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QUESTION OF THE VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE
OCCUPIED ARAB TERRITORIES, INCLUDING PALESTINE

Letter dated 2 October 2000 from the Permanent Observer for Palestine
to the United Nations Office at Geneva addressed to the United Nations
High Commissioner for Human Rights

The Israeli occupation forces have committed a new massacre against the Palestinian people, to be added to the list of their previous crimes of massacres in Deir Yassin, Sabra and Shatila, Al-Aqsa Mosque and the Ibrahimi shrine in Hebron.

On 28 September 2000, Ariel Sharon, leader of the Israeli right-wing Likud party, by mutual agreement with the Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak, made a manifestation, regarded as a provocation to the feelings of Muslims, to the Al-Haram Al-Sharif at the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound, protected by 3,000 Israeli policemen and border guards, thus prompting acts of violence, during which the Israeli forces used firearms, causing injuries to several civilian youths among the Palestinian people.

On Friday, 29 September 2000, the heavily armed Israeli forces stormed the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound and fired live ammunition at thousands of Palestinian worshippers, who were performing their Friday prayers, causing the death of seven Palestinian martyrs and hundreds of injured.

On Saturday, 30 September 2000, the Israeli occupation forces continued their shooting at angry Palestinian masses in the cities of Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Nablus, Gaza and Ramallah, wounding over 200 Palestinians, some of them seriously.

The Israeli army used in this massacre live ammunition, dum-dum bullets and other unusual internationally banned weapons, according to the Israeli army radio in its evening newscast on 30 September 2000, when it said that the Israeli forces launched three "La-aw" category missiles, targeting Palestinian sites.

Furthermore, medical reports, emanating from several hospitals, underlined that most Palestinian victims of this Israeli massacre were hit in the upper part of the body, which shows that the real intention of the Israeli soldiers was to kill and achieve the maximum number of victims.

Consequently, the number of victims increased on 30 September 2000 to 17 martyrs and over 700 wounded, some of them in severe critical condition.

This massacre ignited once more yesterday, 1 October 2000, in various Palestinian cities and villages, during which the Israeli forces used helicopters, tanks and shooting against Palestinian civilians. These forces also launched La-aw missiles against two national security sites to the south of Gaza, and another missile against the Palestinian intelligence headquarters in Rafah, thus increasing the number of victims until yesterday to 36 martyrs and over 1,000 injured, among whom are children under the age of 10.

These crimes not only cast a genuine blow to the stumbling peace process, used by Israel to avoid fulfilling its obligations to the peace process and its commitments to international legitimacy, but are also to be registered as crimes of war, crimes against humanity, flagrant violations of human rights and flagrant violations of the right to life.

Furthermore, this massacre constitutes an act of deliberate killing, an offence to the holy sanctuaries, a grave violation of the principles and provisions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other relevant international covenants and conventions, particularly the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, the International Covenant on Political and Civil Rights, and the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.

In the light of the above, we appeal to Your Excellency, to intervene without delay with the Government of Israel and urge it to immediately put an end to this massacre, to refrain from shooting at Palestinian civilians and to withdraw its Israeli forces from the occupied Palestinian territory.

We would also be grateful if you could have the text of this letter circulated as an official document of the fifty-seventh session of the Commission on Human Rights under agenda item 8.

(Signed) Nabil Ramlawi
Ambassador
Permanent Observer
