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Letter dated 23 December 1980 from the Permanent Representative of
Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to draw your urgent attention to the outrages being committed by Syrian forces against the town of Zahleh in Lebanon. On the pretext of reacting to a military encounter with local forces in which Syrian soldiers died, the Syrian army of occupation deployed in that area, as well as in other parts of Lebanon, has subjected Zahleh and its civilian population to indiscriminate shelling. According to first reports, this bombardment has inflicted scores of casualties, dead and wounded, including women and children.

International silence in the face of such an atrocity can only aggravate the danger to the population of Lebanon, and especially its Christian communities, at the hands of Syrian troops whose brutal repression is as familiar to large segments of the Syrian population as it is to the people of Lebanon who have been experiencing Syrian occupation for several years. A similar Syrian bombardment was, on Saturday, 20 December 1980, directed against the town of Marjayoun and its vicinity in southern Lebanon, where one thousand shells were reported to have rained down on the local population.

Since this recent example of Syrian ruthlessness was perpetrated close to Israel's northern border, Israel deems it necessary to raise its voice in protest against the Syrian bombardment of Zahleh.

As is well known, the Government of Lebanon is unable to expose and appeal against Syrian actions. This should not preclude the international community from acting to stop these outrages. The well-known preoccupation of the United Nations with other issues cannot justify passing over in silence the fate of the helpless inhabitants of Zahleh, who are still under grave threat from Syrian armour.

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I have the honour to request that this letter be 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) Yehuda Z. BLUM
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Israel
to the United Nations
