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LETTER DATED 16 JANUARY 1970 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF
JORDAN TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

Further to my letter of 2 January 1970 (S/9589) addressed to the President of the Security Council concerning Israeli attacks on civilians and upon instructions from my Government, I have the honour to bring to Your Excellency's attention the attached letter by an American professor depicting an example of a human tragedy in the Jordanian village of Zahar.

May I ask that this letter, together with its enclosure, be distributed as official documents of the General Assembly and the Security Council and be brought to the attention of the Special Working Group established under resolution 6 (XXV) of the Commission on Human Rights.

(Signed) Muhammad H. EL-FARRA
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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13 January 1970

Ambassador Muhammad H. El-Farria
Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of
Jordan to the United Nations
866 United Nations Plaza
New York, New York

Dear Mr. Ambassador,

I write to you with a heavy heart asking your assistance to provide me with any information available as to the last hours of my dear friend, Abed Almojeed Mohammed Yousef Haza'mayah, a resident of the Village of Zahar near Irbid. Today, by two separate letters from Jordan, I have been informed that he and his brother were among the eight persons killed in a shelter on New Year's Eve when Israeli rockets hit their poor village.

I shall also be grateful if you will publicize as you see fit my remarks on Abed together with the two notes informing me of his death. I note with bitterness as well as deep personal anguish the fact that the bombardment of Abed's village and the many deaths which ensued have gone unmentioned in the American Press. To the American editors, Arab deaths are simply "casualties" and a brief note in the back pages is deemed adequate coverage. Yet, when an Israeli proves the victim of war, we are exposed to the full horror of the human tragedy involved. My dear friend Abed will not be publicized in any American paper and no American will know the depth of my feeling towards him. Here was a truly good man, a man whose generosity of spirit, affection for his family and love of God were known to all his associates and friends. In but a few days' time, Abed would have been here in America, living with me in Oxford, where I had made arrangements for him to be employed as a mechanic and undertake studies. Now he is gone, and a place long held for him in this household, which has sheltered victims of apartheid and Portuguese colonialism, will never be filled.

Let me tell you something about my relationship with Abed. Two years ago I visited Jordan after a trip to North Africa. While in Amman, I chanced to

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strike up a conversation with the young Jordanian policeman stationed outside the United States Information Center. That young man was Abed. He spoke very little English at the time since he had only received a primary education. Still, there was a sparkle in his eyes, a native intelligence and a hunger for learning that could not be contained. Almost immediately I felt here was one of those rare persons we all search for but seldom find. In my five years at Lincoln University as Director of the Southern African Scholarship Program for refugees, I could pride myself with having generally been able to know an exceptional person at first contact. Indeed, Abed was one of these. After I returned to America, we corresponded, frequently with the assistance of his young brother, who was majoring in English in Zahar. In December 1968, I visited Abed unexpectedly in his village. At the time, I was attending the Arab Human Rights Conference in Beirut. The cold winter wind and mud which I experienced there only kindled my determination to assist this young man on to something else. Moreover, I was fearful because of recent Israeli attacks on Irbid. Yet, because of the obvious absence of any military installations in the vicinity that fear was laid to rest by Abed. By February of 1969 I had resolved to assist Abed in finding some new experience. I knew that his family was poor and his salary as a policeman could hardly finance his brother's education and take care of the others at home, especially since his father was deceased. I therefore purchased a prepaid ticket for him from Pan American Airways.

In late August 1969 I again was able to stop in Jordan after a North African trip. Fortunately, without difficulty, I frequently met Abed when he was not on duty and the Ministry of Information was kind enough to enable me to visit his village by taxi. There I met more of his friends and family and shared a lovely chicken dinner prepared by his mother. After explaining to Abed's police superiors the opportunity now available for him, they agreed to a termination of his employment. There only remained the American visa. This, I was told by Abed in his last letter, dated 17 December, would be granted shortly after 13 January 1970. In the meantime, all arrangements were completed here and we just purchased a new bed and some clothes for him.

While with Abed in Amman in August, I saw a film produced by the Jordanian Ministry of Information dealing with the plight of the Palestinian refugees and the bombing and destruction of civilian areas along the Jordan River. As Abed

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and I sat there, tears streamed down his face and he cried profusely. I was taken aback that this strong young man, so accustomed to sorrow and suffering in his own life, would be touched so deeply by the pain of others. During those few days together, when he was not on duty, we discussed many things. As a result of his eagerness to come to America, he had vastly improved his English and communication was now no problem. He could express deeper feelings and ideas without difficulty. He then said something I shall never forget. He said that for no reason would he ever disobey his God. The conversation arose as a result of his seeing some of the foreign tourists staying at the Jordan Intercontinental Hotel and obviously enjoying the delights of nightlife. While not objecting at all to the ways of others, he made it clear that the values of his village would not be lost. He spoke with affection of his deceased father and the way he had been instructed by him as to what was right and wrong in life. To live an upright life like his father was his goal in life.

Today, Abed is dead. The promise of his life, his brother's and of the others killed with him by Israeli bombing can never be realized. And my household, which over the years has grown with refugee families from white racism in southern Africa together with various other African and Arab students seeking self-improvement, will never be blessed by the presence of this young man. But I shall never forget Abed. There are no words to express my anger that my tax money should have been used by my Government to subsidize the equipping of the Israeli air force. The knowledge that it was an American-made rocket that crashed into Zahar and killed my dear friend cannot be forgotten. And even now I hear that Senator Javits and other Israeli champions seek to provide more American help to Israel. And all of this to defend supposedly "the bastion of democracy and humanism" in the Middle East.

I ask you to convey to Abed's mother and friends in Zahar my deep sympathy and love. From this time I will increase in every conceivable way my assistance to the Palestinian and Jordanian peoples. I do not expect any American Government will be able to overcome the prejudice built up over the years in our news media in favour of Israel despite the fact that various polls have shown that the American people as a whole do not favour continued involvement with Israel. I can assure you, however, that my voice will not be stilled. Until Zionism ceases to exist,

until all people in Palestine/Israel have the fullness of their human and political rights assured in a non-sectarian State, there will never be peace. More young men like Abed and indeed many Jewish youths will also be sacrificed. I ask you to convey to the people of Zahar a wish that I might be considered one of their village. Although I cannot really comfort Abed's mother, I ask you to send on to her the enclosed check of \$420. This is the amount that Pan American Airways returned to me for Abed's ticket. I and my extended family of Africans from South Africa, Zimbabwe, Morocco and Tunisia join in prayer that God will assuage the grief and give courage for a better day. Although Abed was a faithful Moslem, I do not think he would object to a Requiem Mass, which will be held here in Oxford at Sacred Heart Church for the repose of his soul.

(Signed) Richard P. STEVENS, Ph.D.
Chairman, Department of Political Science and
Director, African Language and Area Center
