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COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
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Item 4 of the provisional agenda

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

Report of the Secretary-General

1. At its forty-fourth session, the Commission on Human Rights adopted resolutions 1988/1 A and B and 1988/2. By paragraph 14 of resolution 1988/1 A, the Commission requested the Secretary-General to bring that resolution to the attention of all Governments, the competent United Nations organs, the specialized agencies, the regional intergovernmental organizations and the international humanitarian organizations and to give it the widest possible publicity. By paragraph 9 of resolution 1988/1 B, the Commission requested the Secretary-General to bring that resolution to the attention of all Governments, the competent United Nations organs, the specialized agencies, the regional intergovernmental organizations, the international humanitarian organizations and non-governmental organizations, and to report on progress in its implementation to the Commission at its forty-fifth session. By paragraph 11 of resolution 1988/2, the Commission requested the Secretary-General to bring that resolution to the attention of all Governments, the competent United Nations organs, the specialized agencies, the regional intergovernmental organizations and the international humanitarian organizations and to give it the widest possible publicity, and to report to the Commission at its forty-fifth session.

2. In accordance with the requests of the Commission, the Secretary-General brought resolutions 1988/1 A and B and 1988/2 to the attention of all Governments, by a note verbale dated 5 July 1988. The resolutions were also brought to the attention of the members of the General Assembly and the Security Council. They were also communicated to the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Population of the Occupied Territories and to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

3. Furthermore, the resolutions were transmitted to all the specialized agencies and to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East. The Council of Europe, the Organization of African Unity, the Organization of American States and the League of Arab States were also sent copies of the resolutions. In addition, the resolutions were brought to the attention of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and 24 other non-governmental organizations.

4. In response to the request of the Commission on Human Rights, the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat (DPI) took steps to ensure that resolutions 1988/1 A and B and 1988/2 would receive the widest possible publicity. DPI undertook the following activities:

(a) During 1988, DPI continued to carry out information activities concerning the question of Palestine, including information relating to the human rights of Palestinians in the occupied territories;

(b) DPI has established a project manager on the question of Palestine within its Communications and Project Management Service, to develop and co-ordinate its public information activities on this issue, particularly with the media. The DPI information programme includes information on United Nations action on the question of Palestine taken by the Security Council, the General Assembly, the Commission on Human Rights, the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Population of the Occupied Territories;

(c) Information is disseminated through special press releases, publications and media information kits; regular DPI press releases, publications and radio and television programmes; special activities held in observance of relevant international days and weeks; fact-finding missions to the Middle East for media representatives and regional and national encounters for journalists;

(d) A booklet on the rights of the Palestinians, dealing with the work of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (DPI/945), was published in 1988 by DPI in Arabic, English, French and Spanish. This booklet includes a section on action taken in 1987-1988 by the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Population of the Occupied Territories, as well as information concerning relevant Commission on Human Rights resolutions adopted in 1988;

(e) Work is also under way on revising the DPI booklet on the work of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Population of the Occupied Territories (DPI/842) to bring it up to date with both the Special Committee's activities and the current situation. A DPI Information Officer travelled with the Special Committee on its most recent fact-finding mission through the Middle East and provided detailed press releases regarding the Committee's hearings;

(f) During 1988, DPI organized a fact-finding mission to the Middle East for some 10 high-level media representatives from all over the world, giving them an opportunity to understand first-hand the situation in the region. In addition, journalists participated in two regional encounters, in Africa and in Europe, and in four national encounters in Europe and four in Africa which DPI organized. The fact-finding mission and the encounters dealt with the situation in the Middle East and the question of Palestine, which included an assessment of the human rights conditions in the occupied territories;

(g) The question of human rights in the occupied territories was covered by the DPI press, radio and visual services whenever it was discussed in United Nations bodies. This material was used extensively by the 67 United Nations information centres around the world. A particular effort is being made by DPI to monitor and promote the activities of the information centres, inter alia, by providing them with relevant material in time for distribution to local media and non-governmental organizations. An increasing number of United Nations information centres are now connected to Headquarters by electronic communications methods and can receive information on United Nations activities on this issue instantaneously, thus enabling them to be much more effective in their work;

(h) Increased attention is also being given by DPI to its distribution of material. A new Dissemination Division has been established which is revising and computerizing DPI distribution methods for printed material so as to target better specific audiences both world-wide and regionally. In the audio-visual field, new arrangements with television networks have dramatically increased the potential and actual audiences for regular DPI television programmes. For example, the weekly television magazine programme, UN in Action, is broadcast in 125 countries and new arrangements with a global television news network enable DPI television features to be seen weekly in 105 countries;

(i) Commission on Human Rights resolutions 1988/1 A and B and 1988/2, as well as other relevant resolutions on the question of Palestine adopted by the Commission, the General Assembly and the Security Council, are made available world-wide through the information centres. In addition, these resolutions are circulated to participants in media encounters and fact-finding missions and provide background for other DPI activities on this issue.

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