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New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 36th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. DIALLO (Guinea)

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AGENDA ITEM 71: REPORT OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE TO INVESTIGATE ISRAELI PRACTICES AFFECTING THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF THE POPULATION OF THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES: REPORTS OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.25 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 71: REPORT OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE TO INVESTIGATE ISRAELI PRACTICES AFFECTING THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF THE POPULATION OF THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES: REPORTS OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued) (A/39/339, 501, 527, 532, 591, 620 and 665)

1. Mr. HOSSAIN (Bangladesh) said that the report of the Special Committee (A/39/591) objectively described the situation of the civilian population of the occupied territories. The information which it contained convincingly reflected the fact that the Israeli authorities were continuing their illegal policy of annexation and settlement and, with impunity, were trampling underfoot the principles and purposes of the Charter, the resolutions adopted by the United Nations and other relevant international instruments.
2. The negative position taken by the Israeli authorities towards the Special Committee represented a vain attempt to hide acts of injustice, torture and oppression. There was great irony in the fact that those who never ceased recalling their own past persecution under an oppressive régime were now indulging in equally nefarious practices.
3. The report of the Special Committee revealed that human rights violations in the occupied territories were not only acts committed by individuals or groups of criminals but were based on the policy of the Tel Aviv Government. Genocide, torture, victimization, repression and oppression on the basis of race and religion firmly established Israel as an entity engaged in State terrorism.
4. With reference to the Secretary-General's reports (A/39/339, 501, 527, 532, 620 and 665), he said that they offered graphic examples of human rights violations in the occupied territories, and reinforced the findings of the Special Committee. Bangladesh rejected the Israeli contention that the need for security and law and order justified such brutality.
5. The situation of the Palestinians and other Arabs in the occupied territories was one of the greatest tragedies of modern times, crying out for an immediate remedy. It was high time for the comity of nations to recognize that human rights violations in the occupied territories would cease only when the Palestinians were allowed to exercise their right to self-determination. Further, the Golan Heights should be returned to Syria, thus guaranteeing the rights of the Syrians living there.
6. Bangladesh condemned Israeli measures to change the demographic and geographic character of the occupied Palestinian territories. The imposition of Israeli laws in the occupied areas had no legal validity, and Tel Aviv had no right to plunder natural resources and the archaeological and cultural heritage of the region. All Arab prisoners should be released immediately and transferred to Algiers, in accordance with the agreement reached with ICRC. Bangladesh demanded that the Israeli Government should allow elected Palestinian leaders to resume their functions immediately and that it should restore full academic freedom.

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(Mr. Hossain, Bangladesh)

7. He stressed that the deliberations of the United Nations should be translated into concrete deeds without further delay. Every effort should be made to engender universal rejection of Israeli brutalities in the occupied territories. All delegations should demand with one voice that Israel put an end to its inhuman acts. Information should be disseminated and public opinion mobilized - particularly non-governmental organizations, the media and world leaders - in support of the victims of Israeli oppression. In an interdependent world, where peace and security were indivisible, it was imperative to act immediately and without hesitating to resolve the question of the Middle East.

8. Mr. STANICA (Romania) said that his delegation supported the conclusions contained in the Special Committee's report (A/39/591) and the recommendations in paragraph 339.

9. Any strategy to solve the current difficulties within the framework of peace-keeping initiatives should be based on renunciation of the threat or use of force. Attainment of the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to decide its future in a climate of peace and security and to establish an independent State should be ensured. At the same time, the legitimate interests of all the States of the region should be guaranteed. Israeli measures to alter the demographic, geographic and cultural character of the occupied territories constituted blatant violations of the resolutions of the General Assembly, Security Council, Economic and Social Council and the Commission on Human Rights and of the provisions of the Geneva Convention.

10. His delegation reiterated the inadmissibility of territorial conquest by force and the need to end military conflict, eliminate crisis points and resolve disputes between States by negotiation and peaceful means.

11. Romania had, since 1978, stated its support for an International Peace Conference on the Middle East, to be held under United Nations auspices and with the participation of all the parties involved, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the United States of America and other States.

12. With respect to Lebanon, Romania called for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Israeli troops and the reconciliation of Lebanese political forces so as to ensure the independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of the country, in order to establish conditions which would guarantee the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people and make it possible to resolve the problems of the region to the benefit of the area and international peace and security.

13. Mr. ABDULLATIF (Oman) said that the Special Committee's report (A/39/591) presented a gloomy picture of the situation in the occupied territories. Despite the fact that it had not been possible to carry out an on-site investigation, the report reflected the daily sufferings of the population of the territories and the premeditated practices imposed by Israel. Careful consideration of the report led to a number of conclusions.

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(Mr. Abdullatif, Oman)

14. Firstly, Israel's refusal to allow the Special Committee to visit the occupied Arab territories demonstrated that Israel ignored international instruments and the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly, while the international community maintained a total silence on the matter.
15. Secondly, Israel's refusal to accept the application of the Geneva Conventions to the occupied Arab territories showed that its occupation was permanent and not temporary, inasmuch as that occupation assumed the character of annexation.
16. Thirdly and lastly, reference should be made to the theory of violence used by the occupying Power, violence which was apparent in the daily conduct of the Power in the occupied territories and which transcended the political and military levels to encompass the civilian population as well.
17. He compared the present situation in the occupied territories with the time of the British Mandate and reached the conclusion that the only difference between the two situations was that present-day terrorist organizations operated under the protection of the law and of Parliament.
18. Mr. WAYARABI (Indonesia) said that the report prepared by the Special Committee, under increasingly difficult conditions and despite Israel's continued refusal to allow an on-the-spot investigation, contained adequate information to confirm that Israel was continuing and had even intensified its repressive policies in the occupied territories. The report contained a list of serious violations of widely-accepted norms of international law in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and on the Golan Heights.
19. The report depicted a continuing policy of annexation; the Government of Israel was relentlessly continuing to establish new settlements. Those established in the past had been consolidated into civilian areas, which emphasized their permanency, not only from the viewpoint of the Government but from that of the settlers as well.
20. The report presented a tragic picture of the heinous practice of collective punishment used against whole villages and involving imprisonment, the demolition of houses and even the denial of the right to work. Other measures of reprisal included the sealing of houses, the closing of shops, restriction of the movement of civilians, destruction of crops and water resources, expulsions and deportations, and the confiscation of lands to establish Jewish settlements.
21. The so-called civilian administration had also adopted far-reaching policies, including the use of educational and cultural institutions as instruments to modify the cultural identity of the population of the occupied territories. His delegation was also concerned at the treatment of detainees and prisoners, who were being forced to serve their terms of imprisonment in subhuman conditions and were being denied the right to appeal to the High Court of Justice. The municipal councils had been dissolved, which left the indigenous population with no proper body to which it could appeal.

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(Mr. Wayarabi, Indonesia)

22. Over and above the repressive policies of the military and civilian authorities, the Palestinians were being subjected to attacks by Israeli settlers who were beyond the control of any authority. The Special Committee had noted the use of provocation by the occupying forces and the settlers against the Arab population and the severe repression to which the Arabs were subjected when they attempted to protect their families and property. The occupied territories had been converted into a police-State in which well-organized settler groups were intimidating Palestinian civilians.

23. The delegation of Indonesia condemned the occupying Power's persistence in carrying out its oppressive measures, without which neither the settlements policy nor the civilian administration could be imposed on the population. It called upon Israel to observe scrupulously all of its international obligations and to implement the relevant decisions of the United Nations. The Special Committee had warned that failure to bring to an end the tragic situation in which the Palestinians found themselves might make that situation even more difficult in the future. The occupied territories were at the heart of any solution to the Middle East conflict, and his delegation was firmly convinced that the General Assembly had the solemn duty to prevent continued deterioration of the situation of the Arab population in the occupied territories and to intensify the search for a comprehensive political solution to the Middle East conflict.

24. Mr. MARSOU (Observer, League of Arab States) said that to a great extent both the report and the statements made by the various delegations reflected international consensus and the collective Arab viewpoint on Israeli practices in the occupied territories.

25. Nevertheless, he felt it necessary to emphasize that Israel was establishing "colonization jurisprudence" by systematically deforming well-known and amply confirmed facts, with the aim of institutionalizing the occupation. Israel was the only occupying Power in history that did not admit to being one, because it considered that, in fact, the occupied territories belonged to it. Moreover, it did not consider the population of the occupied territories as a people with rights, but as human obstacles to its designs for annexation. Furthermore, Israel was the only country in the world that possessed no document that established its frontiers. That explained the semantic acrobatics of Israel, which, since 1967, had passed from admitting that it was dealing with occupied territories to calling them administered territories and then, with the Zionization of the region, to calling them Judea and Samaria.

26. Israel not only denied the political existence of the Palestinian people, but its policies went even further than those of apartheid, which recognized the existence of black people, albeit as an inferior race. Israel was denying the population of the occupied territories the right to exist and to enjoy its fundamental rights. The Palestinians were suffering from an institutionalized discrimination that clearly showed Zionism to be a form of racism.

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(Mr. Maksoud, Observer, League of Arab States)

27. The League of Arab States, in recognizing the PLO as a full member, wished it to be understood that it was now time for the Palestinians to exercise their right to self-determination and to have a political entity and form of expression as part of the Arab world. The League was of the opinion that Israel was trying to feed public opinion a series of equivocations in order to hide its real aim, that of annexing the occupied Arab territories by its attempts to dehumanize and depersonalize the national identity of the Palestinian people.

28. Mr. AL-HASSANI (Kuwait), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, pointed out that, at the previous meeting, the representative of Israel had said that he rejected the statement of the representative of Kuwait, whereas, in fact, the representative of Israel had indirectly authenticated that statement by referring to the occupied territories of the West Bank as Judea and Samaria. Israeli spokesmen were in general very clever at avoiding the main issues, because they were defenceless vis-à-vis international criticism of their practices and policies in the occupied territories. In reply to the surprising remark by the representative of Israel that the report of the Special Committee made no mention of what the Israelis had done to improve the quality of life for the Palestinians, he pointed out that there was no benign or benevolent occupation; there was only one type of occupation, illegal occupation. The best proof that Israel had not done anything to improve the quality of life for the Palestinians was its refusal to allow the Special Committee to visit the occupied territories in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

29. Mr. BURAYZAT (Jordan) said that he reserved his right to reply at a later stage.

30. Mr. MANSOUR (Observer, Palestine Liberation Organization), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that colonialists, imperialists and racists followed a similar logic, professing supposedly humanitarian motives in order to subdue a population which they considered to be inferior and which they claimed to be rescuing from underdevelopment and ignorance.

31. The inhabitants of the occupied territories had the right to fight using all the methods at their disposal, including armed struggle, in order to end the occupation. That was their first duty, and the occupying forces could not expect anything except resistance so long as the Palestinians were unable to exercise their right to self-determination. Their struggle could not, therefore, be considered as terrorism. It was Israel which was systematically practising State terrorism, as was shown by its practices in the occupied territories and its recent activities in Lebanon, of which the events at Sabra and Shatila were only one example.

32. The representative of Israel claimed that Israel was interested in peace and that the Arab countries were not. However, peace would mean the implementation of General Assembly resolution 38/58 C, in which the Assembly endorsed the call for convening an International Peace Conference on the Middle East in which all parties to the conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, would participate

(Mr. Mansour, Observer, PLO)

on an equal footing. Israel and the United States were the ones opposing the convening of that Conference, which was evidence that they did not want peace.

33. Mr. BARROMI (Israel), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the observations regarding zionism made by the observer for the League of Arab States were unacceptable lies.

The meeting rose at 4.45 p.m.