



Security Council

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LETTER DATED 15 AUGUST 1989 FROM THE SECRETARY-GENERAL
ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

For some time now, I have been following with deep concern the tragic events in Lebanon, which have caused such immense suffering to the Lebanese people. At the same time, I have been following with great interest and appreciation the initiative undertaken by the League of Arab States, first through the Ministerial Committee of Six, and more recently through the Tripartite Committee, comprising H.M. King Hassan II of Morocco, H.M. King Fahd Bin A. Abdul-Aziz Al Saud of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and H.E. President Chadli Bendjedid of Algeria, to resolve the security and political crises in Lebanon.

On 31 March ([S/20554](#)) and again on 24 April ([S/20602](#)), the Security Council issued a Presidential Statement highlighting its concern about events in Lebanon and expressing full support for the efforts of the League of Arab States. I made a number of similar statements. Furthermore, throughout this period I remained in close contact with the Arab governments and leaders involved, offering to assist them in any way I could. As you know, I have always felt that the complexities of the Lebanese problem are such that they can best be resolved through Arab efforts, with the backing of the international community. This remains my position.

On 11 August, as I informed you, I met with the five Permanent Members in order to convey my growing anxiety about the violence in and around Beirut, which had escalated to a level unprecedented in fourteen years of conflict. They shared my concern and agreed on the need to fully support the efforts of the Tripartite Committee.

You will recall that the Committee on 31 July issued a communiqué in which it summarized its efforts to date. That same day, the UNIFIL mandate was renewed by a unanimous decision of the Security Council. As on previous occasions, the Council reiterated its strong support for the territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence of Lebanon within its internationally recognized boundaries. Sadly, 31 July was also the day on which we received initial reports of the tragic fate of Lieutenant-Colonel William Higgins, who was serving UNIFIL at the time of his abduction in February 1988. All of these events serve to remind us of the United Nations long-standing involvement and commitment to Lebanon, one of the Organization's founding members. Given the depth of this relationship, the United Nations has a responsibility to prevent further bloodshed in Lebanon and to support the wider efforts, led by the Tripartite Committee, for a resolution of this tragic conflict.

I believe that, as a step in that direction, an effective cease-fire is imperative. This would put an end to the bloodshed and enable the Committee to proceed with its mandate. What is required, to my mind, is a concerted effort by the Council as a whole to impress upon the parties to the conflict that there is an immediate need to halt all military activities and to adhere to a cease-fire so that the efforts of the Tripartite Committee may continue unimpeded.

In my opinion, the present crisis poses a serious threat to international peace and security. Accordingly, in the exercise of my responsibility under the Charter of the United Nations, I ask that the Security Council be convened urgently in order to contribute to a peaceful solution of the problem.

(Signed) Javier PEREZ de CUELLAR
