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QUESTION OF PALESTINE

COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF THE WHOLE QUESTION OF PEACE-KEEPING
OPERATIONS IN ALL THEIR ASPECTS

ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

Letter dated 18 November 1976 from the Permanent Representative of
Iraq to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon instructions from my Government I have the honour to attach herewith the Declaration of the International Symposium on Zionism, which was held in Baghdad, Iraq, from 8 to 12 November 1976, by the University of Baghdad.

I would be grateful if you could kindly arrange for the circulation of the above as an official document of the General Assembly under agenda items 27, 54 and 69.

(Signed) Abdul Karim AL-SHAIKHLY
Permanent Representative

ANNEX

Declaration of the International Symposium on Zionism, held in Baghdad
from 8 to 12 November 1976

1. Meeting under the auspices of the University of Baghdad, academics and intellectuals from 46 countries have examined and discussed zionism, its origins, theory and practice, in the light of United Nations General Assembly resolution 3379 (XXX) of 10 November 1975. The resolution was adopted on the basis of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, which constitutes an international legal document and contains an explicit definition of racism.
2. Recalling that in that resolution the General Assembly determined that "zionism is a form of racism and racial discrimination", the participants of the Symposium expressed the view that this resolution reflected the world's growing awareness of the true nature of zionism and of the danger it represented to the peoples of the area and to world peace.
3. Recalling that when the General Assembly in November 1947 recommended the partition of Palestine the United Nations consisted of only 50 Member States, the Symposium noted that the resolution of November 1975 equating zionism with racism had been adopted when the membership of the United Nations had become more genuinely representative of the opinion of the world as a whole.
4. Zionism as a colonial-settler concept was an offshoot of nineteenth century imperialism. At the same time it reflected the prevalent trend of expansionist nationalism and the mistaken view that the solution of anti-Semitism lay in the self-segregation of Jews in a society from which non-Jews were to be excluded. Recognizing that persecution of Jews was an important factor in the growth of zionism, the participants in this Symposium unequivocally condemn anti-Semitism and pledge themselves to oppose it, like any other form of racism, wherever it may exist.
5. In inviting the immigration of all the Jews of the world, zionism shows itself in its essence to be expansionist. By pursuing this aim, it condemns the "Israelis" to a perpetual war for "living space" at the expense of the peoples of the Middle East.

Because of the necessity for territorial expansion which it involves, zionism has not succeeded, and by its very nature cannot succeed, in satisfying the legitimate aspiration of persecuted Jews to attain security. Moreover, by calling on all Jews to come to Palestine, it pursues the very goal which the most hateful of anti-Semites have set themselves: to confine all Jews in a world ghetto.

It is as defenders of progress, peace and humanism that we denounce this attack on human unity.
6. By setting itself the objective of a racially exclusive Jewish State, in disregard of the rights of the Arabs of Palestine, zionism adopted from its inception an essentially racist character.

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7. For them to achieve their ambitions, it became necessary for the Zionists to dispose of the Arab population of Palestine, which they achieved in 1947/48 by intimidation and violence, resulting in the eviction of the greater part of the indigenous population.
8. By pursuing, after they had achieved statehood, the objective of the "ingathering" into Palestine of the Jews of the world, and by conferring on all Jews a "right of return" which they denied to the Palestinian Arabs, the Zionists confirmed the racist nature of their design.
9. Against those Palestinian Arabs who remained the Zionist authorities practised a policy of institutionalized racial discrimination. This was embodied in a series of laws expressly designed to restrict their human and political rights, to confiscate their land and to suppress their sense of a national identity.
10. Even among the Jewish settlers, zionism, reflecting the nineteenth century European concept of racial supremacy, practised a form of discrimination against the non-European Jews.
11. Eviction of the Palestinians and Zionist expansionism necessitated the use of violence, which in turn led to conflict with the surrounding Arab States, whose recurrence came to threaten world peace.
12. Zionism's co-operation with other racist régimes, as evidenced by its close relationships with Rhodesia and South Africa, is a natural outcome of its roots and developments, for it has always drawn its support and sustenance from imperialism and settler-colonial régimes.
13. Supported by the imperialist Powers, zionism was itself used to extend the influence and promote the interests of imperialism in the Arab homeland and in the third world.
14. By their steadfastness in maintaining the struggle for their rights by all means, including armed resistance, the Palestinians have helped to promote a proper understanding of the essentially racist character of the theory and practice of zionism. The struggle of the Palestinian Arabs, which has been supported by popular forces in the Arab world and by other national liberation movements in the world at large, has demonstrated that the conflict in the Middle East is a conflict between the reactionary Zionist movement, backed by United States imperialism, and the Palestinian Arab liberation movement enjoying the backing of similar progressive movements inside and outside the Arab world, as well as the support of progressive and peace-loving countries.
15. Palestinian determination and willingness to make sacrifices for the cause of liberation, reinforced by the spirit of our era, make it inevitable that zionism, together with all other forms of racism, will eventually be defeated. Victory for the Palestinian cause will not be a victory for the Palestinians alone; it will constitute an important milestone on the road to liberation from oppression throughout the world.

16. We express our deepest sympathy with the Palestinian and Lebanese peoples' suffering from the agonizing effects of a brutal civil war aimed at their peace, unity and progress and the independence of Lebanon.

We express our support for the Palestinian revolution and the Lebanese national movement, which constitute an integral part of the struggle for Palestine, in their struggle against separatism, sectarianism and the propagation of the Zionist model in Lebanon.

17. Zionism is the obstacle to peace in the Middle East. The Palestinian struggle to establish in its place a secular progressive Palestinian society, all of whose citizens enjoy equal rights, irrespective of religion, colour or ethnic origin, deserves the active support of free peoples throughout the world. We particularly invite the co-operation of anti-Zionist Jews and hope for better understanding from citizens of Western countries in the struggle to combat zionism.

18. We commend the measures taken by those Arab Governments which have invited Arab Jews to return to their countries of origin. On the other hand, we express our apprehension over continuing Zionist efforts to stimulate Jewish immigration to Palestine, which we believe will only increase the tension in the area and so threaten world peace.

19. Encouraged by the growing recognition throughout the world of the racist and reactionary character of zionism, of which the United Nations resolution is an important manifestation, we call upon all individuals, organizations and movements working for peace and justice to join in the struggle against zionism. In particular we urge intellectuals and academic institutions to give serious attention to this issue and to involve themselves in the campaign to eliminate zionism and all other forms of racism.

Follow-up

The participants in this Symposium emphatically urge the importance of arranging a systematic programme of publicity to make use of the studies made and the discussions held within the framework of the Symposium.

This should include the publication of the papers presented and their distribution to all those in a position to influence and guide opinion in the outside world. It should also include the preparation of concise and accurate information material for speakers and research students in all countries.

It is desirable that an international research centre should be established, with branches in different parts of the world, which would have the task of collecting and collating the available material, commissioning fresh studies on various aspects of zionism, and arranging for the dissemination of information to individuals and organizations, especially those existing institutions which specialize in the study of political science and of questions affecting international relations.