the Ayyubid foundations of the Tankiziyah Madrasah were uncovered.
2. Cracks in the walls of the foundations of the Ayyubid Tankiziyah Madrasah.
3. Fissures in the ceiling of the above-mentioned room.
4. Disintegration of a large portion of the marble floor of the room and damage to its plaster and walls owing to humidity and water seepage from all directions.
5. Damage to doors and windows as a result of negligence and abuse.

What may be concluded from that damage to the property and the procrastination of the Israeli occupation supreme authorities in issuing a permit for the Special Committee of the Islamic Awkaf to visit and inspect the building and see the facts confirms the following:

1. The underlying cause is persistence in the excavations being carried out by the Israeli Ministry of Religious Affairs underneath Islamic buildings in numerous directions for the purpose of completing schemes which have been drawn up but not yet completed.

2. The cracks in the walls of the foundations of the room, in the south-west corner of the Madrasah and in the ceiling of the room, all caused by the excavations under the building, are a sure indication of the gravity of the situation.

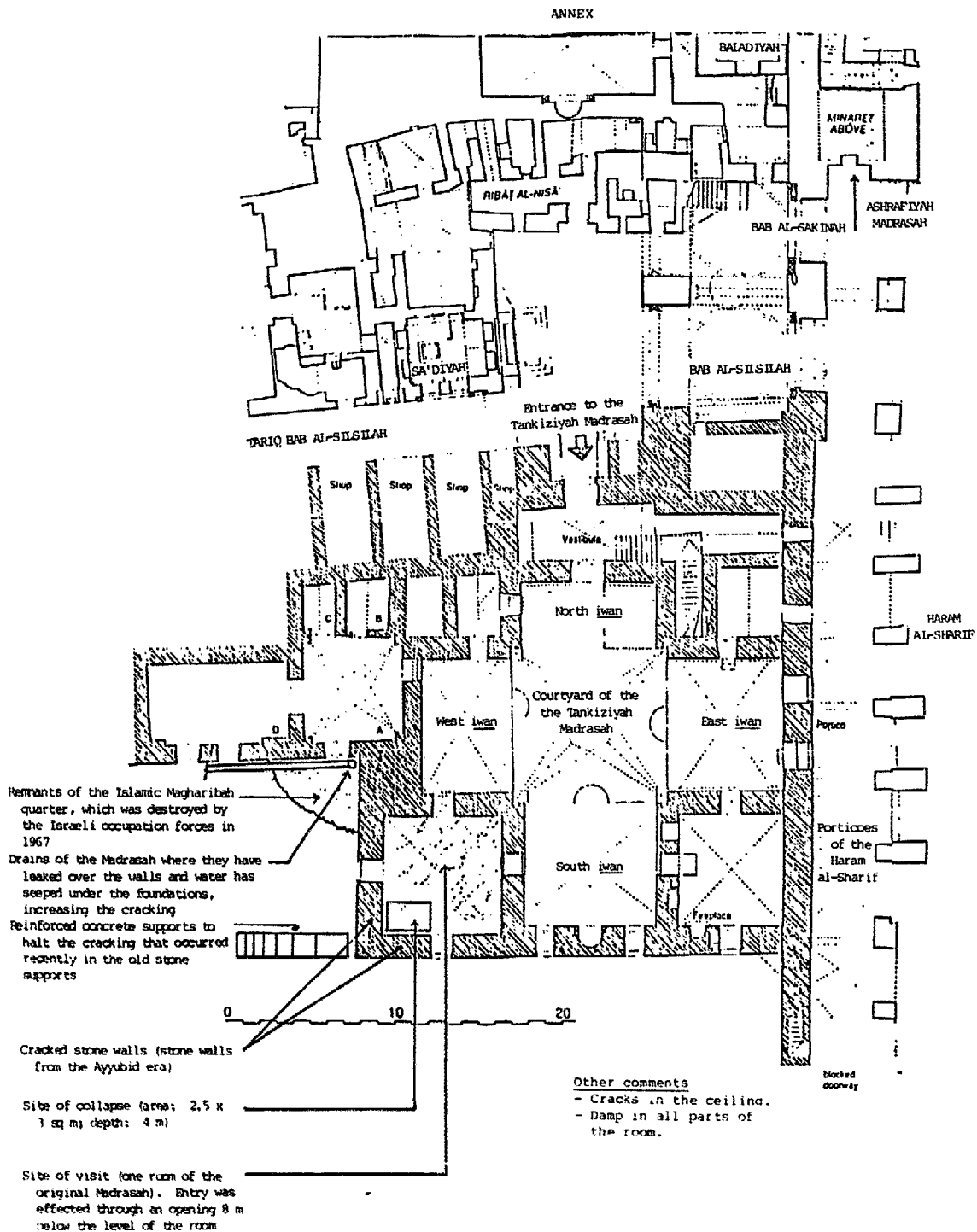
3. Negligence in the use of the building is evident to a large degree. This is apparent from an inspection of one room of the building.

4. The delaying of the visit for such a long time, although cracking had occurred and electrical equipment and transformers were present, emphasizes that the operation is bigger than has been indicated or stated in the Israeli press.

The Government of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, in bringing to your attention the deliberate damage that is being done to an Islamic historic landmark and the consequent injury to the feelings of Muslims, reaffirms the urgent need to take effective measures to ensure the preservation of the condition and integrity of the Islamic historic and sacred places and to endeavour to ensure respect for and implementation of United Nations resolutions relating to Jerusalem, which reject all Israeli measures, legislation and action aimed at altering the character of the Holy City and its demographic and geographical structure and emphasize the urgent need to put an end to Israeli occupation of the Arab territories occupied since 1967, including the city of Jerusalem.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as an official document of the General Assembly, under items 39 and 76 of the provisional agenda, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Abdullah SALAH
Ambassador
Permanent Representative



HORIZONTAL SECTION OF THE GROUND FLOOR OF THE
 TANKIZIYAH MADRASAH SHOWING DETAILS OF CRACKING
 AND DISINTEGRATION WHICH HAS OCCURRED IN THE
 ABOVE-MENTIONED ROOM AND WHICH WAS DISCOVERED
 ON 24 JUNE 1987