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**UNITED
NATIONS**

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General Assembly

A/34/631

13 November 1979

Thirty-fourth session

Agenda item 51

**REPORT OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE TO INVESTIGATE
ISRAELI
PRACTICES AFFECTING THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF THE
POPULATION
OF THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES**

288. Miss Rasmiah ODEH (A/AC.145/RT.262 and 264) was arrested on the night of 28 February 1969 with her father and two sisters. Their house was blown up several days later. After being interrogated for 45 days (including 25 days of non-stop interrogation night and day) at the Russian Compound, in Jerusalem and at Ramle prison, she was sentenced, on 22 January 1970, to life imprisonment on charges (which she denied) of planting explosives in a supermarket. She was detained from 18 April 1969 to 14 March 1979, the date of her release in the Ramle/Neve Tirza prison, except for two short periods in 1975 and 1977 during which she was transferred to Gaza prison.

289. Miss Odeh gave a detailed description of the physical ill-treatment to which she was subjected during her interrogation. She also described the psychological torture that she had experienced when her father, sisters, fiancé and other comrades were ill-treated in front of her or nearby. She stated that the physical torture to which she had been subjected included being stripped naked, chained and beaten with sticks and metal bars, on her head as well as on her body thereby causing her hearing problems for over one year.

290. Miss Odeh stated that she had been subjected to sexual abuse while alone with her interrogators and also in the presence of her

father. She alleged that her interrogators had forced her father to violate her but that he had fainted before he could do so. Similar treatment was meted out to her in front of her colleagues, including Aisha Odeh. Miss Odeh stated that during her interrogation she was forced to remain naked or have her clothes torn off her.

291. Miss Odeh referred to several other cases of torture and ill-treatment which she witnessed during her interrogation at the Russian Compound, namely: Yacub Odeh - her fiancé - Abdel Latif Kheit, Bashir El-Kheit, Gasem Abu Aker, Abdel Matalleb Abu Ramele, Miss Samia Diab, Khalil Hanni, Miss Aisha Odeh, Miss Leila Qumery, Miss Wadad Gumri, Miss Aida Qumry, Miss Hayat Obeidat, Miss Intisar Bseso, Dr. Sobhi Musha, Miss Mariam Shakhshir, Hatem Shannar and Amal Anbrusi. She claimed that one of her sisters, Leila Odeh, had lost her mental capacity subsequent to torture.

292. Miss Odeh gave a detailed description of the conditions of detention in Ramle/Neve Tirza prison, according to which this prison is seriously overcrowded (45 to 50 detainees live in a room of 3.5 square metres). The Arab women security detainees are held together with Jewish women who are common criminals. Miss Odeh described the difficulties in relations between the two categories of detainees. Sometimes Jewish prisoners tried to kill

certain of her fellow prisoners, in particular, Amal Hamdan. Arab detainees do not have the same prison conditions and working conditions as Jewish detainees and are discriminated against as to family visits, studies and access to reading material, the right of expression and of information. Harsher treatment is inflicted by the prison authorities following complaints by inmates to journalists or following strikes staged to ask for better prison conditions. These strikes usually result in the transfer of the leaders to other prisons - Miss Odeh was transferred twice for that reason to Gaza prison. Many detainees suffer from poor health and from lack of adequate medical care - she herself lost her eyesight for 15 days in 1979.

293. Miss Odeh was given a medical examination at the request of the Special Committee. The relevant medical report is attached to the present report (annex I, appendix III).

APPENDIX III

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Medical examination of Miss Rasmia ODEH 1948

Date of examination: 21 June 1979

History: patient aged 31, imprisoned for 10 years, suffered considerable brutality (details of which are known to you) during interrogation. Her present complaints are of two kinds: 1. Frequent bad helmet headaches. While detained, the patient went completely blind for 10 days or so, but regained her sight without special treatment. 2. Abdominal pains, mainly in the right hypochondrium and in the epigastric cavity. The patient was apparently examined for these pains and a gastric ulcer diagnosed.

Condition: patient generally well preserved. Skin eutrophic and fairly moist. Oblique pigmented plaques 2 cm wide and 9 cm long on the rear surface of the anterior third of the forearms. Whites of the eyes not yellowed. No palpable adenopathy. No oedemas. Humeral arterial pressure 12/8; pulse-regular, 80/min. Slight protomesosystolic murmur 3/6, mid-heart area, without irradiation. Peripheral arteries all palpable. Veinous system has no peculiarities. Pulmonary auscultation physiological. Abdomen supple and very painful in the epigastric cavity, right hypochondrium and right iliac fossa. No pain on relaxing; deep palpation impossible owing to pain. No palpable mass. Liver

at costal border, painful on percussion. No palpable spleen. Left renal capsule supple and painless right supple but painful on percussion. Osteoarticular status within normal limits No meningism. Cranial nerves in order. Field of vision normal when finger-tested. Fundus of the eye normal. Osteotendinous reflexes sharp and symmetrical. No co-ordination difficulties.

Conclusions: Although the skull X-rays give no pathological indications, the syndrome is most probably post-concussional and likely to be connected with the brutality suffered by the patient during detention. With regard to the abdominal pains, the patient was not in Geneva long enough (she left on the day on which I examined her) to undergo the additional tests which need to be done. It may nevertheless be concluded, first, that the ulcer diagnosis is a conceivable one and that treatment should be given and, secondly, that the residual pains in the right hypochondrium and right iliac fossa could be compatible with sequels to contusions (blows?). Vesicular pains obviously cannot be ruled out a priori but the absence of food intolerance makes them unlikely.

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Letter dated 30 June 1977 from the Permanent Representative of
the

Sudan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to forward herewith the text of an article entitled "Israel tortures Arab Prisoners" and a related editorial which appeared in The Sunday Times 19 June 1977 with the request that they be circulated as an official document the General Assembly, under items 30 and 57 of the preliminary list, and of the Security Council.

I would appreciate it very much if the attention of the President of the Security Council could be drawn to the subject—matter.

(Signed) Mustafa MEDANI

Permanent Representative of the
Sudan Chairman of the Arab
Group

In assessing those allegations, however, we were frequently driven back to gauging from long interviews what Amnesty calls the "credibility and. motivation' of a witness. The testimony of Josef

Odeh, for example, is terrible - though by no means unique. It squares with the pattern thrown up by other testimony: and some corroboration is available. But the most impressive aspect was Odeh's manner in giving it.

Odeh's allegations go back to 1969 then his daughter Rasmiah then aged 21, was given two life sentences for terrorist offences which included the planting of bombs which killed 14 people.

Odeh says that it was around 1 a.m. on February 28, 1969, when Israeli soldiers burst into his home, then in Ramallah, and arrested him and his three daughters - one 23 one 17 and Rasmiah. They were taken to the Russian Compound.

His testimony bears out what the later prison sentences argue: that the Israelis were from the start, really interested in Rasmiah. According to Odeh's account, during his 20 days at the compound, the interrogators arranged a series of confrontations between members of the family, seemingly, as a pressurizing device.

Once, he said, he was kept in one room while Rasmiah was beaten nearby: "When they took me back ... Rasmiah couldn't stand on her own feet. She was lying on the floor and there were blood stains on her clothes. Her face was blue and she had a black eye. Then she was picked up by two soldiers, and at that moment I started crying

and screaming and they blindfolded me and I think she was then taken away."

As his recital continued, Odeh became visibly distressed. He began to breathe rapidly and the muscles in the side of his neck were twitching. We asked him when he next saw Rasmiah, and he began to cry. At last he said to our interpreter: 'I wish I had died rather than see this thing...It's a question of honour... It is alright, interpret, why not? What is there to tell? They held her down and shoved up a stick.'

When he could go on, he said that he had been taken into an interrogation room to find Rasmiah naked and handcuffed. One of the interrogators, he said, "asked me to sleep with her, and I said: 'Don't even think of that. I would never do such a thing.' They were beating me and beating her and we were both screaming. Rasmiah was still saying: 'I know nothing.' And they spread her legs and shoved the stick into her. She was bleeding from her mouth and from her face and from her end. Then I became unconscious."

Josh Ruebner

National Advocacy Direct

[US Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation](#)

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