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THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST

SECURITY COUNCIL
Forty-fourth year

Letter dated 3 February 1989 from the Permanent Representative of
Lebanon to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit to you the text of a memorandum, dated 30 January 1989, circulated to diplomatic missions accredited in Lebanon by the Lebanese Ministry of Foreign and Expatriate Affairs under reference No. 97/4/F.C. The memorandum, as quoted below, includes a petition submitted to the Ministry by the people of southern Lebanon concerning Israeli practices and the people's request to be protected from such practices and to live in peace and safety.

"The Ministry of Foreign and Expatriate Affairs presents its compliments to the Embassy of ... and has the honour to notify it of events and information relating to the situation in southern areas of Lebanon, and in particular to the border problems of the 'frontier zone area', which is under direct Israeli occupation and subject to Israeli military authority. Israeli officers and soldiers exercise direct command there in contravention of all the precepts of international law, particularly the International Bill of Human Rights, the Geneva Convention and other international covenants and charters.

"Terrorism, blockade, harassment, deprivation of freedoms, raids, expulsion, demolition of homes, torture, imprisonment and pressures are essential elements of daily life even in the areas controlled by the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), in addition to other practices which cannot be listed.

"Events and incidents include:

1. Terrorism and pressure in many forms, including detention and imprisonment: the internationally notorious practice of incarceration in tents constitutes the best example.
2. Continuous raids on homes and schools, summoning of citizens to military administration centres for questioning, threats, warnings and deprivation of freedoms.
3. Subjection of young men and women, and even the elderly, to house arrest or detention.
4. Widespread expulsions: not a week passes without the expulsion of groups or individuals who are driven from their homes by the Israeli army and expelled from the area across the checkpoints; each day the newspapers contain fresh accounts and the names of others who have been expelled.
5. The subjection of inhabitants of the frontier zone to compulsory conscription against their will, under the orders of the Israeli army.
6. The imposition of so-called 'local or civilian administration', over citizens' objections, the subjection of committees to orders from the military rulers, the threatening of dissenters with conscription and of committees with expulsion or imprisonment and the imposition of blockades against towns and villages.
7. Intervention by the Israeli authorities in the affairs of official institutions, the imposition of their wishes on employees of those institutions, the subjection of those employees to their command and the prevention of such employees from carrying out their duties in accordance with their interests.
8. The closure of the frontier zone and prevention of any movement into or out of the zone other than at specified times or under the terms of special permits and authorizations for individuals and vehicles issued by the Israeli commander: such permits are granted in an arbitrary manner and are refused to many.
9. The appropriation of large portions of Lebanese territory, including Mount Hermon, their enclosure with barbed wire and incorporation into Israeli territory.
10. The establishment of mobile and fixed military centres throughout the occupied territories, particularly the huge observation post on hill No. 2,600 at Mount Hermon, and the skiing and tourist centres.
11. Provocation of the international forces and prevention of the fulfilment of their duties.

These acts and practices have resulted in the following:

1. The forcible deportation of large numbers of citizens, in particular young persons, from their homes. Not one week goes by without the Israeli army expelling groups or individuals from the region.
2. Citizens are prevented from exploiting their property which Israel has seized, in particular in the villages of Ouazzani, Sarada, Majidiyé, Halta, Kfar, Chouba, Habbariyé and Chabaa, where Israel has taken over the farms, totalling 14, extending from 'Al-Maghar' near Houli to the top of Mount Hermon.
3. The weakening of trade and economic activity, import and export difficulties, widespread unemployment, high prices and the stagnation of economic life.

The south is a part of the Lebanese Republic, which is a founding Member of the United Nations that participated in the drawing up of the International Bill of Rights and endorses international instruments. Its international borders have inviolability and are recognized. Its sin is that it is a neighbour of Israel, which has proceeded to take over and annex large portions of Lebanon's territory and has occupied other parts of the south, subjected them to its direct authority and imposed on them dictatorial regulations that are contrary to the most elementary customs and laws and are reminiscent of the colonial nineteenth century and the tyranny and terrorism of the middle ages. It has made this region a security zone, in addition to paralysing the role of UNIFIL and opposing the implementation of the resolutions of the Security Council.

"In the face of all that precedes in this brief review of the tragic situation prevailing in our region and imposed on our citizens, we have the right to ask about our rights as Lebanese citizens, which are self-evident. Every human being has the right to live in his homeland, and every citizen has the right to reside in his own home and town and to carry on his normal business in freedom.

"This is especially true since we are living at the end of the twentieth century, under the protection of the United Nations and its International Bill of Human Rights, and the Security Council is the forum responsible for and concerned with a universal and just peace and the security and stability of all States.

"Given the entente between the two giants, which has resulted in peace in many troubled areas of the world, we put the following questions:

1. Is it only the inhabitant of southern Lebanon, the land of love and peace, who is prohibited from living in his homeland and must be driven from his home, deported from his land and robbed of his identity?
2. Is it ordained that he must, without having committed any sin, be imprisoned, have his home demolished and be barred from exploiting his land and leading a natural life?

3. Is it ordained that he must live under martial law, subject to the whims, fanaticism and orders of the Israeli army?

Of course, Israel claims at all times that it protects human rights and is the only State in the Middle East that practices democracy, justice and freedom and believes in peace.

"As we put these questions to these States of the world as a whole generally and to the five permanent members of the Security Council and the two international giants in particular, we ask:

1. That a solution be found to the problem of the south and peace, security and stability brought about there.
2. For the withdrawal of the Israeli army and the restoration to their Lebanese owners of the lands which Israel has taken over.
3. That we be permitted to live in our homeland under the sovereignty of the Lebanese State in our territory up to our internationally recognized borders.
4. For the removal of the barriers and obstacles that impede movement, prevent travel and humiliate people.
5. For a halt to the raids, detentions, imprisonments and other kinds of Israeli practices.
6. That UNIFIL be permitted to play the security role conferred on it by the Security Council.
7. For the implementation of the international resolutions adopted by the Security Council concerning the south.

"The Ministry of Foreign and Expatriate Affairs takes this opportunity to express to the Embassy of ... the assurances of its highest consideration."

I request you to have this letter circulated as an official document of the General Assembly, under the item entitled "The situation in the Middle East", and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Rachid FAKHOURY
Permanent Representative
