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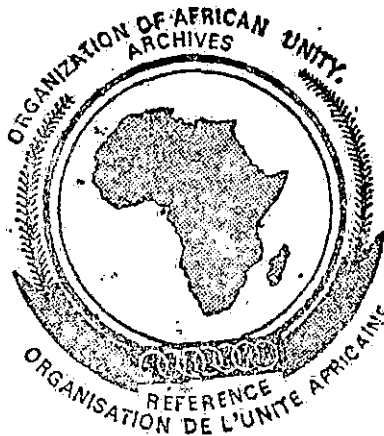
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CM/737 (XXVII)

COUNCIL OF MINISTERS
Twenty-Seventh Ordinary Session
Port-Louis, Mauritius
24-29 June, 1976

REPORT OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE

SECRETARY-GENERAL ON THE PALESTINE PROBLEM



CM 737

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REPORT OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE SECRETARY
GENERAL ON THE PALESTINE PROBLEM

1. Pursuant to its Resolution CM/Res.460(XXVI), the OAU Council of Ministers had requested the OAU Administrative Secretary-General to follow-up the evolution of the Palestine Problem and report on it to the present session, that is to say, to the Twenty-Seventh Ordinary Session of the Council of Ministers. The Council of Ministers had also decided to maintain the Palestine Problem as one of the priority items on the agenda of the present session.
2. It was thus in implementation of that Resolution that the Administrative Secretary-General was submitting the present report to the Council.
3. Since the Palestine Problem constituted the very heart of the Middle East crisis, it followed that there could be no settlement without recognition of the national rights of the people of Palestine.

Certainly, recognition of the legitimate and inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to return, self-determination, independence and sovereignty, and the full exercise of those rights, constituted, in the same way as Israel's withdrawal from all Arab territories occupied in June 1967, the basis for a final and comprehensive settlement of the Middle East problem.

4. By acting along these lines leading to the achievement of this objective, the PLO, sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, had made tremendous progress towards general recognition of its representative character and the justification of the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination in Palestine free of all foreign interference. Having regard to the fact that the Palestine problem constituted the very heart of the Middle East problem, and that, consequently, no just and lasting settlement could be reached in accordance with the principles of the United Nations Charter and its pertinent resolutions unless that problem solved. It was noteworthy that the United Nations General

Assembly had admitted the PLO to the U.N. as an Observer. Moreover, the Security Council had approved PLO participation at all discussions on the problem of Palestine and the Middle East on an equal footing with States who were not members of the Council. That decision had been taken as a result of the active support of the Arab Republic of Egypt, backed by African and Non-Aligned States who were members of the Council.

5. The United Nations General Assembly had, in that connexion, adopted a series of important resolutions on the rights of the Palestinian people, in particular the three following resolutions:

- a) Resolution No. 3236/29 affirming the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination, return, and national independence and sovereignty.
- b) Resolution No. 3375/30 on PLO participation in all discussions and conferences aimed at restoring peace to the Middle East. That resolution further requested the United Nations Secretary-General to take all necessary measures, in concert with the Chairman of the United Nations Conference on Peace in the Middle East, to guarantee invitation of the PLO with the other members.
- c) Resolution 3376/30 setting up the Committee of 20 to discuss and propose an executive programme aimed at enabling the Palestinian people to exercise their rights as specified in Resolution 3236/29. The General Assembly had requested the Committee to submit its report and recommendations to the United Nations Secretary-General not later than 1st June 1976 so that he could submit them to the Security Council. The resolution furthermore requested the Chairman of the Security Council to discuss, immediately after that date, the exercise of those inalienable rights specified in resolution 3236/29. For its part, the General Assembly had decided to place that item on the agenda of its Thirty-First session to discuss it in the light of the decisions of the Security Council and the recommendations and comments of the Committee of Twenty.

The Committee of Twenty had, in fact, been set up under the Chairmanship of Senegal and numbered among its members the following African States: Guinea, Madagascar and Sierra Leone.

At the time the present report was drawn up, the Committee of Twenty was in process of putting the finishing touches to its recommendations so as to forward them to the Security Council through the medium of the Secretary-General.

6. Moreover, in implementation of Resolution 3375/30 which called for PLO participation in all efforts, discussions and conferences on the Near-East, and which requested the United Nations Secretary-General to take all necessary measures to guarantee invitation of the PLO to participate in the meetings of Conference on Peace:

- a) the envoy of the United Nations Secretary-General who visited the region in March 1976 had had consultations with the PLO leadership within the framework of his consultations with the disputing parties in the Near-East on the subject of efforts aimed at activating settlement of the problem.
- b) The United Nations Secretary-General had sent to the PLO, as to all the other parties, his Note of 1st April 1976 which was referred to in the report to the present session on the situation in the Middle-East. Consultations and contacts would be effected by the Secretary-General within the framework of those principles - with the parties concerned in the region so as to deal with any efforts being exerted to freeze the situation, and to convene the United Nations Conference on Peace as soon as possible with the participation of all the parties concerned, including the PLO.

7. Meanwhile, the Israeli authorities were pursuing and intensifying their acts of oppression and terrorism against the Arab population in flagrant violation of the IVth Geneva Convention on the Protection of Civilians in time of war. Those authorities indeed, continued to set up colonies of Israeli settlements, destroy villages, expel the Arab population en masse while at the same time violating the Holy Places and proceeding to arrest religious leaders.

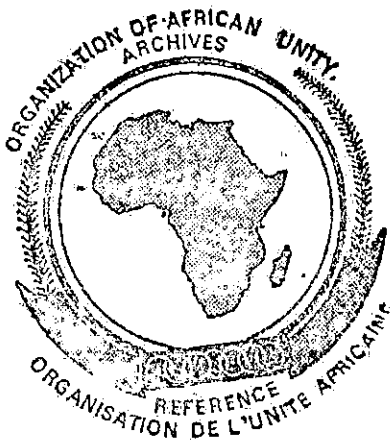
The Palestinian people in occupied territory had reacted against those measures and had risen against the occupation authorities. A general strike in the towns and villages of the West Bank of the Jordan had been decided in protest against Israeli measures aimed at altering the demographic and geographic status of the Arab territories under Israeli military occupation. The matter had, furthermore, been laid before the Security Council, and at the conclusion of deliberations which had lasted three months, it had adopted almost unanimously (by 14 out of a total of 15 votes) the resolution put forward by the African Group and that of the Non-Aligned countries condemning Israeli practices and calling for their immediate suspension. However, the United States had vetoed that resolution. The OAU Secretary-General had, at the time, deplored this misuse of the veto, which was likely to encourage Israel to continue with its arbitrary and illegal measures in occupied territory.

Certainly, in dealing with this question, the Council had once again confirmed, as it had in its previous resolutions, the Organization's principles, and would support the Palestinian people who were stubbornly resisting the practices of the Israeli occupation authorities.

8. It was, furthermore, necessary to clarify another important development, namely the refusal by the population in the occupied territories to countenance Israel's attempt to extend its hold over the West Bank of the Jordan, Gaza and other areas. The occupation authorities had, in fact, attempted to make some

propaganda gains by authorizing elections to the Municipal Councils in those areas. The result had been the opposite of what had been expected. Indeed, the Palestinian people had seized that opportunity to reaffirm their attachment to the PLO by voting for its candidates and supporters.

9. In conclusion, Israel's stubbornness in pursuing its illegal practices in the occupied territories, in particular on the West Bank of the Jordan and Gaza, and in ignoring the rights of the Palestinian people, would necessarily have serious consequences for peace in the Middle-East and would make the restoration of a just and lasting peace extremely difficult. Thus the Israeli authorities would have to assume, in the eyes of the whole world, the serious consequences which would result for peace, security and international stability.



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