



UNITED NATIONS
GENERAL
ASSEMBLY



Distr.
GENERAL

A/31/179
19 August 1976

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Thirty-first session
Item 29 of the provisional agenda*

THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Letter dated 17 August 1976 from the Permanent Representative
of Lebanon to the United Nations addressed to the
Secretary-General

I have the honour to inform you that I have been instructed to communicate to you the text attached hereto and to request that it be circulated as an official document of the General Assembly under item 29 of the provisional agenda.

(Signed) Edouard GHORRA
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

* A/31/150.

ANNEX

Letter dated 17 August 1976 from the Deputy Prime Minister of
Lebanon to Mrs. Sirima R. D. Bandaranaike, President of the
Fifth Conference of Heads of State or Government of
Non-Aligned Countries, Colombo, Sri Lanka

The conditions prevailing in Lebanon have prevented the President of the Lebanese Republic and myself from attending the Fifth Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries. We have previously expressed our regret in this regard.

Reports have reached us about what was stated at the first meeting of the Conference with regard to the war taking place in Lebanon. This compels us to clarify some of the facts, which we request be brought to the attention of the members of the Conference. These facts are as follows:

First: It was stated that the Palestinian revolution and the Palestinian people are subjected to a campaign of liquidation and extermination in Lebanon. This is a false allegation. In fact it is Lebanon itself which is the victim of an ugly conspiracy which has demolished in full view and knowledge of the whole world its prosperity, the vestiges of its civilization and economy. Tens of thousands of its nationals have been killed. Its public institutions such as the army, the security forces, administration and justice have been destroyed. Its constitutional and democratic practices which have made Lebanon famous throughout its history have been disrupted.

Second: The Palestinian revolution is the prime executor of the conspiracy against Lebanon. The Palestinians came to Lebanon 28 years ago as refugees. They were established in camps which they have transformed gradually into military fortifications and in which they set up bases for training terrorists from various nationalities. They have breached the accord concluded with the Lebanese authorities in 1969 by installing heavy weapons in the camps and by preventing the Lebanese security forces from performing their duties therein. They have even occupied the UNRWA offices in the camps. Palestinian elements conspicuously circulated in the cities, streets and public squares with their arms. They set up barriers to check the identity of the peaceful passers-by. Many were kidnapped, tortured and killed. Others were imprisoned for years without any knowledge about their fate. It was only natural that these excesses were bound to lead to an explosion between the Palestinian outlaws and aggressors and the aggrieved Lebanese population. The continuing war since 13 April 1975 has daily revealed new evidence of the Palestinian determination to dominate the country. In their efforts to dominate Lebanon, the Palestinians often hid behind self-styled patriotic parties in Lebanon. And by pretending to support the demands of one group, they have succeeded in causing a division among the Lebanese. The Palestinians besieged cities and villages in the heartland of the Lebanese mountains and their remote summits, far away from the Palestinian camps, and have nothing to do with Palestine. They have also caused the dispersal of the

/...

Lebanese Army and security forces. They have continuously rejected the establishment of any regular force in Lebanon to restore and maintain law and order, be it Lebanese, Syrian or foreign. Thus, they were able to effect an unveiled occupation of a part of the city of Beirut and of south Lebanon, whereby nothing could be undertaken without their permission. They have taken over the centres of communication such as the Department of Post, Telegraph and Telephone, the Beirut International Airport, and the two harbours of Saida and Tyre. This is outright occupation of Lebanese territory, and a stop must be put to it, if there is a real will to end the present war.

Third: The reported statement by the representative of the Palestine Liberation Organization in Colombo demanding the withdrawal of foreign troops from Lebanon is nothing but a new and blatant breach of Lebanon's sovereignty and an infringement upon the responsibilities and jurisdiction of its constitutional authorities. Irrespective of the legal basis for the entry of the Syrian forces into Lebanon on 1 June 1976, it remains the absolute right of the legal Lebanese authorities alone to determine the permissibility or otherwise of the Syrian presence in the country. These authorities have the sole right to request the Syrian forces to withdraw from Lebanon. The bitter and dubious fact is that the Palestinians are deliberately disregarding the truth and international law, because their main concern is first and last to prevent the presence in Lebanon of any armed force other than theirs in order to complete their conspiracy against Lebanon's integrity, unity and independence, and to make out of it an alternative national home to their Palestinian homeland which they have abandoned for what they consider to be an easier objective to attain. It is our hope that your Conference will take a clear and courageous step by communicating to the Palestine Liberation Organization, while it is talking about the withdrawal of foreign troops from Lebanon, that it has a duty to begin itself by withdrawing, for Lebanon's land is not its own, but a free and sovereign State whose destiny cannot be determined except by its people alone.

Fourth: I wish at the same time to protest against false statements made by some Arab States calling for the withdrawal of the Syrian forces from Lebanon. I reiterate that this matter can only be determined by Lebanon itself. Any statement in this regard made by other people without our consent is an interference in our affairs and a breach of our sovereignty, which we categorically reject. I request Your Excellency kindly to distribute this communication as an official document of the Conference.

Camille CHAMOUN
Deputy Prime Minister
Minister of Foreign Affairs
and Lebanese Overseas
