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LETTER DATED 23 JANUARY 1970 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF
SYRIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

Upon instructions of my Government, I have the honour to bring to your attention the contents of the letter addressed to the representative of the International Red Cross in Syria and Lebanon by the Chairman of the Syrian Arab delegation to the Mixed Armistice Commission on 17 December 1969. This letter reads as follows:

"The Chairman of the Syrian Arab delegation to the Mixed Armistice Commission presents his compliments to the Representative of International Red Cross in Damascus and wishes to inform him of the kind of treatment which has been reserved by the occupying Israeli Authorities to the two Syrian pilots during their imprisonment. The ill-treatment which they suffered contradicts the clauses of the Geneva Conventions on the treatment of war prisoners. I wish to cite as examples some of these inhuman acts:

"(1) Savagely hitting the prisoners on their heads and on various parts of their body with heavy sticks till they become unconscious and repeating the hitting again as soon as they recover their consciousness. This has led to inflicting on them major injuries amounting to permanent defects. No necessary medical treatment was offered to them.

"(2) Starving the prisoners for long periods and then offering little quantity of food of very bad kind and full of salt.

"(3) Keeping the prisoners thirsty for long periods and then offering them dirty water and in very little quantities.

"(4) Imprisoning them in individual cells so narrow as to permit no stretching of arms or legs and bounding them with chains of iron. These cells for a long time were not equipped with lavatories nor were the prisoners given the opportunity to clean their room from dirt.

"(5) Injecting them with morphine without reason as to break their nerves and addict them to drugs; preventing tobacco from reaching them and then offering some without matches or the possibility to get these anywhere.

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"To this must be added instances such as giving them over-size and uncomfortable clothes so as to expose them to ridicule; seizing their personal effects; holding for a long time the gifts they receive; photographing them in unfitting postures; recording untrue statements for propaganda purposes and exerting on them pressure through representatives of non-official organizations."

The Chairman of the Syrian Arab delegation ended his letter by requesting the representative of the International Red Cross to inform the headquarters of his organization in Geneva of these details in order to take the necessary action. This conduct of the Israeli authorities of occupation, flagrantly violating the Geneva Convention, does not require any comment.

I have the honour to request that this letter be distributed as a document of the General Assembly and the Security Council.

(Signed) George J. TOMEH
Ambassador
Permanent Representative
