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Letter dated 11 May 1979 from the Acting Chairman of the Committee
on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian
People to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to convey to you once more the concern of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People over the systematic and increasingly repressive measures taken by the Israeli authorities against the Palestinian people in the territories illegally occupied by Israel in 1967.

While presumably not all repressive measures taken by the Israeli authorities receive publicity in the Israeli press, the following extract from the Jerusalem Post (International Edition) of 6-12 May 1979 is a clear indication of the treatment meted out by the Israeli authorities to those who do no more than exercise their freedom of expression:

"Author of PLO cable expelled to Lebanon"

A 27-year-old Bir Zeit student, Riad Abu Awwad -- who reportedly drew up a message of support sent to a PLO conference in Damascus by a group of Israeli Arab students in January -- was expelled to Lebanon last week by the military government.

Abu Awwad had fought the expulsion order all the way up to the High Court, and had also appealed to Minister of Defence Ezer Weizman.

Crossing into South Lebanon, Abu Awwad was stopped by shepherds from the Shia village of Meis el-Jabal. He was brought for questioning to Christian militia leader Major Sa-ad Haddad, who turned him over to Nigerian United Nations troops after establishing his identity."

Several other instances of such provocative and repressive actions have also been brought to my attention by the Permanent Observer of the Palestine Liberation Organization. For instance, on 2 May 1979 a student at Bir Zeit University was shot and wounded during a demonstration. On 3 May 1979 Israeli troops using tear

* A/34/50.

gas closed Bir Zeit University and informed the Acting President that they were not optimistic that the University would be reopened. On the same day Israeli troops surrounded Bethlehem University and closed it. Whether the military authorities will allow the University to reopen is unknown. Since 3 May 1979, 70 students from Bir Zeit University have been under arrest. In addition, on 7 May 1979 the Israeli military authorities closed the secondary school in Bethlehem. These events were also referred to in a document of the Security Council (S/13313).

These are but a few of the provocative steps taken by the Israeli authorities in recent weeks which affect the human rights of inhabitants of the occupied territories and demonstrate an escalation of the systematic repression directed against those who exercise their freedom of expression. Such actions constitute a violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War of 12 August 1949, 1/ and a rejection of Security Council and General Assembly resolutions aimed at restoring peace in the area.

The issue of the Jerusalem Post (International Edition) quoted above also contains an article entitled "The water threat", which commences with the following two paragraphs:

"The Arabs could play havoc with the Israeli economy if they drilled a few dozen wells into Samaria's western slopes.

"Wells in the area between Anabta and Budrus could divert about one-tenth of the water that Israeli farmers are now using. Fields would be parched and crops would die."

Later in the same article, the writer warns "but once the autonomous Arab administration takes over, there may not be anyone to protect Israel's interest and guarantee this flow".

This article is indicative of the campaign that the Government of Israel has mounted to instigate public fears and to win support for Prime Minister Begin's plans to circumscribe even the limited autonomy he proposes for the West Bank and Gaza.

It is clear that, contrary to Israel's protestations that it acts only with the sole purpose of restoring peace to the area, Israel is bent on pursuing policies and practices which are provocative in the extreme and merely tend to increase tension in the area.

The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, deeply concerned at these developments and the consequences that they could generate, has authorized me to point out that these systematic and increasingly

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

repressive measures not only pose new obstacles in the path of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East, but also aggravate the threat to international peace and security.

I shall be glad if this letter is circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under item 24 of the preliminary list, and of the Security Council.

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