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REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR THE SECOND DECADE TO COMBAT RACISM AND RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

IMPORTANCE OF THE UNIVERSAL REALIZATION OF THE RIGHT OF PEOPLES
TO SELF-DETERMINATION AND OF THE SPEEDY GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE
TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES FOR THE EFFECTIVE GUARANTEE
AND OBSERVANCE OF HUMAN RIGHTS

ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

Letter dated 6 February 1987 from the Permanent Representative
of Yemen to the United Nations addressed to the
Secretary-General

I should like, in my capacity as Chairman of the Group of Arab States for the month of February 1987, to draw attention to the letter from the Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations and the resolution of the United States Congress dated 15 August 1985 annexed thereto contained in document A/42/67 dated 2 January 1987.

The Group of Arab States is amazed that resort should be had to an attack on resolution 3379 (XXX), which was adopted more than 11 years ago by the General Assembly in accordance with the procedures customary in the United Nations and with the number of votes in favour more than double the number of votes against (72-35-32).

The Group of Arab States is amazed also that such an attack should be made regarding a subject that was decided once and for all in a purely democratic manner more than a decade ago, without the participation of Israel - which is, basically, the party concerned with zionism as a loathsome racist ideology - in a clear and ignominious attempt to exploit the difficult circumstances currently besetting the United Nations and with the aim of pressuring and embarrassing the Organization.

In the light of the above, it is quite clear that the aim is none other than to force this Organization to disavow itself from a portion of the achievements of which it can justifiably feel proud. This makes it incumbent on its Members to stand fast in the face of such attempts, which, if crowned with success, would set a precedent that might have the direst consequences.

The annex to the letter contained in document A/42/67 - inspired by the defiance and disdain which are inherent in all forms of racism and which are totally unjustified in view of the lack of any forward-looking vision that might serve as a basis for the emergence of a new reality in the Middle East, restore right and justice and ensure the implementation of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including its right to return and its right to self-determination and to the establishment of its independent State in its own territory - adopts a threatening tone of vilification as an instrument of pressure wielded by Zionist circles inside and outside Israel for the purpose of breaking out of the isolation resulting from its aggressive practices in the region and in other regions.

It is most amazing that this attempt should come at this time, when the aggression of zionism against the Palestinian people and against Lebanon and the other neighbouring Arab States has reached its culmination. This underscores, beyond any doubt, the fact that Israel persists in the same philosophy and continues to use the same methods that led the General Assembly more than 11 years ago to adopt its historic resolution 3379 (XXX).

Those who set themselves up as defenders of zionism should refer to the debates that have taken place on the subject, whether in the Third Committee or in the General Assembly at the Assembly's thirtieth session, in order to ascertain that the opponents of zionism as an odious type of racism are as far removed as they could possibly be from anti-Semitism and opposition to Judaism.

The Arabs, as States and as a nation, respect and revere Judaism as a revealed religion and do not see in its ancient heritage any connection, as regards belief or as regards teachings and concepts, with the Zionist movement, which bases its philosophy on loathsome racial separatism, as reflected in its shameful practices and inominious measures.

The Arabs, who are Semites by blood descent, cannot be anti-Semitic, unless a man can be his own enemy.

We therefore hope, because of our concern for the credibility and prestige of the United Nations as a major international organization, that the door will not be opened to such dangerous attempts, for otherwise Member States will find their selves abrogating on the morrow what they decide today. That is a very grave matter.

I request you to have this letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under the items entitled "Report of the Economic and Social Council", "Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Second Decade to Combat Racism

and Racial Discrimination", "Importance of the universal realization of the right of peoples to self-determination and of the speedy granting of independence to colonial countries and peoples for the effective guarantee and observance of human rights" and "Elimination of all forms of racial discrimination".

(Signed) Mohamed Salem BASENDWAH
Chairman of the Group of Arab States
Ambassador of the Yemen Arab Republic
to the United Nations
