



SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 33rd MEETING

Chairman: Mr. IRUMBA (Uganda)

CONTENTS

AGENDA ITEM 64: REPORT OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE TO INVESTIGATE ISRAELI PRACTICES
AFFECTING THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF THE POPULATION OF THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

* This record is subject to correction. Corrections should be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned *within one week of the date of publication* to the Chief of the Official Records Editing Section, room A-3550, 866 United Nations Plaza (Alcoa Building), and incorporated in a copy of the record.

Corrections will be issued after the end of the session, in a separate fascicle for each Committee.

81-58066

Distr. GENERAL
A/SPC/36/SR.33
23 November 1981

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

/...

The meeting was called to order at 10.55 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 64: REPORT OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE TO INVESTIGATE ISRAELI PRACTICES AFFECTING THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF THE POPULATION OF THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES (A/36/85, A/36/579, A/36/588)

1. The CHAIRMAN drew the attention of the Committee to the report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Population of the Occupied Territories (A/36/579), the report of the Secretary-General submitted in pursuance of General Assembly resolution 35/122 D and Security Council resolution 434 (1980) (A/36/85) and the report of the Secretary-General submitted in accordance with paragraph 11(d) of General Assembly resolution 35/122 C, (A/36/588). A number of letters on the item addressed to the Secretary-General had also been circulated. They included 14 letters from Jordan (A/36/58, 89, 125, 128, 178, 180, 373, 381, 399, 443, 444, 460, 489 and 505); and one letter from Morocco (A/36/94). Other documents relating to the agenda item were: document A/36/116 containing the documents of the Conference of Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Non-Aligned Countries held at New Delhi from 9 to 13 February 1981; document A/36/138 containing the resolutions and final communique of the Third Islamic Summit Conference held in Mecca from 25 to 28 January 1981; document A/36/421 containing the resolutions and final communique of the Twelfth Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers held in Baghdad from 1 to 5 June 1981; document A/36/566 containing the communique of the meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Heads of Delegation of the Non-Aligned Countries to the thirty-sixth session of the General Assembly held at the United Nations Headquarters on 25 and 28 September 1981; document A/36/584 containing the resolutions adopted by the 68th Interparliamentary Conference held at Havana from 15 to 23 of September 1981; and document A/36/603 containing the final communique of the meeting of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Organization of the Islamic Conference held at United Nations Headquarters on 3 October 1981.

2. Mr. FONSEKA (Sri Lanka), introducing the report of the Special Committee on behalf of its chairman who was unavoidably absent, said that the Government of Israel had not changed its position with regard to the Special Committee; and the absence of the co-operation of the Government of Israel must therefore be borne in mind in considering the report.

3. Section II of the report gave an account of the manner in which the Special Committee had organized its work and of the various activities which it had undertaken in carrying out its mandate. Section III, and particularly paragraph 16, contained an interpretation of the mandate of the Special Committee. Section

/...

IV provided a summary of the information and evidence considered by the Special Committee. Section V contained the conclusions which the Special Committee had reached on the basis of the information contained in section IV, in the context of the applicable international law referred to in section III. The two annexes to the report contained information on the establishment of settlements, and on areas of expropriation, recorded by the Special Committee. The maps were intended to supplement the information on the same subject contained in section IV.

4. The Special Committee relied for its data on reports taken from newspapers of Israeli origin, some of which might be described as pro-Government and others a independent of the Israeli Government. In examining those reports, the Special Committee took care to ensure the accuracy of the information. It had also considered communications from individuals or groups having direct knowledge of the situation in the occupied territories.

5. The Special Committee did not consider itself a prosecutory or an accusatory body. In order to verify the accuracy of evidence, it sought confirmation of newspaper reports from other sources and cross-examined witnesses. In that regard, the Special Committee did perhaps perform a quasi-judiciary function, at least with respect to the scrutiny of the evidence coming before it. Apart from that, it functioned exclusively as a fact-finding mechanism in accordance with its mandate. Section V of the report provided an analysis of the facts gathered, and viewed them in the context of applicable international law. In doing so, the Special Committee focused attention on the factual reality as compared with the legal reality.

6. Since its establishment in 1968 the Special Committee had submitted 13 reports to the Special Political Committee. Every year the last-mentioned Committee had adopted a resolution permitting the Special Committee to continue its work. He wondered whether the practice had improved the position of the people in the occupied territories or, more specifically, whether it had enhanced their enjoyment of human rights. He believed that he was speaking on behalf of the Special Committee. When he said that the procedure previously adopted had not had an appreciable impact on the human right situation of the people in the occupied territories, the current report was proof of that reality. The international community might been made aware of the precarious situation of the people in the occupied territories; beyond that, all he could say was that their situation had not improved. On occasion it had perhaps worsened to the extent that the policy of the Government of Israel, particulaly with regard to the annexation of the occupied territories had altered to the detriment of the inhabitants of those territories.

7. He wondered therefore whether the Special Political Committee should not try to find another formula which would be acceptable to both the international

community and to the Israeli Government as the occupying power, and which would reverse the existing process and improve the human rights situation of the people in the occupied territory. In raising that question, he did not of course wish to suggest that the Special Committee was seeking to skirt the responsibility which the General Assembly had entrusted to it; nevertheless, he would suggest to the members of the Special Political Committee -- and not only to those who had acknowledged the value of the work of the Special Committee -- that they should now address their minds to the question he had mentioned.

8. Mr. RAMIN (Israel) said that the report of the Special Committee was again replete with false accusations and distortions of truth. The Special Committee had again followed its long-established practice of misinterpreting information and statements in order to make them appear to support its preconceived conclusions.

9. The picture presented in the report was precisely the one which Arab War propaganda wanted to paint of Israel. In fact, Israel was an open and free society. Anyone could see its democracy in action, served by highly-developed governmental, parliamentary and judicial institutions. Anyone could see the considerable development which had taken place in Judea, Samaria and the Gaza District. Although his delegation had no intention of suggesting that conditions in those areas were always quiet, the situation was satisfactory in comparison with the situation in many other countries which were not privileged to receive so much attention from the United Nations. An impartial observer would find that disruptions of day-to-day life in the territories in question were relatively insignificant.

10. The application of the principles of human rights in Judea, Samaria and the Gaza District could not be examined without considering the circumstances prevailing there. International law clearly recognized the fact that, in addition to ensuring the welfare of the local population, the authorities had a clear duty to protect that population, together with their own, against the dangers of disorder and terrorism.

11. The position of his Government with regard to the Special Committee had been consistent ever since the Committee's establishment. General Assembly resolution 2443 (XXIII), which called for the establishment of the Special Committee, was one-sided since it ignored Security Council resolution 237 (1967) and the plight of Jewish communities in Arab countries. Furthermore, the Special Committee had been set up in a highly irregular procedure of the most dubious legality. Over the years, events had vindicated his Government's position vis-a-vis the Special Committee.

12. The Special Committee assumed as a given fact that the presence of Israel, particularly in the parts of Mandated Palestine formerly occupied by Jordan and Egypt, was the source of all evil; and it entirely ignored the causes and circumstances behind Israel's presence there. Those territories had played a significant role in the Arab wars against Israel, and the territorial situation derived directly from the outcome of the Arab aggression of 1967. Ever since Judea, Samaria and the Gaza District had been under Israeli control, the Arab rejectionists had tried to reconvert them into forward bases in their attempt to liquidate Israel. In the endeavour, they had allocated to the so-called Palestine Liberation Organization the task of using the territories as bridgeheads for acts of terror and subversion against Israel and its civilian population. It might be that countries thousands of miles away, unfamiliar with the perils of protracted conflict and hostile neighbours, could turn a blind eye to those harsh facts. Israel could not. Other States might enjoy considerable security and strategic depth. Israel, which had been subjected to four wars of aggression launched by hostile neighbours in three decades, did not.

13. Although his Government was of the opinion that the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 was not applicable in the territories administered by Israel, it nevertheless applied the principles of that Convention and even granted the population privileges not laid down in it. Although the Convention allowed the application of capital punishment, Israel had never applied the death penalty in the areas in question, in spite of acts of indiscriminate murder and terrorism. His Government gave the local population access to Israeli courts, permitted it to travel to and engage in trade with neighbouring Arab countries, and allowed it to take part in free and democratic elections. None of those rights was provided for in the Convention.

14. The Special Committee relied heavily on article 49 of the Convention to support its thesis that no Israeli settlements were allowed in the administered areas. Even if the laws of belligerent occupation were for some reason applicable there, it should be borne in mind that article 49 prohibited forcible transfers, and no voluntary acts by individuals wishing to take up residence in the areas concerned. The leading treatise on that matter, Oppenheim-Lauterpacht's International Law, stated in volume II that the provision contained in article 49 was a prohibition intended to cover cases of the occupant bringing in its nationals for the purpose of displacing the population of the occupied territory. No displacement of the local population had taken place. In fact, since 1967, the Arab population in the administered areas had increased by approximately 20 per cent.

15. In its attempt to distort the realities prevailing in the territories administered by Israel, the Special Committee had presented its own version

concerning the security of the detainees and their treatment and their rights. It had failed to take into account the fact that those detainees were charged with crimes such as murder, assault or extortion and were detained not for their political beliefs but for common crimes which were punishable in all countries. The activities of the terrorist groups within the framework of PLO throughout the world were well known. The declared aim of that terrorist organization, according to its Covenant, was to liquidate the State of Israel by means of "armed struggle".

16. Israel's courts had been criticized for convicting individuals for being members of a hostile or unlawful organization, pursuant to the Defence Emergency Regulations, and for sentencing them to prison terms for acts which were said to be of a purely political nature. That was a serious misrepresentation of the issues, and criticism of the Israel system of justice was misplaced. Israel's courts and judicial system had established an enviable reputation for independence, integrity and impartiality. The Israeli legal system provided numerous safeguards for the rights of Israel's citizens and the inhabitants of the territories under its administration.

17. With regard to the question of medical treatment of detainees, every detainee was examined by a medical orderly on entering prison and was seen by a doctor at the first opportunity. A medical orderly was present in the prison infirmary daily and a doctor visited every prison at least once a week to examine any detainee who so requested. As part of an ongoing review of the procedures of medical staff in the prisons, directives had been issued in August 1979 emphasizing that prison personnel should keep detailed, accurate records of each detainee's medical history. In addition, the special arrangement with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) regarding the medical examination of detainees provided that, after a visit of the ICRC delegate and at his request, the Israeli authorities should immediately permit the examination, without witness, of the detainee by a Swiss physician on the ICRC staff, or any other physician approved by the two parties to the arrangement. No other country in the world had permitted ICRC to visit security detainees during the period of interrogation.

18. The Geneva Convention recognized the right of a State, faced with circumstances of war, to impose administrative detention where considerations of security so demanded. Israel's procedures were completely in accord with those international principles, and special care had always been taken to ensure that they were respected and practiced. Currently, there were no more than six detainees in the category of administrative detention.

19. The British regulations of 1945 concerning administrative detainees in Israel had recently been replaced by an Israeli law which enhanced judicial supervision and allowed the right of appeal to the Supreme Court. Those provisions had been extended, with minor modifications, to detainees in Judea, Samaria and the Gaza District. The Ministry of Justice regularly reviewed the treatment of security detainees and whenever violations were brought to the attention of the authorities, appropriate measures -- criminal and disciplinary -- were taken. The Government of Israel remained committed to due respect for the civil rights of security detainees in the administered areas.

20. The false accusations contained in the report of the Special Committee were belied by the following facts. Visitors to Judea, Samaria and the Gaza District could note the absence of any large numbers of troops. Health and medical services had been greatly improved. Israeli enterprises offered employment for all who were willing to work, including refugees; and equal wages were paid for equal work. Unemployment had been virtually eliminated and there were more than twenty trade unions in those areas. The Israeli administration had introduced free municipal elections and, in a number of cases, sympathizers of the so-called PLO had been elected to serve as mayors. The civil and religious tribunals composed of local judges were continuing to apply existing civil and religious laws. There was a free press in Arabic which criticized the Israeli Government and administration whenever it saw fit to do so. Press censorship was confined strictly to questions of military security and it applied to Hebrew and Arabic newspapers alike. Agriculture was prospering in Judea, Samaria and Gaza as a result of an imaginative agricultural extension system. The number of school children in those areas had increased from 222,000 in 1968 to more than 400,000 in 1981, and the number of female high school graduates had doubled. There were 13 institutions of higher learning in the administered areas, including three universities. Since 1968 more than 9 million persons had crossed the bridge over the Jordan river in both directions. There was free movement for all between the river Jordan and the Mediterranean Sea and residents could invite relatives from enemy countries to come for prolonged visits.

21. His Government felt that it was time to put an end to the activities of the Special Committee, which had become a sinecure for its members. The Special Committee had no valid reason whatsoever to conduct a repetitive and unproductive discussion designed to obstruct reconciliation and peace in the region. What was not required was a positive and constructive approach on the part of all concerned, including the Palestinian Arabs living in Judea, Samaria and the Gaza District. The Camp David Accords constituted the first major breakthrough in the Arab-Israeli conflict, and remained the only

/...

feasible path to peace. Rather than encourage the annual steril and obscene anti-Israeli ritual, the General Assembly should support the efforts for peace in the region, in a manner worthy of the true aims and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations.

22. Mr. TERZI (Observer, Palestine Liberation Organization) ^{*/} said that the Special Committee had, at the end of the detailed report on its investigations of Israeli practices affecting the human rights of the population of the occupied territories, arrived at the conclusion that the situation was such that the threat to international peace and security due to the policy followed by the Government of Israel in that area was more serious than ever. The Special Committee had endeavoured to be fair; it had taken particular care to rely on information that had not been contradicted by the Government of Israel or that was commonly considered as reliable by that Government; and it had, out of respect for the fundamental juridical principle which required the party whose conduct was in question should be given the opportunity to give its point of view, tried unsuccessfully to obtain the co-operation of that Government. It followed that no one was in a position to deny the facts contained in the report.

23. The report covered both policies and implementation. Expropriation had been carried out not only by so-called extremist groups but through arbitrary legal proceedings, through the application of emergency regulations dating from the time of the British Mandate and by order of the Military Governor. In spite of the formal stand taken by the United States of America in the Security Council at the time of the unanimous adoption of resolution 465 (1980), funds for the expanded "settlement programme" were raised and donated primarily in the United States by the Federal Government and other colonist organizations.

24. In its resolution 465 (1980), the Security Council had, inter alia, deplored the decision of the Government of Israel to officially support Israel settlement in the Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied since 1967; but the Special Committee had produced evidence to show that the Government of Israel was persisting in that policy and in the implementation thereof. The establishment of colonial settlements and the transfer of nationals of the occupying Power to settle in the occupied territory were violations of the Fourth Geneva Convention. The attempts to change the demographic composition and the institutional structure of the occupied territory, and the policy of

*In accordance with the decision taken by the Committee at the meeting, the full text of this statement will be issued under the symbol A/SPC/36/PR.33.

denying the population of the occupied territory the right to self-determination, were violations of the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other norms of civilized behaviour.

25. In referring to the expropriation of Palestinian Arab land, he wished to emphasize the colonial aspect. The 1897 Zionist Congress at Basle had contemplated the promotion of the colonization of Palestine by Jewish agricultural and industrial workers. In the Constitution of the Jewish Agency, it was stated that the Agency would promote agricultural colonization based on Jewish labour; and the agreements between the Jewish Agency and the National Fund or the Foundation Fund included provisions to ensure that only Jewish labour would be used on the holdings thereby made available. The colonialist nature of the Zionist undertaking clearly also had a smell of racism; and the relation between Herzl and Cecil Rhodes could not escape notice.

26. The Israeli policy of exercising direct control over water resources in the occupied territories posed a grave threat to the Palestinian peasants. Such control gave Israel a free hand in establishing new colonial settlements in the occupied areas; but Israel also maintained that its water needs within the area occupied prior to 1967 necessitated the same control. Control of water resources was very close to proclaiming sovereignty over the occupied territories; and the Special Committee had been justified in expressing concern at the statement of policy of the new Government of Israel according to which Government would raise the claim to the "sovereignty of Israel over the occupied territories" in the near future. The military occupation authorities had denied the Palestinian Arabs permits to improve their irrigation projects, even when such projects did not involve additional water use. They did, of course, involve the self-preservation and survival of the Palestinian fellah, whereas Zionist policy demanded the evacuation of the Arabs as the basic prerequisite for its implementation.

27. Life in the Jericho oasis had been radically changed by deep drilling by the settlers, as a result of which the Al-Auja spring was now dry. Local farmers had appealed to the Israeli authorities to stop the pumping or to permit them to drill a new well; but that appeal had been rejected. The Israelis claimed that they were helping the population of the West Bank by passing on their technical skills in irrigation; but that could not compensate for the loss of water which was the local inhabitants' most precious resource. There were numerous cases in which water had been diverted for use by settlers, while Palestinian requests for permission to dig wells were almost invariably denied.

/...

28. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights proclaimed that everyone had the right of education, that education should be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and that it should promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups and should further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace. With education under Zionist control, the Arab student under occupation was obliged to become prudent and wait and rot in ignorance. It had been reported that Arab university graduates faced bleak job prospects, and that some university departments would not admit Arabs for higher degrees. Of 60,000 university students only 3.5 per cent were Arabs, while the Arabs in Israel represented more than 15 per cent of the population. Israeli Arab youths suffered from highly conservative teaching methods and were compelled to learn by rote so that their analysis and understanding of affairs was poor. That policy, which has a political basis, had resulted in relatively poor academic performance, which in turn deepened the sense of alienation among Arab students.

29. Israel's Deputy Attorney-General had said that where there were schools, there were also demonstrations, stone-throwing, and raising of flags and was therefore a threat to security. The so-called "High Court of Justice" had therefore ordered the closure of the Universities of Bir Zeit and Bethlehem. As Palestine was a centre for pilgrimage, Bethlehem University had planned to establish an academic programme enabling students to study history and guide tourists around the historic and holy sites; but permission for such a programme had been denied, and the students' right to education and the right to work had thereby been violated.

30. The aim of that campaign against education was to drive out Arab intellectuals and professionals. All Zionists were, in one way or another, guided by the Biblical injunction to "drive out the inhabitants of the land" (Numbers, 33, 55). Rabbi Meir Kahane was not alone in regarding the Arab population within the Jewish State as a raging cancer. Sharon and his Gestapo troops were now working to eliminate that "cancer". Palestinian Arabs in the Israeli occupied territories were intimidated and threatened, municipalities were closed, elected mayors were expelled and other mayors were marked for physical elimination; and the so-called security forces had made no progress towards arresting the terrorists responsible.

31. The aim of the Zionists was to "evacuate the Palestinian Arabs". Civic and religious leaders had been arbitrarily expelled, and many professional people and teachers were being threatened with expulsion. Unqualified teachers were being imposed on Arab towns and villages; and, if they were

rejected, the schools remained closed. The Israeli military governor was searching hopelessly for collaborators.

32. The Camp David Accords had been presented as a peace formula. However, it should be recalled that in September 1978 Menachem Begin had stated that, under those accords, there would be "a certain withdrawal" from the occupied territories, but most of the Israeli defence forces would remain in Judea, Samaria and Gaza in order to provide security for the people of Israel, even beyond the five-year interim period. On the question of settlements, Mr. Begin had said that there would be a possibility of establishing Nahal footholds and that a total freeze on settlements was certainly not envisaged.

33. How were the Palestinians to react to Israel's intentions, and to a situation in which the so-called peace accords annulled their right to return to their homes and property, to exercise self-determination and to choose their own representatives? As long as their homeland was occupied by Israeli troops, as long as they were denied the right to establish their own sovereign, independent Palestinian State in Palestine, as long as Israel and its supporters -- particularly the United States Government -- obstructed all sincere efforts to achieve a just and comprehensive peace, and until the United Nations -- and in particular the permanent members of the Security Council -- assumed full responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, applied full mandatory sanctions against Israel and demanded its complete withdrawal from the Palestinian and other Arab territories which it had occupied, at least since 1967, there would be no peace. There would be peace only when the Palestinians could return to their homes and exercise their inalienable rights; and until then the Palestinian people would continue its struggle by all means and under the leadership of its sole legitimate representative, the Palestine Liberation Organization.

34. Mr. NUSEIBEH (Jordan) observed that, in its 14-year occupation of Arab and Palestinian lands, Israel had carried on a relentless and manifestly calculated policy of depriving the Palestinian and other Arab peoples of every human right recognized by international law and indeed in every acceptable norm of civilized behaviour.

35. His Government deeply appreciated the assiduous efforts made by the Special Committee, notwithstanding Israel's refusal to co-operate with it, and its judicious portrayal of the terrifying situation of Arabs and Palestinians in the occupied territories. The Committee's report came as no surprise, in view of Israel's brazen determination to annex all the occupied Palestinian and other Arab territories and their resources, in preparation for the day when the indigenous population would have no viable means for survival in their ancestral homeland.

36. It was no longer accurate to talk about Israeli "practice" in the conventional sense of the word, as opposed to malpractices against which constraints were provided for in the Charter, in the numerous international instruments on human rights and in the rules applicable in times of armed conflict. Those instruments had been painstakingly formulated by civilized people to protect civilians during and immediately after armed conflict. However, authors could not have foreseen the abominable atrocities that Israel had been inflicting on an unarmed civilian population over 14 years of occupation, in total defiance of such instruments.

37. Yet there were still some blind supporters of Israel who described it as a shining example of democracy in the Middle East. No self-respecting State would want its name to be associated with kind of sham democracy in which the most ruthless oppression was the daily ordeal of the populations of the occupied territories. In 14 years of occupation, Israel had conducted an all-out onslaught on the land and resources of the occupied territories and against the population whose ancestors had lived there for over 7,000 years.

38. The Chairman of the Special Committee had reported that the Committee had been particularly disturbed at the statement of policy of the new Government of Israel that it would raise the claim to the sovereignty of Israel over the occupied territories in the near future. The Committee had reiterated the need for the international community to intervene to put an end to Israel's policy of annexation. The Committee's conclusions were an accurate reflection of what was actually happening to the occupied territories and their population. In 1979, Jordan had complained to the Security Council that 27.1 per cent of the total land mass of the occupied territories, a Security Council Commission had been established and had, after thorough investigation, confirmed the accuracy of Jordan's complaint. His Government's figures now showed that Israeli colonization of the occupied West Bank, including Jerusalem, had reached 40 per cent. The perfidious Camp David Accords, which were in fact a recipe for the final liquidation of a meaningful Palestinian existence on the national Palestine soil, had envisaged a five-year interim period in the course of which the Israelis had calculated Israeli occupation and plunder would probably encompass 70 to 80 per cent of the entire occupied territory.

39. Side by side with the plunderers of the land and water resources of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, there had been a massive transfer of Israelis to settlements in the occupied territories. Also, after illegally annexing Arab Jerusalem in 1967 within its then existing boundaries, Israel had expanded the city's boundaries to the point where it now constituted 18 to 20 per cent of the entire West Bank. The Israelis had thus already annexed one fifth of the entire West Bank including Jerusalem. The number of Israeli colonizers in that area alone was 150,000 illegal aliens, although any transfer of population to an

occupied territory was strictly forbidden under the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949. Ariel Sharon, The Israeli War Minister, had spoken of plans to settle at least 1 million more colonizers in those territories.

40. The Israelis did not in fact regard the occupied territories as occupied but rather as liberated territories, in other words as territories liberated from the indigenous Palestinian population. In his recent book They Must Go, Rabbi Meir Kahane had, with a frankness that had embarrassed the Israeli authorities, unabashedly described the calculated policy and practice of the Israeli occupiers.

41. With regard to the massive violations of the human rights of the population of the occupied territories, he said that hardly a day passed without the media publishing reports of such violations. Most recently, students had been shot at while demonstrating peacefully against Israel's systematic attempts to dislodge the Palestinians from their homeland. Only that morning, it had been reported that military gangs had blown up three homes in Beit Sabur, near Bethlehem, leaving 29 people homeless. Even the raising of the Palestinian flag or the singing of a national song was regarded as a crime, as was demonstrated by the indefinite closure of Bir Zeit University. Palestinians had been imprisoned for such activities when they were not even carrying fire arms, in contrast to Israeli civilians who possessed at least three quarters of a million machine guns and other arms, which they often used against unarmed civilians. Where else in the world were peaceful demonstrations brutally dispersed and participants jailed for expressing their sentiments?

42. It was no exaggeration to state that hardly any family in the occupied territories had not had at least one of its members jailed over the past 14 years. In most cases, such jailings had been preemptive or predicated on the doctrine that every Palestinian must be assumed to be guilty until extensive interrogation, often involving brutality and torture, proved otherwise. Israel clearly regarded itself as unique and above any obligation to practice universally recognized principles of justice and human rights.

43. On 14 July 1981, the Jordanian Mission had circulated as an official document an article from the Israeli newspaper Al-Hamishnar entitled "The Occupied Territories after 14 Years of Occupation". In that article, Mr. Amnon Kapilok, an Israeli journalist, had stated that, in the first years following the June 1967 war, many Israelis had deluded themselves that liberal occupation of the occupied territories would be possible. No one now believed that liberal occupation was possible; and the policy pursued in the occupied territories was one of an iron fist which was naturally met with resistance, leading to a spiral of further repression and further resistance. The article

/...

had gone on to state that about a quarter of a million persons , or one in five of the inhabitants of the occupied territories, had at some time during the past 14 years been imprisoned in Israeli prisons and detention camps. A similar proportion in the United States of America would have amounted to 45 million people. It was high time that some people stopped talking about Israel as the only shining democracy in the Middle East, unless they assumed that the Palestinian people were not human beings and did not have universal human rights.

44. In view of the above-mentioned situation, together with the continuing excavation of Al-Haram Al-Sharif in Jerusalem and Israel's illegal unilateral construction of a canal linking the Mediterranean Sea to the Dead Sea, the conclusion was inescapable that the Special Committee should intervene promptly to end Israel's occupation of Arab and Palestinian lands. Arabs and Palestinians were determined to restore the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people with the assistance of virtually the entire international community; and they were not in the least daunted by Israel's refusal, in its shortsighted commitment to organized violence, even to countenance a just and lasting peace. Sooner or later, right was surely destined to prevail.

45. In his statement earlier in the meeting, the representative of Israel had been guilty of gross misinformation. The population of the occupied territories was not living in a Garden of Eden, but had been dispossessed to such an extent that its continuing survival in its ancestral homeland was threatened. Torture and death among detainees in Israeli prisons were a fact; and no matter what ICRC or other reports the Israeli representative might cite, the Palestinian people knew what the real situation was in the occupied territories.

46. The Israeli representative had mentioned the educational opportunities afforded to the people of the occupied territories. The delegation of Jordan wished to inform the Committee that when Arabs who had left Palestine after 1948 -- and had a level of education among the highest in the world -- later met Arabs who had remained in Israel, they were shocked at the latter's poor educational level.

47. Of the various Palestinian universities and colleges, one was over fifty years old, Bir Zeit was several decades old and the only new university was one established not by Israel, but by the Holy See which had been concerned with the fact that Palestinian Christians were being forced to leave Israel in order to have access to higher education. It should also be noted that Israel was preventing the establishment of a university of Jerusalem which would be totally funded by Arabs. The Arab countries had long been helping to finance housing, relief and municipal services for the Palestinians in the occupied territories; but even that aid had now been prohibited. Since when was it a crime to provide such assistance?

48. With regard to agriculture, Israel had already confiscated almost 40 per cent of the best Arab lands and forced their occupants off the land and on to the slave labour market, and it had also taken over the European markets for produce from those lands.

49. Begum IKRAMULLAH (Pakistan) proposed that, in view of its importance, the statement by the Observer for the Palestine Liberation Organization should be reproduced in extenso.

50. The CHAIRMAN recalled that the General Assembly had authorized the Special Political Committee to obtain, on its express request, the transcription of all or part of its debates.

51. It was decided that the statement by the Observer for the Palestine Liberation Organization should be reproduced in extenso.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.