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Letter dated 19 November 1980 from the Chairman of the Committee on the
Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People to the
Secretary-General

In my capacity as Acting Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People I have the honour to convey the Committee's deep concern at the most recently reported outrage by the Government of Israel in the Palestinian territories illegally occupied by Israel.

Reports from the area speak of the inhuman wounding of 11 students of Beir Zeit University by gunfire from Israeli military forces who had fired into the university campus as the students were demonstrating against the closure of the University to prevent observance by the University of Palestine Week.

This latest violation of basic international law is yet another outstanding example of government-sponsored terrorism aimed at Palestinian youth. The attitude of the Israeli authorities is particularly offensive if the report is to be believed that live ammunition was used as a matter of policy, when rubber bullets could have been used just as effectively. On this occasion, the Israeli authorities appear to have unleashed a blatantly terrorist act without even seeking the spurious shelter of "national security", which they have frequently done in the past to justify similar acts of terrorism.

It is clear that the Government of Israel now feels confident of its ability to defy international opinion with impunity and that such instances will continue to occur with increasing frequency unless firm action is taken to prevent a recurrence.

In this connexion I wish to draw attention to paragraphs 113 to 115 of the annex to the report of the Secretary-General on living conditions of the Palestinian people in the occupied Arab territories (A/35/533 and Corr.1) where reference is made to the banning by the Government of Israel of certain books and the exclusion of passages from others, which made it difficult for students in the occupied territories to appreciate certain aspects of their culture and history. The report

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also refers to the constant harassment of students and staff in the form of frequent arrests, beatings and administrative detentions, and the closure of schools.

It is clear that these extreme actions are intended not to preserve national security but to deprive, illegally, the inhabitants of the occupied territories of all their links to their cultural and national heritage.

It should be brought to the attention of the Government of Israel that such policies are a violation of the established principles of international law in general and of the fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 1/ in particular, and persistence in such policies can only exacerbate tensions in the area and constitutes a threat to peace and security.

I shall be glad if you will have this letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 24, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Raúl ROA-KOURI
Acting Chairman of the
Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable
Rights of the Palestinian People

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