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QUESTION OF THE VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS,
INCLUDING POLICIES OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION AND SEGREGATION AND OF
APARTHEID, IN ALL COUNTRIES, WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO COLONIAL
AND OTHER DEPENDENT COUNTRIES AND TERRITORIES

Letter dated 10 November 1969 from the Permanent Representative of
Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour, on instructions of my Government, to transmit to you herewith a copy of the Russian original, together with a translation into English, of a letter dated 6 August 1969 from a group of eighteen Jewish families in Georgia, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, together with a document directed to the Commission on Human Rights. The letter and the document were transmitted by the senders to Her Excellency Mrs. Golda Meir, Prime Minister of Israel, with a request to forward them to me and to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights.

I am further instructed, referring to the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, to ask you to use your good offices to alleviate the situation of Soviet Jewry and more particularly to secure for the signatories of the documents and for their families, as well as for other Jews who may share their desires, the fulfilment of their wishes.

I have the honour to request that this letter and its enclosures be circulated as an official document of the General Assembly (violation of human rights).

(Signed) Yosef TEKOAH
Permanent Representative of Israel
to the United Nations

Dear Yosef Tekoah
Representative of Israel in the United Nations
New York, USA

Enclosed please find a copy of a letter addressed to the United Nations Human Rights Commission. We request you to take immediate steps to obtain in the shortest possible time permission for us to leave for Israel.

We also request you to take steps to distribute the enclosed letter to the Members of the United Nations and also to have it published in the Press with the complete list of signers - names and surnames, and, if necessary, addresses.

For the time of fear has passed - the hour of action has come.

For if I am not for myself, then who will be for me?

And if not now, then - when?

Signatures:

- | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Elashvili, Sh. M. | 10. Mikhelashvili, Kh. A. |
| 2. Elashvili, M. Sh. | 11. Mikhailashvili, A. Kh. |
| 3. Elashvili, I.M. | 12. Mikhelashvili, A. Kh. |
| 4. Eluashvili, Ya. A. | 13. Tetrushvili, Kh. D. |
| 5. Khikhashvili, M.I. | 14. Tsitsushvili, I.Z. |
| 6. Chikhashvili, M.S. | 15. Tsitsushvili, Ye. I. |
| 7. Chikhashvili, M.S. | 16. Yakobishvili, B. Sh. |
| 8. Beberashvili, M.R. | 17. Batonyashvili, M.R. |
| 9. Elashvili, Ya. I. | 18. Tetrushvili, M. Sh. |

22nd day of Av

6 August 1969

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TO THE COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
UNITED NATIONS
New York, USA

We, eighteen religious Jewish families of Georgia, request you to help us leave for Israel. Each one of us, upon receiving an invitation from a relative in Israel, obtained the necessary questionnaires from the authorized USSR agencies, and filled them out. Each was assured orally that no obstacles would be put in the way of his departure. Expecting to receive permission any day, each sold his property and gave up his job. But long months have gone by - years, for many - and permission for departure has not yet been given. We have sent hundreds of letters and telegrams; they have vanished like tears in the sand of the desert. All we hear are one-syllable oral refusals. We see no written replies. No one explains anything. No one cares about our fate.

But we are waiting, for we believe in God.

We eighteen religious Jewish families of Georgia consider it necessary to explain why we want to go to Israel.

Everybody knows how justly national policy, the theoretical principles of which were formulated long ago by the founder of the State, V.I. Lenin, is in fact being carried out in the USSR. There have not been Jewish pogroms, pales or quotas in the country for a long, long time. Jews can walk the streets without fear for their lives; they can live where they wish, hold any position, even as high as the post of minister, as is evident from the example of V. Dymshits, Deputy Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers. There is even a Jewish deputy in the Supreme Soviet - A. Chakovsky, Editor-in-Chief of Literaturnaya Gazeta.

Therefore, it is not racial discrimination that compels us to leave the country. Then perhaps it is religious discrimination? But synagogues are permitted in the country, and we are not prohibited from praying at home. However, our prayers are with Israel, for it is written: "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, may my right hand forget its cunning". For we religious Jews feel that there is no Jew without faith, just as there is no faith without traditions. What, then, is our faith and what are our traditions?

For a long time the Roman legions besieged Jerusalem. But despite the well-known horrors of the siege - hunger, lack of water, disease, and much more - the

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Jews did not renounce their faith and did not surrender. However, man's strength has its limits, too, and in the end barbarians broke into the Holy City. Thus, a thousand years ago, the Holy Temple was destroyed, and with it - the Jewish State. The nation, however, remained. Although the Jews who could bear arms did not surrender to the enemy and killed one another, there remained the wounded, who were bleeding to death; there remained the old people, women and children.

And whoever could not get away was killed on the spot.

But whoever could, went away into the desert; and whoever survived, reached other countries, to believe, and pray and wait.

Henceforth they had to find a way to live in alien lands among people who hated them. Showered with insults, covered with the mud of slander, despised and persecuted, they earned their daily bread with blood and sweat, and reared their children.

Their hands were calloused, their souls were drenched in blood. But the important thing is that the nation was not destroyed - and what a nation.

The Jews gave the world religion and revolutionaries, philosophers and scholars, wealthy men and wise men, geniuses with the hearts of children, and children with the eyes of old people. There is no field of knowledge, no branch of literature and art, to which Jews have not contributed their share. There is no country which gave Jews shelter which has not been repaid by their labour. And what did the Jews get in return?

When life was bearable for all, the Jews waited fearfully for other times. And when life became bad for all, the Jews knew that their last hour had come, and then they hid or ran away from the country.

And whoever got away, began from the beginning again.

And whoever could not run away, was destroyed.

And whoever hid well, waited until other times came.

Who didn't persecute the Jews! Everybody joined in baiting them.

When untalented generals lost a war, those to blame for the defeat were found at once - Jews. When a political adventurer did not keep the mountain of promises he had given, a reason was found at once - the Jews. Jews died in the torture chambers of the Inquisition in Spain, and in fascist concentration camps in Germany. Anti-Semites raised a scare - in enlightened France it was the Dreyfus case; in illiterate Russia, the Beilis case.

And the Jews had to endure everything.

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But there was a way that they could have lived tranquilly, like other peoples; all they had to do was convert to another faith. Some did this - there are cowards everywhere. But millions upon millions preferred a life of suffering and often death to apostasy.

And even if they did wander the earth without shelter - God found a place for all.

And even if their ashes are scattered through the world, the memory of them is alive.

Their blood is in our veins, and our tears are their tears.

The prophecy has come true: Israel has risen from the ashes; we have not forgotten Jerusalem, and it needs our hands.

There are eighteen of us who signed this letter. But he errs who thinks there are only eighteen of us. There could have been many more signatures.

They say there is a total of twelve million Jews in the world. But he errs who believes there are only twelve million of us. For with those who pray for Israel are hundreds of millions who did not live to this day, who were tortured to death, who are no longer here. They march shoulder to shoulder with us, unconquered and immortal, those who handed down to us the traditions of struggle and faith.

That is why we want to go to Israel.

History has entrusted the United Nations with a great mission - to think about people and help them. Therefore, we demand that the United Nations Human Rights Commission do everything it can to obtain from the Soviet Government in the shortest possible time permission for us to leave. It is incomprehensible that in the twentieth century people can be prohibited from living where they wish to live. It is strange that it is possible to forget the widely publicized appeals about the right of nations to self-determination - and, of course, the right of the people who comprise the nation.

We will wait months and years, we will wait all our lives, if necessary, but we will not renounce our faith or our hopes.

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We believe: our prayers have reached God.

We know: our appeals will reach people.

For we are asking little - let us go to the land of our forefathers.

Signatures:

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| 1. Elashvili, Shabata Mikhailovich | Kutaisi, 53 Dzhaparidze St. |
| 2. Elashvili, Mikhail Shabatovich | Kutaisi, 33 Dzhaparidze St. |
| 3. Elashvili, Izrail Mikhailovich | Kutaisi, 31 Kirov St. |
| 4. Eluashvili, Yakov Aronovich | Kutaisi, 5 Mayakovsky St. |
| 5. Khikhashvili, Mordekh Isakovich | Kutaisi, 19 Makharadze St. |
| 6. Chikvashvili, Mikhail Samuilovich | Kutaisi, 38 Khakhanashvili St. |
| 7. Chikvashvili, Moshe Samuilovich | Kutaisi, 32 Tsereteli St. |
| 8. Beberashvili, Mikhail Rubenovich | Kutaisi, 9 Klara-Tsetkin St. |
| 9. Elashvili, Yakov Izrailovich | Kutaisi, 54 Tsereteli St. |
| 10. Mikhelashvili, Khaim Aronovich | Poti, 57 Tskhakaya St. |
| 11. Mikhailashvili, Albert Khaimovich | Poti, 57 Tskhakaya St. |
| 12. Mikhelashvili, Aron Khaimovich | Poti, 18 Dzhaparidze St. |
| 13. Tetrushvili, Khaim Davidovich | Kutaisi, 5 Shaumyan 1st Lane |
| 14. Tsitsuashvili, Isro Zakharovich | Kutaisi, 5 Shaumyan 1st Lane |
| 15. Tsitsuashvili, Yefrem Isrovich | Kutaisi, 6 Shaumyan 1st Lane |
| 16. Yakobishvili, Bension Shalomovich | Tbilisi, 4 General Delivery
(formerly lived at 91 Barnov St.) |
| 17. Batoniashvili, Mikhail Rafaelovich | Kutaisi, 53 Dzhaparidze St. |
| 18. Tetrushvili, Kikhail Shalomovich | Kulashi, 114 Stalin St. |

6 August 1969
