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QUESTION OF PALESTINE

SECURITY COUNCIL  
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Letter dated 13 November 1981 from the Chairman of the Committee on the  
Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People addressed  
to the Secretary-General

As Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, I have the honour to inform you of the deep concern to which the most recent reports on the occupied Palestinian territory of the West Bank have given rise in the Committee.

It was stated that, on 1 November 1981, a civilian, Mr. Menahem Milson, was entrusted with the civilian administration of the Israeli-occupied West Bank. The local Arabs demonstrated against this development, which they denounced as a step aimed at imposing the Israeli interpretation of autonomy in the region.

It was further stated that Mr. Milson had received instructions from Mr. Ariel Sharon, the Minister of Defence, to replace the military responsible for tax collection, education, health, economic affairs and other civilian matters by civilians, including local Arabs. The responsibility for internal security will be transferred to the central command of the Israeli army.

The sixty-fourth anniversary of the Balfour Declaration was commemorated in the occupied territories with a large number of demonstrations and protests. On 3 November 1981, the Palestinian students of Bir Zeit University, the main Palestinian institution of higher education in the occupied West Bank, held a general strike. Although the demonstrations were suspended after the strike, the Israeli military authorities ordered the University to close.

According to the most recent reports on the subject, Bir Zeit University is currently conducting a campaign in Israel and abroad to have its doors reopened.

A/36/688

S/14754

English

Page 2

It is not known how long the University will remain closed. According to articles in the press, the Supreme Court of Israel, which rejected a petition by the University that the ordinance should be deferred, has instructed the military authorities to set the date for the expiry of the period of closure.

In addition, Palestinian tradesmen organized a strike to protest against the appointment of a civilian administrator to a post in the military government of the West Bank, and protest marches took place simultaneously in Ramallah, Nablus, Bethlehem, Bir Zeit and other cities under Israeli occupation.

The situation in the occupied territories remains extremely tense and explosive, and the acts which have been committed there in violation of General Assembly and Security Council resolutions will continue to exacerbate tensions in the region and to endanger international peace and security.

All this clearly demonstrates that it is urgent to secure the strictest compliance with the relevant resolutions of the United Nations, in particular those designed to enable the Palestinian people to exercise their inalienable rights.

I should be obliged if you would arrange for this letter to be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 31, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Massamba SARRE  
Chairman of the Committee on  
the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights  
of the Palestinian people

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