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REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON MEASURES TAKEN BY ISRAEL
TO CHANGE THE STATUS OF THE CITY OF JERUSALEM

1. The General Assembly, in operative paragraph 3 of its resolution 2253 (ES-V) adopted on 4 July 1967, requested the Secretary-General "to report to the General Assembly and the Security Council on the situation and on the implementation of the present resolution not later than one week from its adoption".
2. In a letter dated 5 July addressed to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Israel, the Secretary-General requested the Minister to draw the above-mentioned resolution to the attention of his Government as a matter of urgency.
3. On 10 July the Secretary-General received the following reply from the Minister for Foreign Affairs, transmitted by the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations:

* Also issued under the symbol A/6753.

"I have the honour to transmit to you the following reply from the Minister for Foreign Affairs to your letter of 5 July 1967:

'Dear Mr. Secretary-General,

My Government has given careful consideration to your letter of 5 July 1967, concerning resolution 2253 (ES-V) of the General Assembly. Israel's position on Jerusalem was explained by me at the plenary meetings of the General Assembly on 21 and 29 June 1967. In response to your letter the Government of Israel now takes the opportunity of reviewing recent developments in the City.

As a result of aggression launched by the Arab States against Israel in 1948, the section of Jerusalem in which the Holy Places are concentrated had been governed for nineteen years by a régime which refused to give due acknowledgment to universal religious concerns. The City was divided by a military demarcation line. Houses of worship were destroyed and desecrated in acts of vandalism. Instead of peace and security there was hostility and frequent bloodshed. The principle of freedom of access to the Holy Places of all the three monotheistic religions was violated with regard to Jews, but not to them alone. The Jordan Government informed the Ad Hoc Political Committee at the fourth and fifth sessions of the General Assembly, on 6 December 1949 and 11 December 1950, that it would not agree to any special arrangements for the Holy Places. This policy was the subject of a reference by the President of the Trusteeship Council, M. Roger Garreau, in his report on the mission entrusted to him by virtue of the Trusteeship Council resolution of 4 April 1950 (T/681), in which he stated:

"... I have to state with the deepest regret that up to yesterday, when my term as President of the Trusteeship Council came to an end, the Government of the Hashimite Kingdom of Jordan had not seen fit to break its silence....

... the Government of Israel showed a spirit of conciliation which led it to submit to the Trusteeship Council certain new proposals which... represent a considerable advance towards a settlement of the various aspects of the problem of Jerusalem and the Holy Places...."

On 5 June 1967, the Jordanian forces launched a destructive and unprovoked armed assault on the part of Jerusalem outside the walls. This attack was made despite Israel's appeals to Jordan to abstain from hostilities. Dozens of Jerusalem citizens were killed and hundreds wounded.

Artillery bombardment was directed against synagogues, the Church of Dormition, hospitals, centres of secular and religious learning, the Hebrew University and the Israel Museum. Intensive fire was directed against institutions and residential centres from positions in and near the Holy Places themselves, which were thus converted into military positions for shelling Jerusalem.

Since 7 June, the entire City of Jerusalem has experienced peace and unity. The Holy Places of all faiths have been open to access by those who hold them sacred.

The resolution presented on 4 July by Pakistan and adopted on the same date evidently refers to measures taken by the Government of Israel on 27 June 1967. The term "annexation" used by supporters of the resolution is out of place. The measures adopted relate to the integration of Jerusalem in the administrative and municipal spheres, and furnish a legal basis for the protection of the Holy Places in Jerusalem.

I now come to specify the character and effect of the measures adopted on 27 June:

(1) The Holy Places

"The Protection of Holy Places Law, 5727-1967, provides that the Holy Places shall be protected from desecration and any other violation and from anything likely to violate the freedom of access of the members of the different religions to the places sacred to them or their feelings with regard to those places. Whoever desecrates or otherwise violates a Holy Place shall be liable to imprisonment for a term of seven years...." During the previous nineteen years there had been no such legislation to protect the Holy Places in Jerusalem. Since 27 June, sacred buildings desecrated since 1948 have been restored, and houses of worship destroyed during the Jordanian occupation are being rebuilt.

(2) Civic co-operation

One of the most significant results of the measures taken on 27 June is the new mingling of Arabs and Jews in free and constant association. The Arab residents within the walls had been cut off for nineteen years from all contact with the residents of the newer parts of the City. Today they are free to renew or initiate contacts with their Jewish neighbours in Jerusalem and elsewhere in Israel. The residents of the City outside the walls now visit the Old City. There is a profound human and spiritual significance in the replacement of embattled hostility by normal and good neighbourly relations. It is especially appropriate that ecumenical habits of thought and action should take root in the City from which the enduring message of human brotherhood was proclaimed with undying power in generations past.

(3) Municipal services

In the hills of Judea, where Jerusalem is situated, there is an acute shortage of water. The Old City is now connected with the general water supply system, and all houses are receiving a continuous supply of water, double the quantity available to them in the past.

All hospitals and clinics are already functioning. In the past no health services existed for the young within the framework of the school system, nor were there any health stations for mother and child care. These services are now being established.

There was no social welfare system in the Old City. Today all the inhabitants of Jerusalem now enjoy the same welfare rights. The municipality has already begun extending its welfare services to those for whom none have been available in the past.

School buildings are being prepared for the resumption of studies at the beginning of the new school year. Teachers are being located and arrangements made for them to return to their work. Their salaries are paid by the municipality.

Compulsory education regulations have been extended to all parts of the City. None of those arrangements affect the existing private education network.

If these measures had not been taken, the Holy Places would be without legal protection. The unified public utilities services would not exist. Municipal and administrative facilities would not be extended to some sections of the City, and Jerusalem's residents would still be divided, hermetically confined in separate compartments.

The universal interest

The measures taken by my Government to secure the protection of the Holy Places are only a part of Israel's effort to ensure respect for universal interests in Jerusalem. It is evident from United Nations discussions and documents that the international interest in Jerusalem has always been understood to derive from the presence of the Holy Places. Israel does not doubt her own will and capacity to secure the respect of universal spiritual interests. It has forthwith ensured that the Holy Places of Judaism, Christianity and Islam be administered under the responsibility of the religions which hold them sacred. In addition, in a spirit of concern for historic and spiritual traditions, my Government has taken steps with a view to reaching arrangements to assure the universal character of the Holy Places. In pursuance of this objective, the Government of Israel has now embarked on a constructive and detailed dialogue with representatives of universal religious interests. If these explorations are as fruitful as we hope and expect, the universal character of the Holy Places will for the first time in recent decades find effective expression.

The changes which have affected Jerusalem's life and destiny as a result of the measures recently adopted may therefore be summarised as follows:

Where there was hostile separation, there is now harmonious civic union. Where there was a constant threat of violence, there is now peace. Where there was once an assertion of exclusive and unilateral control over the Holy Places, exercised in sacrilegious discrimination, there is now a willingness to work out arrangements with the world's religious bodies - Christian, Muslim and Jewish - which will ensure the universal religious character of the Holy Places.

The Government of Israel is confident that world opinion will welcome the new prospect of seeing this ancient and historic metropolis thrive in unity, peace and spiritual elevation.

Please accept, Mr. Secretary-General, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Abba Eban
Minister for Foreign Affairs'

"Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

"(Signed) Gideon RAFAEL
Permanent Representative of Israel
to the United Nations"
