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LETTER DATED 8 FEBRUARY 1971 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
OF THE UNITED ARAB REPUBLIC TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO
THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

By its resolution 237 (1967) the Security Council "calls upon the Government of Israel to ensure the safety, welfare and security of the inhabitants of the areas where military operations have taken place and to facilitate the return of those inhabitants who have fled the areas since the outbreak of hostilities".

I am instructed by my Government to bring to your attention reports of intensified repressive and indiscriminate attacks against the civilian inhabitants of Sinai and Gaza Strip being committed by the Israeli forces of occupation.

It would be a matter of concern for the members of the Security Council to note what The New York Times correspondent wrote from Israel on 2 February 1971. He reported that "the Israeli Army Garrison in Gaza was more than doubled. With the cease-fire in effect along the Suez Canal, the Israeli Army could spare the troops. A unit of tough border police called the 'Green Berets of Israel' was dispatched to Gaza town armed with truncheons."

Some detailed information from Israeli sources about what is happening today in Gaza Strip are attached. They are as follows:

Annex I: Excerpts from an article by Shalom Cohen, member of Knesset, published in Haolam Hazeh on 27 January 1971

Annex II: Excerpts from "Foreign Reporters Testimony" as published in the aforementioned weekly newspaper

Annex III: Excerpts from the Israeli Parliament Protocol, session of 18 January 1971.

These events are sadly reminiscent of the tragic massacres which occurred in the vicinity of the village of Kafr Kassem on the eve of Israeli aggression against Egypt on 29 October 1956 and the subsequent mass murder which occurred in Gaza,

Rafah and Khan Younis in the days and weeks immediately following the 1956 aggression and which was reported fully at the time by the Director-General of UNRWA in November 1956.

The United Nations cannot be indifferent to the fate of the civilian population which is being victimized not only by the fact of the prolonged occupation itself but also by such acts of oppression.

I request that this letter and its annexes be circulated as an official document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Mohamed H. EL-ZAYYAT
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

Annex I

GAZA AS DEATH

- from an article by
Shalom Cohen, member
of Knesset (Israeli
parliament), in Haolam
Hazeq, 27 January 1971

The deeds are done. Even if they try to cloud and hide them, it will be of no use. These deeds were done last week, they are being done now, while I am writing these lines. The question is what can we do to stop them.

Which order, which power, which authority - and immediately can resolve to stop the use of whips and sticks against innocent people in the streets of Gaza? And to stop killing whoever runs in the streets - either because of fear or nervousness, or as a hunted animal? Who can prevent the honour of innocent women from being violated in the streets or in their homes? And that searches will not be used to justify the destroying of furniture, insulting people, and torturing them?

Who can stop the unjustified arrest of passers-by, and all of what happened in Gaza this week, and is happening now?

... I restrain myself from giving the details of each of these deeds. But if the authorities want us to believe them - today, tomorrow and after tomorrow, here and abroad - that what was done was done without an official order, let an order be given now to stop what is happening in Gaza immediately.

Otherwise, we will know that the horrible things are being done with knowledge and according to a plan. And let them not say tomorrow that phrase which is hanging over all of Europe: "I didn't know".

Annex II

A member of the Israeli parliament, Mr. Uri Avneri, declared in a speech before the Knesset on 25 January 1971 that foreign reporters who visited me were shocked (at what they saw in Gaza). They infiltrated into Gaza and wandered about without official escort, and they saw what was done there in the daylight and in the main streets. The testimony of those reporters, as told to Mr. Avneri, was published in his weekly, Haolam Hazeh. It reads as follows:

* Regiments of the border guards were asking people for their identification. The guards carried Uzi sub-machine-guns and long sticks. Others carried another kind of equipment - skinwhips. One of the guards would start looking at a citizen's papers while others would complete the job: hitting his face and whipping his legs. A citizen who entered the civil administration office was whipped on his legs while another guard was inspecting his papers.

* A newspaper boy told the reporters: "I was riding my bicycle distributing the Jerusalem Post to subscribers. The soldier stopped me and scattered the papers in the street. When my watch fell, one of the soldiers smashed it with his feet."

* In the Shifa hospital, we saw a nine-year-old girl who was mistakenly wounded by the border police. However, the Israeli broadcast said that "a young woman was wounded". We also saw a twelve-year-old boy in the hospital suffering from internal bleeding - as a result of the treatment from border police. During this same visit in the hospital, seven people were being treated after having been beaten by the border police.

* Many of the local employees of the civil administration refused this week to go to work, because of the treatment from the border police, who ignore the movement permission given to those people and beat them indiscriminately. Israeli employees of the military government in Gaza did not try to conceal their resentment and shock at what they saw with their own eyes.

Annex III

From the Israeli Parliament Protocol, session of 18 January 1971,
Uri Avneri, MP, I received reports about what is happening these days in Gaza also. As an Israeli citizen, a member of the Knesset, I am shocked at what is being done these days... let it be registered in the Knesset record that at least one member of the Knesset raised his voice today to express his most extreme protest against the deeds that are taking place now in Gaza.

(interruption)

The Minister of Defence said in Haifa: that the soldiers of the Israeli Army are not ready to do these things (shooting into crowds). Hence, I decided to send the border police which is not under the jurisdiction of the Israel Defence Army.... In Gaza today, brutal treatment against innocent population is taking place. Beating is not only a daily matter, but an hourly one. Passers-by in the streets are beaten by the border police and lashed with whips - this is what is happening now in Gaza.

Gideon Hausner, MO: I am taking the stand in order to refute in the sharpest and clearest language some of Uri Avneri's words which were heard here, and which are a grave insult to the whole State and to the army it sent in order to ensure the safety of the citizens who are being killed daily.

Avneri: Read your own speech in a certain trial (Hausner was the prosecutor in the Eichmann trial) about the duty to stand up to say certain things (Avneri refers here to the obligation to refuse to obey orders which are essentially immoral, a point which Hausner made in the Eichmann trial).

Hausner: You shouldn't clarify to me my duty in this regard. What was said here about the job that troops of the State are implementing at the risk of their lives in order to protect first of all the people of the murderers, is an insult to the Knesset.

Avneri: Does this end justify all the means? Are you ready to say that this justifies all the means? (A reference to the same point in the Eichmann trial and to the attitude of the nazis that the end justified the means.)

Avneri asked for permission to give a personal statement in answer to attacks by other members of the Knesset. However, the Chairman did not allow him to quote the testimony given to him by foreign correspondents who had infiltrated Gaza, although this testimony was published the same morning in Avneri's weekly, Haolam Hazeh.
