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Letter dated 25 January 1989 from the Chairman of the Committee
on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian
People addressed to the Secretary-General

In my capacity as Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, I wish to draw your most urgent attention to the escalation of the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories as a result of the increasingly harsh measures taken by Israel, the occupying Power, to suppress the Palestinian intifadah.

On 18 January 1989, The New York Times reported that on 17 January, Israeli Defence Minister Yitzhak Rabin had announced "tough new measures" against Palestinians accused of throwing stones in the occupied territories. The measures include allowing a greater number of soldiers to fire on demonstrators, sealing or destroying the homes of stone throwers, fining their parents, and confiscating the cars of those who take part in the uprising. The order also liberalized the use of plastic bullets, which are supposed to be non-lethal but can kill a person if fired at close range.

The New York Times of 23 January reported that more than 30 Palestinians, mostly young people have been shot and killed by Israeli soldiers in the past month, 18 of them in the last 10 days. In many cases, doctors extracted plastic bullets from the bodies. Increasing casualties have also been caused by the recent introduction (according to Ha'aretz on 13 January and Reuters on 14 January) of a heavier and highly lethal bullet consisting of a metal ball coated with thin rubber, which is reported to have killed at least six Palestinians and to have left several others so severely brain-damaged that they are expected to die. According to a Reuters dispatch of 20 January, the Israeli army said that 492 Palestinians

had been wounded in the past month. Reuters also reported that at least 370 Palestinians have been killed since the beginning of the uprising.

In view of the gravity of these events, the Committee wishes once again to protest vigorously at the increasing armed repression in the occupied Palestinian territories, particularly the brutal new measures adopted by Israel, the occupying Power, in violation of international law and in defiance of United Nations resolutions. Such policies and practices are abhorrent to the international community as a whole and have been condemned within Israel itself. They can only result in further bloodshed among the Palestinian people and increased resistance to oppression, thus jeopardizing international efforts to advance towards a negotiated and just settlement of the question of Palestine, which lies at the heart of the Arab-Israeli conflict in the Middle East.

The Committee therefore wishes to reiterate its earnest appeal to you to take all possible measures to ensure the safety and protection of Palestinian civilians under occupation and to intensify your efforts towards the urgent convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 43/176 of 15 December 1988.

I should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter distributed as an official document of the forty-third session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 37, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Absa Claude DIALLO
Chairman
Committee on the Exercise
of the Inalienable Rights
of the Palestinian People
