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LETTER DATED 21 APRIL 1980 FROM THE ACTING PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE  
OF IRELAND TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

I should be grateful if you would be good enough to have the attached  
statement by the Government of Ireland issued as a document of the Security Council  
in relation to the situation in southern Lebanon.

(Signed) Aidan MULLOY  
Acting Permanent Representative  
of Ireland

Annex

Statement by the Government of Ireland on 20 April 1980

The Government held a special meeting this morning to consider the situation arising from the murder on Friday of Privates Barrett and Smallhorne, two members of the Defence Forces serving with the United Nations Force in Lebanon, and the death some days previously of Private Griffin from injuries received earlier.

The Government expressed their deepest sympathy to the families and relatives of the three men, all of whom died while courageously carrying out their duty in the service of the United Nations and in the cause of peace. The bereaved families should know that everyone in Ireland shares their grief and their sense of loss. That this grief is shared by the international community is evident from the many moving expressions of sympathy which the Government have received from abroad.

Following these wanton killings, the Government heard reports from the Minister for Defence and from the Minister for Foreign Affairs including the steps taken by Irish representatives at the United Nations and in various capitals during and immediately after the latest tragic incidents.

Ireland has a long and honourable record of service to United Nations peace-keeping over many years. The Government believe strongly that this commitment should be maintained and that the officers and men of Ireland's Defence Forces should continue, as they have for 22 years, to play their part effectively in peace-keeping operations at the request of the United Nations.

The Government are extremely concerned at recent developments and at the further difficulties which have been placed in the way of the Force in carrying out its mandate from the Security Council effectively and in conditions of reasonable security for its personnel.

In the dangerous situation in the Middle East, the United Nations Peace-keeping Force in Lebanon has a particularly important - indeed a vital - role to play. The Force has made a significant contribution towards the prevention of an outbreak of more general hostilities in the Middle East. The precipitate withdrawal of the Force now would dangerously upset such stability as exists in the area. Such a withdrawal could lead to intervention by other outside forces. At the present time of heightened international tension this could have the most serious consequences and might easily lead to wider war.

The Government recognizes this and they believe that Ireland should continue to play its part in the United Nations peace-keeping effort by maintaining its contingent with the Force. But any United Nations peace-keeping operation depends fundamentally on acceptance of the Force, and of its role, in the area where it is to serve, on a necessary minimum of co-operation and support from the Governments who wish to see it interposed between parties in conflict. No United Nations peace-keeping force can function effectively if it is prevented by deliberate

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policy from full deployment in its area of operation nor can the participating countries allow the officers and men of their forces who have volunteered for service at the request of the international community to be the target of harassment and attack by hostile irregular forces which are supplied, trained, advised and supported from outside by a United Nations Member State on the grounds that it considers the existence and the activities of those forces to be helpful to its security.

The Government understands that Israel is concerned for its security and they sympathize with the grief felt by the people of Israel when death or injury is caused by attack from across its border as in the recent tragic incident at Misgav Am. They emphasize, however, that there is no evidence that the infiltrators who carried out this attack came through the area where UNIFIL has been allowed to exercise effective control. Governments in the region, and all those Governments which wish the Force to continue in being, must now see that it is necessary once and for all to create conditions which will allow it to carry out its mandate in every respect throughout the area assigned to it, in conditions of adequate security for its personnel. It is clear, that a return to the situation as it existed before the attack on At-Tiri two weeks ago, while it may be a first step, is quite insufficient.

At their meeting today, the Government noted that, on the evening of Friday, 18 April, following the murder of Privates Barrett and Smallhorne, the President of the United Nations Security Council, with the agreement of all 15 Member States, made an important statement at a special meeting of the Council. In it he reaffirmed:

"The intention of the Council to take such determined action as the situation calls for to enable UNIFIL to take immediate and total control of its entire area of operations up to the internationally recognized boundaries."

The Government now look to the United Nations Security Council for this action. Specific decisions must be taken of a political and diplomatic character to implement the stated intention of the Council, taking account of the fact that the role of the Force is a peace-keeping one.

In particular, the intention of the Council that UNIFIL should take "immediate and total control of its entire area of operations" requires that the irregular Haddad Forces who have been the major source of the problems created for the United Nations Force, and the direct cause of the recent loss of life by Irish soldiers, must cease their harassment and attacks. This means that they must be deprived of all outside support so that there will be an end, once and for all, to the threat which they have posed, almost on a daily basis, to the units of the Force since it was first set up.

The Government have therefore decided to propose to the other troop-contributing countries that at an early date they consult closely with each other and with the United Nations Secretary-General to consider how far such measures as may now be taken by the Security Council, which has the responsibility in the

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matter, will be adequate to ensure that the Force can function effectively and with due regard for the safety of its personnel. The Minister for Foreign Affairs will now seek to arrange an early meeting at Ministerial level with the other troop-contributing countries. First contacts are already under way to this end.

The Government have noted the assurances given by Prime Minister Begin of Israel to President Carter that Israel would co-operate fully with UNIFIL. On the instructions of the Taoiseach, the Irish Ambassador to Israel, Mr. Sean Ronan, will meet Prime Minister Begin today to convey to him the Taoiseach's deep personal concern. He will discuss with the Prime Minister how Israel intends to carry out the assurances it has given and deal effectively with the forces of Major Haddad.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs will also bring the present serious situation to the attention of the Foreign Ministers of Ireland's partners in the Nine, at the Council of Ministers meeting in Luxembourg on Monday and Tuesday and he will inform them of the views and of the concern of the Irish Government.

The Government are keeping the whole situation under continuing review.

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