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LETTER DATED 20 MARCH 1978 FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE
ON THE EXERCISE OF THE INALIENABLE RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN
PEOPLE ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

The tragedy which has once again stricken the population of Lebanon following Israel's invasion is a cause of profound concern and anxiety to the Committee over which I have the honour to preside.

Accordingly, I am authorized to inform you that the members of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People fully associate themselves with the request of the Security Council that Israel should immediately cease its military action against the territorial integrity of Lebanon and withdraw its forces without delay from all Lebanese territory.

In the first place, it cannot be denied that this invasion is likely to complicate considerably the settlement of the Middle East problem as a whole and to have a profoundly adverse effect on all the efforts being made to achieve a just and lasting settlement, of which the question of Palestine is the central element. As the General Assembly has stated on more than one occasion, a viable peace can be achieved in the region only by taking into account the inalienable rights and legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people.

At the same time, our concern is all the greater in that Israel's attack - according to the Israeli leaders themselves - was directed mainly against the Palestinians, who are in Lebanon because they have been driven from their homes and have so far been prevented from establishing in Palestine a homeland which would be their own and in which they could live in peace with their neighbours.

As you well know, the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People has drawn up a specific programme of recommendations for the just and equitable solution of the question of Palestine, in conformity with the Charter and United Nations resolutions. The General Assembly of the United Nations, at its thirty-first session, endorsed those recommendations as the basis for the solution of the question of Palestine and urged the Security Council to consider them once again. Unfortunately, despite all the efforts made, the Security Council has still not been able to deal seriously with the problem in order to arrive at a positive conclusion on the above-mentioned recommendations and their implementation. I think that it may today be said with assurance that many innocent lives could have been saved if the Security Council had exercised its responsibilities by making its contribution to the efforts to achieve progress in the solution of the question of Palestine.

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The Security Council, of course, remains seized of the recommendations of the General Assembly concerning the creation of conditions to enable the Palestinian people to exercise their inalienable rights. In the light of the tragic events taking place in Lebanon, it is clearer than ever that until strong measures are taken to achieve a just and durable settlement of the question of the Middle East as a whole, including, and above all, the Palestinian problem, there will be no peace, security and tranquillity in the region.

The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People believes that, in current conditions, it is imperative for the Security Council to take more energetic and determined action to bring about the urgent establishment of peace in the Middle East. In this connexion, a positive response to the General Assembly recommendations on the question of Palestine and the achievement of perceptible progress towards the solution of this question should no longer be postponed. The current state of immobilism runs the risk of further confrontations and at the same time entails a still more serious threat to international peace and security.

The Committee condemns Israel's current aggression against Lebanon and demands its immediate cessation.

I should be grateful if this letter could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Médoune FALL
Chairman of the Committee on the
Exercise of the Inalienable Rights
of the Palestinian People
