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QUESTION OF PALESTINE

Letter dated 17 January 1978 from the Chairman of the Committee
on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian
People addressed to the Secretary-General

At a time when the question of the fate of the Palestinian people is receiving increasing attention within the framework of recent talks, the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People has deemed it necessary to authorize me, as its Chairman, to draw the attention of all concerned to the fundamental principles relating to this question which are set out in the report submitted by the Committee to the General Assembly and which were adopted by the General Assembly at its thirty-first session. 1/

Among the most important of those principles, I would mention the following:

(a) The question of Palestine is at the heart of the Middle East problem, and, consequently, no solution in the Middle East can be envisaged which does not fully take into account the interests of the Palestinian people;

(b) The full implementation of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to return to their homes and property and to achieve self-determination, independence and national sovereignty will contribute decisively to a comprehensive and final settlement of the Middle East crisis;

(c) The participation of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people, on an equal footing with other parties, on the basis of General Assembly resolutions 3236 (XXIX) and 3375 (XXX) is indispensable in all efforts, deliberations and conferences on the Middle East which are held under the auspices of the United Nations;

(d) The inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force and the consequent obligation for the complete and speedy evacuation by Israel of any territory so occupied.

1/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-first Session, Supplement
No. 35 (A/31/35).

I am convinced that you will do everything in your power to ensure that those fundamental principles are applied in any effort aimed at establishing a just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

In that connexion, I should like once again to draw your attention to the fact that the Palestine National Council, at its meeting in Cairo in March 1977, decided to consider the recommendations of the Committee which had been approved by the General Assembly at its thirty-first session as a positive and progressive step towards the achievement of the aspirations and rights of the Palestinian people, including the right of return and the right to self-determination, independence and national sovereignty, and to declare that any settlement or agreement affecting the rights of the Palestinian people concluded in its absence would be null and void.

The foregoing considerations had, on the express instructions of the Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization, been reaffirmed by the Permanent Observer for that organization at a meeting of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People held on 10 January 1978 (see A/AC.183/SR.26, pp. 3 and 8).

I should be grateful if you would arrange for the widest possible circulation of the recommendations of the Committee, through the competent organs of the United Nations.

I would also request you to have this letter circulated as an official document of the General Assembly under the item entitled "Question of Palestine".

(Signed) Médoune FALL
Chairman of the Committee on the
Exercise of the Inalienable Rights
of the Palestinian People
