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LETTER DATED 3 APRIL 1983 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
OF ISRAEL TO THE THEN UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT
OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to refer to the letters addressed to the President of the Security Council by the Permanent Representative of Jordan (document S/15659 of 29 March 1983) and by the Permanent Representative of Iraq (documents S/15660 of 29 March 1983 and S/15673 of 31 March 1983). These letters contain irresponsible and unfounded accusations against Israel.

During the past two weeks an outbreak of headaches, dizziness and nausea has occurred in a number of locations in the Jenin district, affecting in particular female high school students. Israel medical authorities began a comprehensive examination of the causes of this occurrence as soon as its existence became known. Extensive clinical, laboratory and environmental analyses yielded no traces whatsoever of poisoning. Nevertheless, the Israel Ministry of Health decided to request also international health authorities to independently assess the causes of the phenomenon.

Local representatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) visited the Jenin high school students and their families immediately after their hospitalization. On 30 March 1983 the Government of Israel and the ICRC agreed on the sending of an ICRC physician to the area in order to participate in the examination of the phenomenon together with Israel and local physicians. Dr. Franz Altherr, a Swiss citizen, thus arrived in the area from Geneva on 31 March. He visited the hospitals and patients, met with local physicians and toured the area, both alone and in the company of Israel physicians. Dr. Altherr submitted his findings to the Permanent Representative of the ICRC in Israel on 3 April 1983.

At a meeting held on the same day between Dr. Altherr and the Director-General of the Israel Ministry of Health, Professor Baruch Modan and his staff, Dr. Altherr stated that after meeting with local physicians and hospitalized high school students, it was his impression that there was no indication as to the existence of poisonous agents. It was Dr. Altherr's feeling that this was a mass phenomenon without any organic basis, and that the population should be reassured that the event was devoid of any danger.

Following contacts on this matter between the Government of Israel and the World Health Organization (WHO) starting on 30 March 1983, it was agreed on 2 April that WHO would dispatch a team of experts to the area. These experts, Dr. Detoratie and Dr. Carter, are scheduled to arrive in Israel on 4 April. Concurrently, the Israel health authorities approached the United States Center for Disease Control in Atlanta, Georgia, with the request that it also assist in the examination of the causes of the phenomenon. The center consented to this request and accordingly two of its experts were due to arrive in Israel today, 3 April 1983.

Further occurrences of these symptoms, once again primarily among female high school students, appeared in the Hebron and Tul-Karem areas on 3 April. These additional cases have further strengthened the resolve of the Government of Israel that this phenomenon and its causes be fully and rapidly investigated by appropriate international medical experts as well.

I have the honour to request that this letter be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Yehuda Z. BLUM
Ambassador
Permanent Representative
of Israel to the United Nations

