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THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST

SECURITY COUNCIL
Thirty-third year

Letter dated 17 October 1978 from the Permanent Representative of
Lebanon to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the text of an appeal from the International Committee of the Red Cross dated 17 October 1978 concerning the situation in Lebanon.

I have the honour to request you to have this urgent appeal circulated to all States and all agencies as an official document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 30, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Ghassan TUÉNI
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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ANNEX

Appeal by the International Committee of the Red Cross, issued on
17 October 1978, for relief and assistance in Lebanon

1. General situation

1.1. The fragile cease-fire observed in East Beirut and Metn since 7 October has at last allowed the wounded to be removed to hospitals in Beirut and other parts of the country and has permitted the supply of food, albeit on a very small scale, to the civilian population.

To move from one place to another is still very hazardous and difficult, because of snipers and the vast amount of rubble in the streets. Protection and assistance operations are greatly hampered by delays in crossing the lines separating the combatants.

Tension is still running very high in Lebanon and fighting may break out again at any moment.

1.2. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is launching today an appeal to Governments and National Red Cross Societies to meet those needs which are at present known. Further appeals may follow when a clearer view is obtained or if there is a radical change in the situation.

2. Needs

2.1. Emergency medical supplies and personnel are covered for the time being. The ICRC has dispatched three doctors and four nurses to Lebanon. On 15 September it sent various medicaments, sufficient for about 5,000 casualties, as a precautionary measure in the event that fighting breaks out. Plans must be made to send further supplies, especially for displaced civilians.

2.2. Estimates of the number of people who have fled from East Beirut and North Lebanon to neighbouring areas (districts of Metn, Kessrouan and Jbeil) vary greatly even today, but all observers put it at over 500,000.

Although all those displaced persons may not be in the immediate need of assistance, the Lebanese Government and the Red Cross are basing their assistance plans on a figure of about 50,000 families who need help right away. The ICRC is a major contributor to those assistance programmes by providing blankets, powdered milk, baby food and children's clothing.

2.3. The ICRC must increase again its staff in Lebanon and must maintain its strength there for many months to come.

The ICRC must also purchase ambulances, utility trucks and radio transceivers for its joint operations with the Lebanese Red Cross, to which this equipment will be donated after the operation.

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Operating expenses for October are estimated at 400,000 Swiss francs. Purchases of relief in Europe and Lebanon will exceed 500,000 Swiss francs for the same month. The balance of the special budget for Lebanon is already entirely committed for November and December. To continue its operations, ICRC must receive at least 3 million Swiss francs.

3. Action already undertaken by ICRC

- (a) Purchase of 10,000 blankets in Europe which were sent by air freight to Lebanon;
- (b) Purchase of 10,000 blankets in Beirut;
- (c) Twenty tons powdered milk were sent from Switzerland;
- (d) Purchase being negotiated in Lebanon of 20 tons of baby milk;
- (e) 35,000 francs have been allocated for the purchase of 2,000 sets of baby clothing in Beirut;
- (f) 50,000 francs have been allocated for the purchase of detergents in Lebanon.

Moreover, on 15 October, the Red Cross of the Federal Republic of Germany sent 10,000 blankets and 16 tons of baby food by air freight.

4. Appeal

It is hoped that ICRC will receive the following soon from Governments and National Societies:

- (a) 100 tons of baby milk;
- (b) 10,000 sets of clothing for children two to five years of age;
- (c) 50 tons of baby food;
- (d) A minimum of 50,000 blankets;
- (e) 10,000 layettes;
- (f) Three million Swiss francs for operating and logistics costs and relief purchases.

5. Forwarding and relief

Consignments to Beirut should be sent by air, care of ICRC Delegation, Immeuble Makarem, rue du Koweit, Ras-Beyrouth. Donors are earnestly requested to

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inform ICRC Geneva beforehand of weight, volume, value, number of packages item-by-item and other relevant details of each consignment.

For subsequent consignments by sea, please contact ICRC Geneva first to find out which Lebanese port is most suitable.

J.-P. HOCKÉ
Director of Operations
