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THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Letter dated 9 April 1980 from the Permanent Representative of Israel
to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Further to my letter to you of 8 April 1980 (A/35/170), I wish to draw your urgent attention to an atrocity perpetrated on 7 April 1980 (the last day of the Passover festival), by PLO terrorists based in Lebanon, which resulted in the deaths of an infant and a civilian, as well as the wounding of four small children, the death of an Israeli Defence Force soldier and the injury of 11 other soldiers.

The details of this outrage are as follows:

Shortly after midnight of 6/7 April (local time), five PLO criminals penetrated into Israel from UNIFIL's area of operation in southern Lebanon. They entered Kibbutz Misgav Am (about half a mile from the border with Lebanon) and seized two nursery buildings, in which innocent children, all less than three years old, were sleeping, together with some nursing mothers. It was soon learned that the terrorists' aim was to take the infants hostage and hold them as ransom in an attempt to gain the release of 50 PLO criminals, sentenced by Israel courts to various terms of imprisonment.

The Kibbutz guards gained control of one of the nursery buildings, and freed the children and several mothers inside. Later, an Israel army unit, which was rushed to the scene, engaged the terrorists at the second nursery. By 1000 hours the children and other hostages there had been freed, and the five terrorists had been killed.

A terrorist group which belongs to the PLO, calling itself the "Arab Liberation Front", and operating under the direction of PLO headquarters at Sidon in southern Lebanon, immediately took responsibility for this outrage in a statement issued at Baghdad and broadcast on Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic on 7 April 1100 hours.

* A/35/50.

Indiscriminate attacks on civilians in general and children in particular, with the aim of mass murder or of taking hostages for unconscionable ransom, have always been characteristic of the PLO's cowardly acts. Thus, for example, the PLO chose its own vicious way to mark the International Year of the Child in 1979, namely, with the slaughter of three children and injury of 18 others in Israel - see, in particular, my letters of 22 April 1979 (A/34/207-S/13264) and 23 May 1979 (A/34/277-S/13346).

This is not the first time that the PLO has used UNIFIL's area of operation and set about its criminal acts through UNIFIL's lines. Thus, for instance, on 9 May 1979, three PLO terrorists opened fire on Kibbutz Manara (also on the border with Lebanon, some three miles south of Kibbutz Misgav Am) after having entered UNIFIL's lines from the north (see my letter of 9 May 1979 - S/13312).

The time has surely come for Members of the United Nations to recognize the implications and consequences flowing from any form of co-operation with the terrorist PLO both within and without the framework of the United Nations.

A heavy responsibility also rests with all those at the United Nations whose statements cannot but be viewed by the PLO as encouragement to continue to perpetrate its despicable crimes. As is well known, the murder organization in question masquerades at the United Nations as a "national liberation movement".

These crimes throw clear light on the true objectives of the PLO and its supporters when they speak of "Palestinian rights".

Given the true character of the criminal PLO and its violent aims, the Government of Israel, for its part, is duty-bound, as I have indicated in previous letters, to take all measures necessary to protect the lives and safety of its citizens.

I have the honour to request that this letter be circulated as an official document of the General Assembly under item 26 on the preliminary list.

(Signed) Yehuda Z. BLUM
Ambassador
Permanent Representative
of Israel to the
United Nations
