

UNOFFICIAL TRANSLATION

Jerusalem, 20 July 2011

Ms. Navanethem Pillay, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights;

Ms. Irina Bokova, Director-General, UNESCO

RE: Urgent Action to Prevent the Jerusalem Municipality from Completely Desecrating Ma'man Allah (Mamilla) Cemetery

With our warmest regards from the Holy City of Jerusalem,

Mamilla Cemetery is one of the oldest Palestinian cemeteries, in which were buried numerous Companions and followers of the Prophet Muhammad, learned scholars, military commanders and many notables of Jerusalem throughout history. Unfortunately, this cemetery has been targeted by the Israeli authorities, and continues to be until this day. Indeed, 85% of its area has been turned into parks and streets, while buildings and parking lots have been erected over parts of it. Only 23 dunums of the cemetery remain, and even this area is not being spared from the hands of the Israeli authorities, which attempt by numerous means to dispose of what is left of it.

On June 25th, 2011, under cover of darkness in the middle of the night, Jerusalem Municipality bulldozers entered Mamilla Cemetery and completely destroyed close to 100 graves and grave markers. The authorities are still determined to continue the leveling and destruction of the graves of Jerusalem's ancestors, and they have placed red marks on dozens of additional graves in preparation for their destruction. This comes at the same time as official permission has been given for construction work to begin on the site of the cemetery for what they brazenly and unashamedly call "A Center for Human Dignity – Museum of Tolerance"! *We ask you: What humanity could this possibly refer to? And what dignity? And what tolerance?*

In the face of these troubling developments, we the undersigned, in the name of our Arab, Muslim and Christian people steadfast in the holy land, from here in the "flower of cities", in the Holy City of Jerusalem, appeal urgently to you for immediate intervention to stop the desecration of this cemetery via your sending a delegation to investigate the situation, and putting pressure on the Government of Israel, as was requested by the Human Rights Council resolution of 2010. This is especially important in light of the sanctity, location and historical importance of this cemetery, and the fact that it is an exceptional archaeological site, which is no less holy than the Christian or Jewish cemeteries whose profanation is also prohibited.

We therefore ask that you give the necessary priority to the study of the Petition submitted to you by a distinguished group of Jerusalemites, represented by the Center for Constitutional Rights in New York, which includes thorough historical and legal documentation on this issue, and rightful and just requests that no reasonable person could refuse.

Thank you for your cooperation.

[In Arabic alphabetical order, per Arabic original]

- Shaykh Ibrahim Sarsour – Member of Knesset Mrs. Ilham Salama – Social Department, YMCA Jerusalem.
- Mr. Ibrahim Matar – The National Christian Society.
- Mr. Ahmed Hashem al-Zaghayer – President, Union of Chambers of Commerce.
- Mr. Usama al-Sa’adi – Attorney.
- Ms. Ilham Salama, Social Department, YMCA.
- Mr. Iyad al-Masrouji – Businessman and Investor.
- Mr. Bernard Sabella – Member of Palestinian Legislative Council.
- Mr. Tawfiq Habash – Businessman.
- Mr. Jamal Zahalqa – Member of Knesset.
- Dr. Jamal Nusseibeh – Attorney-at-Law.
- Mr. Hatem Abd Al-Qader – Minister for Jerusalem Affairs, Palestinian Authority.
- Mr. Hana Siniora – Businessman.
- Mr. Hana ‘Amira – Member of the Executive Committee, Palestine Liberation Organization.
- Engineer Khaled al-Kaluti – Jerusalem Activist
- Ms. Dina Zarina – Secular Committee in the Holy Land.
- Ms. Rania Elias – Director, Yabous Cultural Center.
- Ms. Randa Makhlouf – Secular Committee in the Holy Land.
- Engineer Zaki Aghbariya – President, Al-Aqsa Association for Waqf and Culture.
- Ms. Zahira Kamal – Secretary General Fida, Former Minister, Palestinian Authority.
- Dr. Sari Nusseibeh – President, Al-Quds University.
- Mr. Salah Atallah – Businessman.
- Engineer Adnan al-Husseini – Governor of Jerusalem District, Palestinian Authority.

- Mr. Azzam Abu Sa'ud – General Director, Jerusalem Chamber of Commerce.
- Dr. Afu Ighbaria – Member of Knesset.
- Archbishop Atallah Hanna.
- Shaykh Dr. Akrama Sabri – President of the High Islamic Council and Preacher of the Aqsa Mosque.
- Mr. Omar al-Alamy – Associate General Director, Jerusalem Cigarette Company.
- Mr. Francis Tamas – Financial Expert and Jerusalemite Activist.
- Engineer Fouad al-Daqqaq – Advisor, Jerusalem Holding Company.
- Shaykh Kamal al-Khatib – Vice President of the Islamic Movement in Israel.
- Engineer Mazen Sinokrot – Former Palestinian Authority Minister and Chairman of the Board of Jerusalem Holding Company.
- Mr. Muhammad Baraka – Member of Knesset.
- Dr. Muhammad Jadallah – Representative of National Forces in Jerusalem.
- Mr. Muhammed Zaydan - President, Arab Higher Follow-up Committee in Israel.
- Dr. Mohamed al-Masrouji – President of the Board of Directors, Businessmen's Association.
- Rosary Sister's High School.
- Mr. Mas'ud Ghanaim – Member of Knesset.
- Engineer Mustafa Abu Zahra – President of the Council of Islamic Cemeteries in Jerusalem.
- Dr. Mahdi Abd al-Hadi – President, Palestinian Academic Society for International Affairs.
- Shaykh Najih Bakirat – Head, Manuscripts and Culture Section, Al-Aqsa Mosque.
- Professor Nabil Mashhour – President of the Union of the Arab Orthodox Club.
- Ms. Hind Houry – Former Palestinian Authority Minister and Ambassador.
- Mr. Hisham al-Kalouti – Jerusalemite Activist.

- Mr. Wasif Thahir – President of the Board of Directors, YMCA Jerusalem.
- Mr. Yusef Sanahir – Center for Church Relations.

Cc:

Mr. Michael Ratner, Ms. Maria LaHood, Center for Constitutional Rights, New York.

Ambassador Ibrahim Khreishi, Permanent Observer for Palestine at the United Nations, Geneva

Ambassador Elias Sanbar, Permanent Observer for Palestine at UNESCO, Paris

Ambassador Riyadh Mansour, Permanent Observer for Palestine at the United Nations, New York