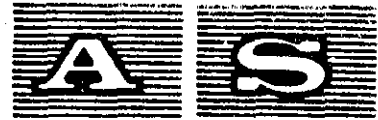


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GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Thirty-sixth session
Item 33 of the preliminary list*
THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST

SECURITY COUNCIL
Thirty-sixth year

Letter dated 18 February 1981 from the Permanent Representative of
Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to refer to the letter to you of 2 February 1981 from the Permanent Representative of Jordan (A/36/89-S/14356) and to state that his allegations are, once again, without foundation.

Like members of all faiths, the Muslim population in Jerusalem and in Judea-Samaria enjoys complete freedom of worship: all its holy places are well protected and preserved; and its religious leaders and officials are treated with the full respect due to them. The significant increase in the building of new mosques in cities, towns and villages throughout the area in recent years amply testifies to the freedom and vibrancy of religious life there. Israel makes possible religious ties with Muslim authorities and institutions abroad and also does everything in its power to facilitate participation in the pilgrimage to Mecca.

In December, three Muslim religious functionaries were arrested on suspicion of involvement in terroristic activities - and not, it must be emphasized, in connexion with their religious functions. All three have already been released, one on bail.

The three are:

1. Jamal Abd al-Latif Attiya Jubran - a preacher from Tubas: arrested on 12 December 1980, released on 3 February 1981.
2. Muhammad Fuad Abd al-Rahman Abu Zeid - Supervisor of Islamic Instruction in Jenin: arrested on 18 December 1980, released on 2 February 1981.
3. Said Ahmad Muhammad Said, known as Sheikh Said B'lal - Supervisor of Mosques in the Hablus area: arrested on 16 December 1980, released on bail on 9 February 1981.

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These are the only arrests which have been made. Thus the allegation made in the message incorporated in the above-mentioned letter from the Permanent Representative of Jordan, to the effect that 20 other Muslim religious functionaries have lately been arrested, is without truth or foundation.

I should also like to take this opportunity of referring to the letter of 23 December 1980 which the Permanent Representative of Jordan addressed to you (A/36/58-S/14317) in connexion with the small fire which broke out in an Armenian Chapel within the Church of the Holy Sepulchre on 14 October 1980. The Permanent Representative of Jordan had seized on that mishap in a letter to you of 29 October 1980 (A/35/578-S/14241) to suggest that the fire was "a criminal attempt to burn the Church of the Holy Sepulchre". His allegations were disposed of in my letter to you of 4 November 1980 (A/35/595-S/14243), and I now deem the mendacious and mischievous accusations by unidentified "witnesses" contained in his second letter on the subject as unworthy of reply.

I have the honour to request that this letter be circulated as an official document of the General Assembly, under item 33 of the preliminary list and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Yehuda Z. BLUM
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Israel
to the United Nations