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**ORGANISATION DE L'UNITE
AFRICAIN**
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REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON
THE QUESTION OF PALESTINE

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The Council of Ministers of the Organization of African Unity, meeting in its Forty-ninth Ordinary Session in Addis Ababa, considered the report of the Secretary-General on the Question of Palestine as contained in Document CM/1528 (XLIX) and adopted Resolution CM/1183 (XLIX) on the issue.

2. The Council, in its resolution reiterated its support for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to return to their homeland and properties, to self-determination without any outside interference and to the establishment of their independent sovereign State on their homeland with Jerusalem as its capital. The Council called specifically on the UN Security Council to "take all the necessary measures to put an end to Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories and extend the international protection, through UN machinery, to the Palestinians as well as placing the occupied territory under the supervision of the United Nations for a set period as part of the peace process". The Council declared its full support for the Palestinian National Council's proclamation of the independent Palestinian State as well as for the efforts being deployed by the international community in convening an international conference for peace in the Middle East with the full participation of the Permanent Members of the UN Security Council, the parties concerned, including the PLO, the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

3. The Council, further, called on the OAU Secretary-General to follow up on developments in the Palestinian Question and submit a report on them to its following session.

4. This report, therefore, highlights developments that had come to pass with regard to the question, during the period under review.

5. During the period, one notes that Israel had escalated its acts of terrorism and harrassment against the Palestinian populace in the occupied territories.
6. The United Nations General Assenbly passed a resolution last April expressing its grave concern and alarm at "the deteriorating situation in the Palestinian territory occupied by Israel since 1967". The resolution requested the Security Council "to consider with urgency ... measures to provide international protection to the Palestinian civilians in the Palestinian territory". The resolution was particularly condemnatory of the use of military force, in the occupied territories, against the civilians.
7. The United Nations Commission on Human Rights, in a resolution entitled "Question of violations of human rights in occupied Palestine" it had adopted at its Twenty-seventh meeting in February 1989, affirmed that:
- the systematic and persistent policy parctised by the Israeli occupation authorites and reflected in the killing of Palestinians, including children;
 - the breaking of bones of youths, causing them grievous and permanent bodily harm;
 - the subjection of towns, villages and campos to living conditions intended to destroy them through the imposition of curfews and military sieges;
 - the throwing of bombs into houses, mosques and hospitals resulting in the death of many Palestinians by the suffocation and
 - the savage beatings and maltreatment of pregrant women causing them to abort".

constituted serious violations of the principles of international laws, human rights and fundamental freedoms.

8. The above-cited instances of violence against the Palestinian civilian population by the Israeli armed forces and Government authorized and armed vigilante settler groups had particularly increased since the popular uprising (the Intifadha) of the Palestinian people against occupation in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

9. The uprising, which continues to draw world-wide attention and sympathetic coverage, shows no sign of abating, under its unified leadership despite the Israeli Government's draconian measures of murder, torture, administrative and collective detentions, closure of educational and cultural institutions, and forceful deportations. The uprising had singularly succeeded in putting the Palestinian question in the forefront of world concern.

10. In spite of all these provocations and intransigence by the Israeli authorities, the PLO Leadership had showed commendable statesmanship in accepting:

- UN Security Council Resolution 242 (1967) that had stipulated the "withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from territories occupied..." and the recognition of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of every state in the area and their right to live in peace with secure and recognised boundaries; and
- UN Security Council Resolution 338 (1973) that called on all parties to the conflict to immediately implement "in all its parts" Resolution 242.

11. With the explicit recognition of Israel's right to exist, the Palestine National Council had accepted a political programme based on two states - Arab and Jewish, in accordance with the UN General Assembly Partition Plan (Resolution 181-(II)). President Yasser Arafat had further declared, during his official visit to France that the PLO's charter calling for the "elimination of the Zionist presence" in Palestine was obsolete. These positions won the Palestinian cause a lot of good will throughout the world.

12. However, Israel, instead of responding creatively to the Palestinian diplomatic moves and peace overtures, persists in its labelling of the PLO as an unacceptable partner in any negotiations on peace in the Middle East and denounces the pronouncements of the PLO as "elegant sophistry" or "outright lying". In its determination not to give up any territory in return for peace, Israel seeks vainly to find an alternative Non-PLO Palestinian leadership in the occupied territories that would endorse its election plans for a vague form of autonomy in the territories.

13. The PLO rejects the Israeli Government election plans as an attempt to ignore Palestinian rights and circumvent UN resolutions on the withdrawal of all Israeli troops from the occupied territories. It opposes the idea of autonomy, maintaining that Palestinians have a right to determine their own future and not merely administer land controlled by Israel. The PLO insists on the withdrawal of the occupation forces and the institution of a UN-monitored transitional period in the Palestinian territory before elections could be organised.

14. The United States Administration's position of open and unequivocal support for Israeli obduracy became untenable after the PLO had complied with its preconditions. The US Administration, however, still continues to bolster Israeli positions, where it perceives merit and when it conceivably could.

15. Yet, in a refreshing departure from normal Administration policy, US Secretary of State James Baker, in an address to the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, a pro-Israeli lobbying group in the United States, called on Israel to "lay aside the unrealistic vision of a greater Israel, forswear annexation, stop settlement activity, allow schools to reopen and reach out to Palestinians as neighbours, who deserve political rights".

16. Yitzhak Shamir, the Israeli Prime Minister, rejected Baker's peace advice as "useless", while Shimon Peres, the Labour Party leader, demurred that the "American Secretary of State was mistaken in attributing aspirations for a larger country to the entire Israeli Government".

17. In another development, the British authorities had reportedly urged Shamir, who was visiting London in May, to accept UN monitoring at his planned elections in the occupied territories.

18. Given Israeli policies in the region, one is prompted to ask whether Israel or rather its Government really wants peace. There is a sizeable portion of the Israeli population that wants peace as evidenced by a poll carried by Yedioth Aharanoth, an Israeli daily, which reported that 58% of those contacted favoured some form of talk with the PLO.

19. Given the grave situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, it is all the more incumbent upon the international community to redouble its efforts in convening an international peace conference, so that security and stability will return in the region.

20. The General Secretariat will continue to monitor events and developments as they pertain to the question of Palestine.



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