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Letter dated 2 May 1985 from the Acting Chairman of the Committee on
the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People to
the Secretary-General

In my capacity as Acting Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, I wish to bring to your attention a number of recent reports concerning serious incidents that have taken place in the occupied territories of the West Bank and Gaza. These reports indicate a continuing pattern of repression by the Israeli authorities, which appears to be aimed at stifling all forms of opposition by the Palestinian people to the continuing illegal occupation of their land.

According to the weekly Al-Fajr of 5 April 1985, demonstrations and strikes by Palestinians in celebration of Land Day on 30 March were met with hundreds of arrests, the forcible reopening of shops, heavy censorship of Arabic language newspapers, the closing of schools, and the shooting of demonstrators at several locations in the West Bank and Gaza.

Further protest demonstrations in the following weeks have reportedly been met with various acts of repression, including gunfire, by the Israeli authorities, leading to an ever-growing list of casualties, particularly of youths and students.

Al-Fajr reported on 5 April that hundreds of Israeli border police had stormed the al-Ibrahimiyeh College in East Jerusalem and violently quelled a demonstration by Palestinians in support of striking political prisoners in Asqalan prison. It was reported that the police had arrested 132 students and others, and that many had been injured in the raid, seven of whom had to be hospitalized.

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According to the weekly Al-Fajr of 5 April, a Nablus youth was critically injured and tens of Palestinian youths arrested on 3 April as the Israeli army broke up a demonstration in the Qasabeh district of Nablus. The demonstrators, who were raising Palestinian flags and chanting national songs, were reportedly met with tear-gas and live bullets.

The same source reported that Israeli border police had shot and wounded four Bethlehem University students on 1 April, following alleged incidents of rock-throwing. The police then barred access to the campus and arrested a number of students, and threatened to close the university for two months.

Subsequently, Ma'ariv reported on 21 April that units of the Israeli army and of the military government had raided and searched Bethlehem University in connection with a proposed exhibit to mark "Palestine Students Day". Although no illegal materials were found, the campus was then declared a "closed military area".

Ha'aretz reported on 21 April that a 15-year-old boy had been shot and killed and an 18-year-old youth injured when a border police patrol opened fire on demonstrators at the al-Borj refugee camp in the Gaza Strip, who were protesting the demolition of the house of a man accused of attacking an Israeli police officer.

In another development, the weekly Al-Fajr reported on 19 April that 12 residents of the Dheisheh refugee camp, including the prominent journalist Hamdi Farraj, were remanded for trial in connection with demonstrations held last January at the camp and were held at the Tulkarm detention centre, which is under the direct control of the Israeli army.

As on previous occasions, I wish to reiterate the most serious concern of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People at these developments. There is no doubt that, as long as the Palestinian people are prevented from exercising their rights to self-determination, national independence and sovereignty, and their territory remains illegally occupied, tension and violence will continue to prevail in the area, increasingly endangering international peace and security. The Committee remains convinced that a peaceful political solution under the auspices of the United Nations is possible and continues to call on all concerned to co-operate in the search for such a solution.

In conclusion, I wish to request that this letter be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under item 33 of the preliminary list, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Oscar ORAMAS-OLIVA
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Committee on the Exercise of
the Inalienable Rights of
the Palestinian People