

UNITED NATIONS



GENERAL ASSEMBLY



SECURITY COUNCIL

Distr.
GENERAL

A/33/116
S/12725
5 June 1978

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Thirty-third session
Item 55 of the preliminary list*
REPORT OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE TO
INVESTIGATE ISRAELI PRACTICES AFFECTING
THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF THE POPULATION OF
THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

SECURITY COUNCIL
Thirty-third year

Letter dated 31 May 1978 from the Permanent Representative of Israel
to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to refer to the notes verbales of 21 February 1978 (A/33/60-S/12575) and of 12 April 1978 (A/33/88-S/12669) from the Permanent Representative of Jordan and also to the letter of 11 April 1978 (A/33/78-S/12640) from the Chargé d'Affaires a.i. of Morocco, which make wholly unfounded and incongruous charges about the activities of Israel in Jerusalem.

The Government of Israel protects every historical site which is part of the cultural heritage of all faiths and denominations, unlike the Government of Jordan whose authorities in Jerusalem for 19 years between 1948 and 1967 have engaged in the systematic destruction of synagogues in the Jewish quarter of the Old City, in the violation of the ancient Jewish cemetery on the Mount of Olives and also in the desecration of many other properties belonging to the cultural and religious heritage of the Jewish people.

Unlike Jordan which, in contravention of its international undertakings, has barred Jews from all Holy Places in Jerusalem and in Judaea and Samaria, the Government of Israel respects all places held sacred by members of the different religions and also their sentiments with regard to those places. The overriding principles guiding Israel's policy with regard to the Holy Places are to uphold and guarantee by law access by members of all faiths without discrimination to these places and to ensure complete freedom of worship there to members of all denominations.

* A/33/50/Rev.1.

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This has been and continues to be Israel's practice as regards the site referred to in the above-mentioned Jordanian and Moroccan documents. The diggings which are cited in those documents were conducted at a distance of 20 metres from the site in question, and without any connexion with it, for the purposes of laying the foundations for another building. Had there been any grounds to suspect that the building-work would cause any injury to the site nearby, the Company for the Reconstruction and Development of the Jewish Quarter in the Old City of Jerusalem would have taken care to erect a supporting wall.

I have the honour to request that this letter be circulated as an official document of the General Assembly, under item 55 of the preliminary list, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Chaim HERZOG
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Israel
to the United Nations
