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THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Letter dated 23 February 1982 from the Permanent Representative of
Jordan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to forward to you the enclosed letter at the request of Mr. Zuhdi Labib Terzi, the Permanent Observer of the Palestine Liberation Organization concerning the arbitrary closure of Bir Zeit University by the Israeli occupation authorities for a period of two months. This closure comes only two weeks after the University was reopened following a similar closure, which would in effect deprive the students of half the academic year of studies.

I request that this letter and its enclosure be circulated as an official document of the General Assembly under item 34 of the preliminary list.

(Signed) Hazem NUSEIBEH
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

* A/37/50.

ANNEX

Letter dated 18 February 1982 from the Permanent Observer of the
Palestine Liberation Organization to the United Nations addressed
to the President of the Security Council

I am instructed by Chairman Yasser Arafat to bring the following to your urgent attention. On 16 February 1982, the Israeli occupation authorities arbitrarily closed Bir Zeit University for a two month period. This closure comes only two weeks after the University was reopened following a similar closure. Israeli occupation authorities are presently attempting to justify the closure on the grounds that students molested an education officer from the Israeli "administration" who had entered the campus unannounced. The unannounced intrusion was regarded by both the students and faculty as a further attempt by the occupation authorities to take control of educational affairs in the occupied territories.

The closure was accompanied by the arrest of several students and faculty members. Among the faculty members arrested were one British subject and one United States citizen, who have been accused of teaching "pro-PLO propaganda". The arbitrary closure of Bir Zeit University and arrests of students and faculty was met with protests throughout the occupied territories.

Today, 18 February 1982, the municipal councils in the occupied Palestinian territories have declared a general strike. It is recalled that the General Assembly in its resolution 36/147 called on Israel to rescind its orders to close universities as well as to comply with the provisions of the Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War of 12 August 1949. It is also to be recalled that the General Assembly has on several occasions reaffirmed the applicability of the said Geneva Convention to the Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967, including Jerusalem.

Illegal settlers dressed as members of the military forces under the leadership of United States citizen Meir Kahane roamed the streets of Ramallah arresting students, undressing them of their trousers and forcing them to walk back to their homes with only their underwear on in a temperature of 7° centigrade. A 50-year-old Palestinian woman received a superficial head wound as Israeli troops fired into the air.

The forces of occupation are basing their interference in the freedom and sanctity of universities on Order No. 854 issued by the Military Commander. Recently they have started imposing on teachers and professors residing in Jerusalem and working in institutions in other areas of the occupied Palestinian territories the need to secure work permits from the Military Governor as if they were aliens needing special working permits.

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The Palestine Liberation Organization, on behalf of the Palestinian people under Zionist occupation, rejects all practices and will oppose by all means such policies, which are in flagrant violation and disregard of the principles of international law and the numerous resolutions of the United Nations.

I am instructed by the Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization to ask you to take immediate action, since such policies exacerbate the already explosive situation and pose a serious threat to peace and security.

(Signed) Zuhdi Labib TERZI
Permanent Observer
