THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST*

Letter dated 26 August 1969 from the Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to enclose the text of a statement made in the Indian Parliament by the Foreign Minister of India on 26 August 1969 concerning the burning of the Al Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem.

I should be grateful if you could have this letter together with its enclosure circulated as a document of the General Assembly.**

(Signed) S. SEN
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations

* Item 27 of the provisional agenda.
** An identical letter, addressed to the President of the Security Council, has been issued under the symbol S/9413.
1. According to information received from our Embassy in Amman, the famous Al Aqsa Mosque was set on fire around 0700 on Thursday, 21 August 1969. The fire lasted about three hours and damaged the south-eastern wing of the Mosque. The central portion, including the main dome, has fortunately remained unharmed.

2. The Government and people of India are deeply shocked and pained at this sacrilege of the holy shrine. I am sure the House will join me in expressing our strong condemnation of this act of desecration.

3. The continued occupation of Jerusalem by Israel in defiance of resolutions of the United Nations is a matter of grave concern. This shocking incident makes it imperative that the resolutions of the Security Council on Jerusalem should be implemented without delay. In this context, Israel cannot be absolved of responsibility for this outrage.

5. Our Missions are already in touch with Governments of some friendly countries to see what further action needs to be taken.