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NOTE VERBALE DATED 3 MARCH 1978 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF
LESOTHO TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

The Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Lesotho to the United Nations presents his compliments to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and has the honour to refer to his note of 22 February 1978 (copy attached) and requests that the communication be circulated as a Security Council document.

Annex

Note verbale dated 22 February 1978 from the Permanent
Representative of Lesotho to the United Nations
addressed to the Secretary-General

The Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Lesotho to the United Nations presents his compliments to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and has the honour to transmit the following text as received from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Lesotho:

"In contravention of existing trade, customs, labour and travel arrangements between Lesotho and South Africa, in particular the labour agreement of 1973, which names fifteen points of entry between the two states, South Africa has unilaterally blockaded the south-eastern border of Lesotho which abuts that part of South Africa called the Transkei.

"Since Friday, 17 February 1978, the South African authorities, through their Transkeian minions, have demanded visas at a cost of R2.50 each from Lesotho citizens travelling through Transkei en route to destinations in other parts of South Africa. This week the situation worsened when international passports as distinct from agreed travel documents were demanded by South African officials at Ramatseliso, Qacha's Nek and Tele border posts. The implication of this demand is obvious namely, tacit recognition of the Transkei Bantustan.

"The net effect of South Africa's insidious move is the complete stoppage of all movement of goods and persons, in both directions through the border posts already mentioned. For all intents and purposes, the south-eastern border of Lesotho is sealed. During the past week, thousands of Basotho who normally travel through the Transkei to other parts of South Africa have been stranded on both sides of the border. The refusal of the South African authorities to permit Lesotho citizens to return to their own country is a gross violation of internationally accepted norms.

"Faced with the situation which threatens her integrity and stability, and in line with her known stand against apartheid, in compliance with General Assembly resolution 31/6, Lesotho is mobilizing her people with meagre resources to withstand this latest move against her by the racist South African régime. Specifically, the following actions have been taken to alleviate the suffering of our people:

- "1. R1,000,000 has been diverted for the immediate construction of a wholesale facility at Qacha's Nek and capitalization of the Lesotho National Bus Service.
- "2. The bus service between Qacha's Nek and Quthing is to be launched immediately. With (1.) above, this action is intended to reduce the effect of the blockade.

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- "3. Additional health facilities, in the form of staff and medicines, are being diverted to Qacha's Nek and other affected areas.
- "4. Self-help projects are being increased and intensified to provide food and employment.
- "5. Construction of roads is being accelerated. This applies to access roads and river crossings as well.
- "6. Emergency food supplies are being sent to affected areas.

"Lesotho is in a state of seige and therefore needs international moral support and material assistance. Her own efforts and resources are not sufficient to cope with the emergency imposed upon her by Pretoria. As the Security Council is already seized with the problem of our south-eastern border with South Africa, in accordance with its resolution 402, you are requested to marshal another support on our behalf and to immediately dispatch a fact-finding mission to Lesotho. If possible, such a mission should include an international lawyer with special knowledge of boundary disputes and/or transit rights and obligations.

"We appeal to Your Excellency to come to our rescue at this hour of crisis. Because of her problems and her tarnished international image, South Africa is deliberately if not maliciously venting her spleen on us. We need international support to survive."
