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

Letter dated 28 March 1980 from the Permanent Representative of Jordan to
the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to convey herewith a statement issued by Mr. Rouhi al-Khatib, the Mayor of Arab Jerusalem, in which he strongly deplores the latest act of aggression, in the Jerusalem area, perpetrated by the Israeli occupation authorities, in flagrant violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, 1/ and in defiance of Security Council resolution 465 (1980), pertaining to Israeli colonization of the occupied territories and the ongoing seizure of Arab properties, lands and institutions.

The latest act is the more reprehensible inasmuch as it is targeted against a well-established educational institution in Abu Dees, a suburb of Jerusalem, located at the eastern entrance to Arab Jerusalem. This outrageous act is clearly intended to stifle educational opportunities to the inhabitants of occupied Arab Jerusalem.

Following is Mayor al-Khatib's statement:

"1. The office of the Israeli military governor for the occupied territories, summoned on 16 March 1980, His Eminence Sheikh Sa'ddudeen al-Alami, the Mufti of Jerusalem and head of its religious courts - in his capacity as Chairman of the civic community - supervising the Science College in Abu Dees and Dr. Ahmad Sa'eedan, Dean of the College and informed them of the Israeli military Governor's decision to close down this College within two weeks. He further informed them that they should transfer the student body amongst other Arab colleges, on the spurious grounds that there were three universities and twelve Arab institutions of higher learning with a student body of 6,000 boys and girls, in the occupied Palestinian territories. These colleges, the Israeli military dictator claimed were sufficient to absorb the Jerusalem students as well.

* A/35/50.

1/ United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 75, No. 973 (p. 287).

"2. The said college, the newest victim of Israeli plans to make Jerusalem a wholly Jewish city, is an offshoot of an Arab Philanthropic and Cultural Society, established in sisterly Kuwait in 1957 by a group of Kuwaiti philanthropists and some other Arab brethren living there. The objective of the Society has been, since its inception, to establish a number of academic institutions in the fields of science, industry and agriculture in the Arab world wherever the need is greater. The Society had chosen to found its first college in Jerusalem in view of the dire need of Arab Jerusalem for such a centre.

"3. The people of the village of Abu Dees had donated a spacious piece of land for this purpose. Subsequently, the Society bought additional land and other Abu Dees inhabitants donated other lands, to make it possible to found an academic institute, with the possibility of expanding into a college which would be the nucleus of an Arab University in Jerusalem. The site of Abu Dees was originally chosen because it overlooks the City of Jerusalem from the south-east.

"4. The Society was able by virtue of donations from the late ruler of Kuwait, Sheikh Sabah al-Salem al-Sabah, and other contributors, to lay the corner-stone for the projected college on 7 March 1965 under the name "The Arab Institute". The ceremony was held under the auspices of His Majesty King Hussein Ibn Talal and His Highness the late Emir Sabah al-Saalem al-Sabaah.

"5. The Society had selected a committee in Jerusalem, representing most of the cities and towns in the occupied territories, and empowered it to supervise and develop the institute as a nucleus of an Arab university.

"6. In the aftermath of the Israeli occupation on 7 June 1967, construction was temporarily halted but was resumed in 1969. A high school was inaugurated in 1970 which expanded into a full-fledged secondary college in both the arts and sciences. The college followed the Jordanian curricula and the student body comprised 455 boarding and 87 non-boarding students. Education at the college is free for all the students.

"7. The Society's third phase was started in 1978 for a science college. When the necessary construction was completed for this embryo college, contacts were made with the University of Jordan which loaned to it its former Dean of Sciences and another professor. An additional former professor at the Jordan University was also recruited as were other lecturers from Jerusalem and its environs. The staff thus assembled was deemed sufficient for the first year at the new college. Permits for those professors to enter the occupied territories were requested and approved. Simultaneously, a request was approved by the occupation authorities for the college to upgrade its status to a full-fledged college of sciences and the assistant military governor informed the Society that the expansion could proceed forthwith while administrative formalities were being completed. On the basis of the aforementioned understanding the first year of the college commenced on 11 November 1979 and the enrollment reached 49 students.

"8. Over the past four months, the college conducted its work normally until the Chairman and the Dean were wantonly informed on 16 March 1980 of the Israeli occupation authorities' decision to abolish the college on the totally false grounds that there were other sufficient colleges in the occupied territories. This misleading excuse is contradicted by a meticulous study, carried out by the executive committee of the Palestinian Council for Higher Education in the occupied territories, fully endorsed by a foreign expert who had conducted a similar study recently and which concluded that the institutions of higher learning in the three Arab universities of Nablus, Bethlehem and Beir Zeit could only absorb 30 per cent of the Jerusalem students and that the remaining 70 per cent had no other place to go to, except abroad, or give up higher education altogether. This was the reason why the Abu Dees college was launched in the first place to ameliorate the situation.

"9. This arbitrary action against the people of Jerusalem by closing down their first college, must be viewed in light of the fact that the Israeli occupation authorities have in Jerusalem itself a university comprising 20,000 students and six other universities in other occupied Palestinian towns which comprise an additional 40,000 students.

"10. Needless to state that such wanton and arbitrary action to stifle the right and freedom to education in the occupied territories, in violation of the most elemental provisions of the Geneva Convention of 1949 and basic human rights, has caused the deepest concern and protest throughout the occupied territories and amongst the academic community. Urgent requests have been made for rescinding the occupation authorities' reprehensible decision.

"11. In the name of the Municipal Council of Jerusalem, I appeal to all Governments and peoples, particularly the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Commission on Human Rights, to stand in complete solidarity with the college of sciences at Abu Dees and to demand that the occupation authorities rescind their order for closure of the college, to enable it to continue its educational mission to the students of Jerusalem and its environs and to spare them the inhumane fate which is being imposed upon them.

(Signed) Rouhi al-Khatib
Mayor of Jerusalem"

This communication from the Mayor of Jerusalem speaks for itself. It would be greatly appreciated if this statement were circulated as an official document of the General Assembly under item 57 of the preliminary list.

(Signed) Hazem NUSEIBEH
Ambassador
Permanent Representative
