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THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST

DRAFTING OF AN INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION AGAINST THE TAKING
OF HOSTAGES

Letter dated 23 May 1978 from the Permanent Representative
of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-
General

I have the honour to refer to the vicious PLO terrorist attack against passengers waiting to board an El Al plane at Orly Airport, Paris, on Saturday, 20 May 1978, and to draw your attention to a cable which was sent on 21 May by Mr. Tamir, the Minister of Justice and Acting Minister of Transport of Israel, to the President of the Council of the International Civil Aviation Organization. The text of Mr. Tamir's cable read as follows:

"In accordance with article 13 of the 1971 Montreal Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Civil Aviation, this is to inform you of the following:

"On Saturday, 20 May 1978, at Paris Orly Airport, at approximately 1525 hours, a group of three terrorists opened fire on passengers waiting to embark on El Al flight 324, en route to Ben Gurion International Airport. Only prompt action by security forces prevented the terrorist attack from developing into a massacre of dozens of innocent passengers and an attack on the El Al aircraft. Despite the prompt action, a member of the French security forces was killed by the terrorists, and a number of persons were injured.

"The terrorists were members of a group affiliated to the PLO. This group, in an announcement from Beirut, has already hastened to claim responsibility for the attack.

* A/33/50/Rev.1.

"This attack is the latest in a long record of attacks against civil aviation by members of the PLO. It is beyond comprehension that the PLO, which is the umbrella organization of the Palestinian terror movements, has recently been granted observer status in ICAO, the very organization dedicated to the safe and orderly development of international civil aviation.

"I hereby urgently call upon the Council of ICAO to condemn the attack and to call upon States to take prompt action to prevent and punish such attacks, and to comply with the relevant ICAO resolutions, especially A-22-16 and A-22-17, which, inter alia, call upon States to take adequate measures to prevent such attacks.

"I request that this letter be circulated to all members of the Council."

I have the honour to request that this letter be circulated as an official document of the General Assembly under items 30 and 122 of the preliminary list.

(Signed) Chaim HERZOG
Ambassador
Permanent Representative
of Israel
to the United Nations
