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QUESTION OF PALESTINESECURITY COUNCIL
Forty-fourth yearLetter dated 6 December 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 urgent attention to the further aggravation of repression by Israel, the occupying Power, against Palestinians in the occupied Palestinian territory.

Since my letter to you on 21 September 1989 (A/44/547-S/20860), more Palestinians, particularly children and minors, have been killed and injured, and collective punishment has continued to be widely imposed. According to a recent report of the DataBase Project on Palestinian Human Rights, the number of Palestinians killed from the beginning of the intifadah in December 1987 to 30 November 1989 has exceeded 800. Betselem, the Israeli Information Centre for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories, has reported, as quoted in the Jerusalem Post of 21 September 1989, that until the beginning of 1989, 15 to 20 per cent of the Palestinians killed during the intifadah were children; in January the rate rose to 28 per cent, and in August, 46 per cent of the Palestinians killed were children.

According to the Jerusalem Post of 19 October, the Israeli army Judge Advocate-General, Ammon Strashnow, stated that soldiers were permitted to shoot at masked Palestinian youths "because they are the hard-core activists of the uprising". The Jerusalem Post further reported that there had been a sharp rise in Palestinian fatalities in the first half of October, including several masked youths killed by troops, and that some observers attributed the increase to the "more liberal open-fire orders". On 17 October, the Jerusalem Post reported that a total of 20 Palestinians were fatally shot by the army in the first two weeks of October, the largest number of fatalities in a fortnight since the intifadah.

began. According to Al-Fajr of 20 November, 45 Palestinians were killed between the beginning of October and 20 November. The New York Times reported on 4 December that five Palestinians were killed during the previous weekend, including a 10-year-old girl from Shati refugee camp near Gaza, and at least 63 others were wounded. On 5 December, the same paper reported that at least 110 deaths occurred in the last four months, primarily in the course of raids by the army.

Israel has also continued the use of mass detention of Palestinians in its efforts to suppress the intifadah. As reported in the Jerusalem Post of 20 October, the army Judge Advocate-General told Israeli journalists on 19 October that 13,600 Palestinians were being held in detention camps. He also said that since the beginning of the intifadah 40,000 Palestinians were arrested at one time or another and 18,000 of them were sentenced by military courts. The Jerusalem Post reported on 7 November 1989 that the Israeli army had opened a detention camp (Ansar IV) near Khan Yunis and that no lawyer or representative of the International Committee of the Red Cross had been allowed to visit the camp. The same issue of the Jerusalem Post reported that information had reached the International Committee of the Red Cross indicating that in the new camp detainees are subject to harsh treatment and held in tents equipped with only 25 mattresses for 60 people. Children under 14 years of age are also held in the camp, according to the report. The New York Times reported on 4 December that during 1 to 3 December, Nablus was the object of the army's largest sweep since June 1967 and that about 2,000 soldiers conducted the search and arrested dozens of Palestinians.

In further escalation of the repressive measures against the Palestinian population, the Israeli Defence Minister approved on 1 November 1989 a decision taken by the Commander of the Army Central Command to call up a reserve company made up of settlers from the West Bank to serve in Hebron. According to the daily Haaretz of 2 November, several groups within Israel opposed the decision, expressing concern that it would lead to further bloodshed.

Alarmed by these repressive measures and the growing loss of life, the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People deplores once again the policies and practices of Israel, the occupying Power, which are in violation of its obligations under the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War of 12 August 1949, and contrary to the provision of resolutions of the Security Council. The Committee considers it imperative that the Security Council should adopt urgent measures to provide international protection to the Palestinian civilians, as requested by the General Assembly in its resolutions 43/233 of 20 April 1989 and 44/2 of 6 October 1989. The Committee would also greatly appreciate appropriate action by you and by the organizations of the United Nations system, to alleviate the suffering of the unarmed Palestinian civilians under occupation, especially women and children.

The Committee wishes to stress once again the urgent need to advance towards a comprehensive and just settlement of the question of Palestine in accordance with the principles contained in General Assembly resolution 43/176 of 15 December 1988, which have received the near-unanimous support of the Member States of the United Nations, and appeals to you and to all parties concerned to intensify all efforts to attain this essential objective.

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I should be grateful if this letter could be circulated as an official document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 39, and of the Security Council.

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