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REPORT OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE TO
INVESTIGATE ISRAELI PRACTICES
AFFECTING THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF THE
POPULATION OF THE OCCUPIED
TERRITORIES

SECURITY COUNCIL
Thirty-eighth year

Letter dated 14 March 1983 from the Permanent Representative of Jordan
to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I am transmitting herewith, in extreme indignation and protest, a brief account of the Israeli assaults on the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem from June 1967 to 11 March 1983, when the series of Israeli assaults on the Islamic Holy Places reached its peak with Israel's commission of an act of desecration against the sacred Haram al-Sharif.

Israel has continually persisted in the commission and encouragement of acts of aggression and destruction against the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque and against the other Holy Places in Jerusalem and in all the places that have since fallen under Israeli occupation.

The repeated commission of such acts indicates clearly Israel's deliberate intention of destroying all the Islamic religious landmarks in Jerusalem and elsewhere in the occupied territories and its disdain for the feelings of hundreds of millions of believers whose eyes are turned towards Jerusalem.

I need not emphasize once again the seriousness of such acts, which constitute a grave violation of the principles of international law, in particular article 47 of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, and the fact that it represents a serious threat to the peace and security of the region.

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I would be grateful if you would arrange for this letter and its annex to be circulated as an official document of the General Assembly, under item 69 of the preliminary list, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Abdullah SALAH
Permanent Representative

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ANNEX

Israeli assaults on the sacred Haram al-Sharif from
June 1967 to March 1983

The Israeli conspiracy against the sacred Haram al-Sharif of the Al-Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock, aimed at the destruction of the complex and the establishment of the Temple on its ruins, began during the latter part of 1967, less than one week after the occupation of the City.

This conspiracy has adopted numerous methods, all aimed at the destruction of this sacred Islamic monument, the first of the two Kiblahs and the third of the Holy Places, and at terminating the historic Islamic relationship with the City of Jerusalem, which finds visual expression primarily in its fundamental symbol, the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque.

These methods have alternated between, on the one hand, early excavation work around the Al-Aqsa Mosque from the west and the south, which, as a result of the extension of the excavations through a tunnel, penetrated underneath the Mosque, and, on the other, innumerable attempts at infiltration, which occurred, on the average, twice or three times in one month, on the pretext of holding prayers in the Mosque, while the real goal is to impose the Jewish fait accompli on the Haram al-Sharif. That is what happened in the Ibrahimi Mosque at Hebron, where the act of entry into and prayer in the Mosque led to its partition between Muslims and Jews, the subsequent encirclement of the Muslim areas and harassment of the worshippers there, in preparation for their eventual expulsion and the Judaization of the Mosque.

The following are the most conspicuous assaults to which the Haram al-Sharif has been exposed since the Israeli occupation in June 1967.

I. FIRE

The crime of setting fire to the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque was the first of the conspicuous attempts to destroy and demolish this Islamic Holy Place. It occurred on 21 August 1969, when a Zionist, of Australian nationality, Michael Rohan, started a fire in the Mosque, which resulted in the burning of the Saladin minbar in its entirety and of the south-eastern part of the roof of the Mosque. The occupation authorities merely arrested the criminal, submitted him to a nominal trial, in the course of which they claimed that he was insane, and acquitted and released him.

II. EXCAVATIONS

Excavations have been carried out around and under the Al-Aqsa Mosque from both the west and the south in order to destroy the Al-Aqsa Mosque and cause cracks in its walls. Ostensibly, they constitute an attempt to search for the remains of the so-called Temple, but, in actuality, they are aimed at the destruction and

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elimination of the Islamic buildings contiguous to, abutting on and located along the Buraq Wall (Wailing Wall). The purpose is also to obtain possession of and destroy the Haram al-Sharif and to construct the Temple on the site where the Al-Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock stand.

The Israeli excavations around the Al-Aqsa Mosque began in late 1967 and have continued up to the present, in nine stages, the most recent being the stage of the tunnel running from beneath the Buraq Wall to beneath the Dome of the Rock and extending to the sacred Haram al-Sharif. The Department of Islamic Awkaf discovered the excavations in the tunnel accidentally on 17 August 1981, and they closed the tunnel on 2 September 1981, after extensive clashes between Muslim workers and technicians and Jewish extremists.

III. REPEATED ATTEMPTS TO PRAY IN THE AL-AQSA MOSQUE

Israeli attempts to break into the Al-Aqsa Mosque and its external courtyards began on the pretext of conducting early-morning prayers. Less than three days after the fire in the Al-Aqsa Mosque, which occurred on 18 August 1969, some young Jewish men stole into the Haram al-Sharif and circumambulated the Dome of the Rock, while chanting psalms, prayers and some passages from the Torah. After that, the break-ins continued. The most conspicuous was the attempt to blow up the Dome of the Rock made by Rabbi Meir Kahane in May 1980. On 11 May 1980, the Israeli security forces discovered a cache of explosives near the Al-Aqsa Mosque prepared by Meir Kahane and his group.

Since that time, Kahane has been announcing his determination to blow up the Al-Aqsa Mosque. For example, there is his unambiguous statement in the interview conducted by the Israeli newspaper Yedioth Aharnoth and published on 21 January, in which he said that he would not rest until he succeeded in blowing up the Al-Aqsa Mosque.

IV. ARMED INTRUSION AND SHOOTING OF MUSLIMS

Indicative of the attempts to break into and blow up the Al-Aqsa Mosque was the break-in effected by the Israeli soldier Eli Gothman on 11 April 1982. He succeeded in reaching and entering the Dome of the Rock, after firing at the Mosque guards and killing two of them. This break-in resulted in the firing of a large number of shots at the Dome of the Rock and its walls and great material losses in the Mosque. The clashes that took place between Muslims and Jews left nine martyrs and 136 wounded.

V. THE MOST RECENT ATTEMPT TO BLOW UP THE AL-AQSA MOSQUE

The last of the attempts to penetrate the Haram al-Sharif was that which took place on 11 March 1983 and which was carried out by approximately 45 settlers belonging to the racist extremist Kach movement, most of them living in Qiryat Arba near Hebron. They intended to reach the Al-Aqsa Mosque through a secret tunnel not

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yet uncovered by excavation and were equipped with large amounts of weapons and explosives for the purpose of blowing up the Al-Aqsa Mosque and establishing a Jewish settlement on its ruins. However, the attempt failed, and the members of the group were arrested. They confessed that the operation had been planned by Jewish religious leaders, including Meir Kahane, Moshe Levinger and Israel Ariel, and that the leaders had held meetings at Qiryat Arba with the members of this group that had been entrusted with the task of blowing up the Al-Aqsa Mosque.

A quick count of the attempts made so far to break into the Al-Aqsa Mosque and penetrate its courtyards, and of the statements in which extremists among Jewish religious leaders announce their resolve to continue the endeavour to blow up the Al-Aqsa Mosque and establish the Temple on its ruins gives an indication of the truth regarding Jewish designs on this Mosque and the other Islamic and Christian Holy Places in Jerusalem and the various parts of the West Bank. The instance of the attempt to explode a bomb in the Qazzazin Mosque at Hebron a few days ago is but a further indication of the degree of gravity that the situation in the occupied territories has reached and the seriousness of the dangers that threaten the citizens and the Arab and Islamic cultural presence in the occupied territories.
