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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 31st MEETING

Chairman: Mr. ABDULLATIF (Oman)

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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**

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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 (A/39/591); REPORTS OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/39/339, A/39/501, A/39/527, A/39/532 and A/39/620).

1. Mr. WIJewardane (Sri Lanka) speaking as Chairman of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Population of the Occupied Territories, introduced the sixteenth report of the Special Committee (A/39/591). He paid tribute to the memory of Professor Bechir Meholić, former representative of Yugoslavia on the Special Committee.

2. The report attempted to give a chronology of the main developments in the occupied territories between 19 August 1983 and 31 August 1984, a period which had seen a continuing deterioration in the human rights of the civilian population. Paragraph 26 of chapter III of the report set out the international instruments protecting that civilian population. Those instruments defined the responsibilities of the occupying Power to ensure order and the continuance of life in territories under occupation, pending the conclusion of the state of belligerency. Articles of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, contained in annex I of the report, forbade the taking of steps of a permanent character and any active annexation or transfer of civilian population by the occupying Power to the occupied territories.

3. Those two provisions constituted the key to the human rights problems of the Palestinians and Syrians in the occupied territories. During the period covered by the report, new settlements had been established and several hundreds of Israelis transferred to them, bringing the total number of settlements to at least 220, and the number of Israeli settlers to several thousands. The location of those settlements was shown in a map in annex V of the report.

4. The establishment of settlements had been accompanied by the extensive expropriation of property and interference in virtually every aspect of the daily life of the civilian population. The transfer of Israeli settlers had continued and increased in spite of the warnings of the Committee, further complicating the life of the civilian population.

5. As shown in chapter IV part c of the report, the Israeli settlers were now organized in groups, each of which had repeatedly taken the law into its own hands, murdering, injuring and kidnapping Palestinian and Syrian civilians. The report of the Karp Commission, reproduced as annex III of the report, corroborated the reports received by a Special Committee in that regard.

6. As chapter IV of the report showed, no single aspect in the life of the average person in the occupied territories was not directly affected by the military occupation. Acts of violence were occurring almost daily throughout the occupied territories, as might be seen from the Table of Incidents, which was by no means exhaustive.

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(Mr. Wijewardane, Sri Lanka)

7. Educational institutions had been closed down for long periods. Teachers, who were subject to the issuance of annual work permits by the military authorities, had been intimidated, and transferred arbitrarily with their students to other towns or villages. Prominent trade unionists and intellectuals had been harassed and their freedom of movement and expression restricted. All publications in the occupied territories were censored, and any expression of Palestinian patriotism was punishable by law.

8. The report also described prison conditions and the treatment of detainees. The Special Committee had received several serious allegations which had convinced it that detained Palestinians were not treated in accordance with accepted norms. There had been continuous reports of protests by prisoners against what they described as intolerable treatment, and the Special Committee was satisfied that individuals had been subject to cruel and inhuman treatment, in spite of repeated appeals to the authorities.

9. The civilian population in the occupied territories was at the mercy of the military occupation authorities and the Israeli settlers. Examples were given in the report of the attempts by some civilians to appeal to the Supreme Court of Israel in defence of their basic rights. Such remedies had however not been effective.

10. It was the duty of the Special Committee, by drawing attention to the plight of the civilian population, to encourage the international community to take action to prevent its further deterioration. Israel's policy of annexation of the occupied territories and subjection of the Palestinian population could only provoke further suffering. Concrete steps must be taken to restore to the Palestinian people all their human rights, including that of self-determination.

11. Mr. BURAYZAT (Jordan) said that his delegation attached great importance to item 71, on which for years past it had been the first speaker. His delegation had always given full support to the work of the Special Committee. Unfortunately, however, due to unprecedented delay - which his delegation deplored - in the publication of the report of the Special Committee, it had been impossible for his delegation to make adequate preparation for a statement at the present time.

12. Mr. MANSOUR (Observer, Palestine Liberation Organization) said that the report of the Special Committee conveyed the reality of the brutality and terror practised by the Israeli authorities against the Palestinian people, who had been deprived of all rights. The continued refusal of the Israeli occupation authorities to co-operate with the Special Committee and allow it to visit the occupied territories was further proof of the inhuman conditions under which Palestinians were living in occupied Palestine.

13. A prominent myth of Zionist ideology was that Palestine was a country without a people, and the Jews a people without a country. Having failed physically to annihilate the Palestinian people and to expel or deport them from Palestine, the Zionists had found a new "final solution" by making their life as unpleasant as possible. The devotion of the Palestinian people to the land of Palestine had

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(Mr. Mansour, Observer, PLO)

remained steadfast in the face of imprisonment, torture, terror and cold-blooded murder. The Israeli occupation authorities, finding it impossible to arrest and murder all the Palestinian people, had introduced to the occupied Palestinian territories a system equally as inhuman and barbaric as that of racist apartheid.

14. In the Letter of Transmittal of its report, the Special Committee had pointed out its concern about the further deterioration in the human rights of the civilian population of the occupied territories, as a result of the continuation of the policy of annexation and settlement of those territories by the Government of Israel, and about the plight of thousands of detainees imprisoned for political or security offences. Tawfic Zayyad, a member of the Knesset, had stated that some 300,000, or nearly 1 out of every 2 Palestinians from the Israeli-occupied territory, had been detained or imprisoned since 1967.

15. The vivid descriptions contained in the Special Committee's report of the quality of treatment meted out to Palestinian detainees and prisoners was complemented by the recent appeal sent to the Secretary-General by one thousand prisoners in the new central prison in Nablus. The prisoners had appealed for inhuman treatment; decent food and the provision of newspapers and magazines; the alleviation of intolerable overcrowding; the extension of prison visiting hours to more than half an hour; and an end to savage acts by the prison authorities against defenceless prisoners. Palestinian prisoners had been on hunger strike for more than 600 days during the past 17 years. Many Palestinian prisoners had been murdered, and hundreds suffered from chronic medical problems caused by negligence and inhuman treatment.

16. Fara'a, the only prison in the occupied Palestinian territories run by the Israeli occupation army, had more brutal and harsh conditions than any other Israeli prison. Palestinians were kept up to 30 at a time in cells approximately 20 metres square; they were confined in the stables, as many as five to each stall, and as many as 50 at a time in tents approximately 18 metres square. Since January 1984, Fara'a had become Israel's principal interrogation centre. Torture was regularly used against the prisoners, almost all of whom were Palestinian teenagers. A 15-year old Palestinian student had described his experiences in Fara'a. After he had been handcuffed, and a bag had been placed over his head, he was kept in water for two days in the latrines, during which time he had been beaten unconscious. After 12 more days of torture, he had been kept in the cells for two further months until his release on 22 March 1984.

17. Amnesty International, in its 1984 report, had stated that it continued to receive allegations of the torture of security suspects detained in the occupied territories. According to that organization, 140 former prisoners of the Al-Ansar concentration camp continued to be held incommunicado, in violation of the exchange agreement, in Atlit prison. In a letter written to the Israeli occupation authorities after the discovery of a mass grave in northern Galilee, Amnesty International had stressed the importance of publicizing details of the names and cause of death of the victims, in view of the large number of detainees who had gone missing after transfer to Israel; no reply had been received, and no such details published.

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(Mr. Mansour, Observer, PLO)

18. The use of collective punishment by the Israeli occupation authorities against the Palestinian people had turned the occupied territories into a massive Israeli prison. That was well documented in the report of the Special Committee as well as in that of the Commissioner-General of UNRWA (A/39/13).

19. The International Commission of Jurists (ICJ), in a recent report, had found Israel guilty of "serious violations of academic freedom", contrary to the provisions of the 1949 Fourth Geneva Convention and the 1960 UNESCO Convention Against Discrimination in Education. The ICJ report urged the international community to defend a basically defenceless people from discrimination in higher education which would lead to educational disadvantage and permanent inferiority. Amnesty International's 1984 report recorded at least 90 restriction orders in the occupied territories, many issued to people without charge or trial for the non-violent expression of political opinions.

20. Acts of terrorism against the Palestinian people would necessarily intensify as more Palestinian land was seized, new settlements were built and the number of Zionist settlers increased. Such terrorism was justified by Zionist racist indoctrination, which encouraged the physical elimination or expulsion of Arabs, in a manner reminiscent of Nazi and apartheid policies.

21. The report of the Special Committee had described in some detail the settler terrorist organization Kach, founded by Rabbi Meir Kahane, a member of the Knesset. The ideology of Kach and the similar organization Gush Emunim had been described as being dominated by two themes: the racial inferiority of the Arabs, and the necessity of using armed force to expel them from Israel. The settler terrorist organizations were supported by the Government in Tel Aviv, as revealed during the so-called "trial" of settler terrorists in Israel. The massive support enjoyed by those ultra-rightist, fascist organizations had been shown during the recent Israeli elections.

22. The report of the Karp Commission (A/39/591, annex III) had concluded that Jewish settler terrorism against the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territories would be dealt with effectively only by a political decision and a shift in Government policy. After the publication of the Karp report, it had been reported that Jewish settlers in the West Bank were ordered by the Israeli Defence Forces not to co-operate with civilian police after incidents in which Arabs had been fired on.

23. The first aim of the murder, expulsion, terrorizing and suppression of the Palestinian people living under Israeli military occupation was the total annihilation of Palestinian society, to pave the way for the complete Zionist expropriation of the remaining Palestinian land and the ultimate annexation of all Palestinian land under Israeli military occupation. Paragraphs 273 to 283 of the report of the Special Committee showed that tens of thousands of dunums of Palestinian land had been expropriated during the course of the year. Dozens of new Zionist settlements had been established, and dozens more were planned.

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(Mr. Mansour, Observer, PLO)

24. In his West Bank Data Project, published in 1984, Meron Benvenisti had suggested that the process of creeping annexation begun in 1967 had led to quasi-permanent interactions between the occupying Power and the occupied territories, and that factors working toward total annexation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip now outweighed those working against it. Benvenisti had further claimed that a "binational State" was already in existence, and that failure to understand the true significance of the situation in the occupied territories could lead to the development of a régime similar to that of South Africa. The present situation in Palestine was reminiscent of "Herrenvolk Democracy": a system in which the ruling group enjoyed democracy, while the remainder of the population was disenfranchised and deprived of basic civil rights. The Zionist State was in fact, according to Benvenisti, vacillating between two racist and fascist alternatives: a pure Jewish State, or an apartheid-style State where Palestinian Arabs would be reduced to a source of surplus labor.

25. The Israeli Government's support for the settler terrorist organizations proved that the Zionists sought the physical annihilation of the Palestinian people in order to "purify" the Jewish State. As had been pointed out, it was now becoming hard to distinguish between the lunatic fringe and the mainstream of Israeli political life.

26. The Palestinian people had fought courageously against racism, fascism, foreign domination, oppression and exploitation, Zionist occupation and colonization and United States imperialism. They would determine their own destiny, and would resist the Zionists' "final solution" at all costs, until they and their United States imperialist backers recognized the fact that the Palestinians had an inalienable national right which would be realized.

27. Despite all acts of Zionist terror against the Palestinian people, the destruction of their homes, the expropriation of their land, the deprivation of their right to education, the acts of oppression, intimidation and genocide, the Palestinians would continue to resist. Their will and determination would never be broken. They would continue until they had attained their right to return to their homeland, fully exercise their right to self-determination and establish an independent Palestinian State on their national soil.

The meeting rose at 4.25 p.m.