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LETTER DATED 6 AUGUST 1997 FROM THE PERMANENT OBSERVER FOR THE  
LEAGUE OF ARAB STATES TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE  
PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

With reference to Article 54 of the Charter of the United Nations, I have the honour to send you a copy of the statement by the Council of the League of Arab States, adopted at its extraordinary session on 5 August 1997 at the headquarters of the Arab League in Cairo, concerning the aggressive and abusive decisions taken by the Israeli Government against the Palestinian people.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Hussein HASSOUNA  
Ambassador  
Permanent Observer for the  
League of Arab States

Annex

Statement adopted by the Council of the League of Arab States on  
5 August 1997 concerning the aggressive and abusive decisions  
taken by the Israeli Government against the Palestinian people

The Council of the League of Arab States,

Meeting in extraordinary session at the level of Permanent Representatives at the request of the State of Palestine, in order to adopt a unified inter-Arab position in the face of the aggressive and abusive decisions taken by the Government of Israel against the Palestinian people,

Reaffirming the resolutions and communiqués adopted by the Arab Summit Conferences, in particular the Final Communiqué of the Cairo Summit Conference, adopted on 23 June 1996, and also the resolutions of the Council of the League of Arab States concerning the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Palestine problem,

Having discussed the grave developments being faced by the Palestinian people, bearing in mind the contents of the letter sent by Yasser Arafat, President of the State of Palestine, to the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, and also the statement by the Palestinian political leadership concerning the policy of collective punishment adopted by the Israeli Government whereby a blockade has been imposed on towns and villages, international crossing points to Egypt and Jordan have been closed, and the movement of workers and goods between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip is being prevented, and the declared intention of the Israeli forces to operate in the area of the Palestinian Authority and to mobilize tanks, troops and rocket launchers in confrontation with Palestinian towns,

Affirms that this explosive situation and the acts of violence that are occurring in the region, of whose consequences it has persistently warned, is a result of the halting of the peace process stemming from Israel's actions and its failure to abide by signed agreements, and that it is a direct product of the following factors:

1. The continuation of the expansionist policy of the Israeli Government in building colonialist settlements, particularly in the Holy City of Jerusalem, seizing land, changing the demographic and geographical situation, violating all the resolutions and principles on which the peace process is founded, particularly Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), and the agreements signed by the Israeli Government with the Palestine Liberation Organization;

2. Action by the Israeli Government to impede and bring to a halt the various tracks within the peace process, and the consequential tension in the region;

3. The atmosphere of heightened tension resulting from incidents in which the colonialist settlers profaned moral and human values and desecrated Islamic and Christian religious beliefs and symbols, thereby inflaming religious feelings and bringing Arab, Islamic and Christian public opinion to fever pitch;

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Holds Israel, therefore, fully responsible for poisoning the atmosphere and for the upsurge of violence, strongly condemns the Israeli decisions and actions which are incompatible with all the principles and resolutions on which the peace process was founded, and which offend against all international laws, particularly those relating to human rights, and the Geneva Conventions of 1949, and considers those decisions and actions as tantamount to a declaration of war on the Palestinian people, and on its political leadership, and demands that they be reversed immediately;

Considers that the way to ensure the return of security to the region, and to break out of the state of deadlock and tension, is to expedite the resumption of all tracks within the peace process, to achieve a just, lasting and comprehensive peace through the total withdrawal of Israel from the Arab lands that it occupied in 1967, and subsequently, in accordance with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1978);

Commends the stand adopted by the Members of the United Nations which voted for the two draft resolutions at the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly and requests the two co-sponsors of the peace process, the States of the European Union, the permanent members of the Security Council, Japan, the States of the non-aligned group and other States involved, the United Nations and international organizations and institutions to take urgent action with a view to lifting the blockade that has been imposed on the Palestinian people, which has become a grave threat to the lives of Palestinian citizens, and also to take action to bring about a resumption of the process of negotiation on all tracks so as to build on what has been achieved in that connection, and to give an impetus to the peace process so as to enable the region to avoid further violence, bloodshed, the worsening of hostility and loss of confidence, a result that will come about only if the process of colonialist settlement is brought to an end in all the Arab lands, particularly the Holy City of Jerusalem, and if the Israeli Government scrupulously implements the agreements it has reached with the Palestine Liberation Organization;

Categorically rejects the Israeli allegations to the effect that it is the Palestine National Authority that is responsible for acts of violence which were instigated by the obduracy of the Israeli Government and by its failure to honour the binding agreements which it had signed, while the Palestine National Authority respects its own obligations;

Reaffirms that the resumption of negotiations on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks, from the point at which the previous negotiations with the Israeli side stopped, will have a positive impact on the peace process as a whole;

Reaffirms its support and backing for the Palestinian people and for its leadership in confronting all these challenges, and calls on the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States to expedite action at all levels, both regional and international, to lift the blockade on the Palestinian people;

Regards the present session as remaining open for the purpose of monitoring the grave developments that are taking place.