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SECURITY COUNCIL
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Letter dated 20 March 1974 from the Permanent Representative
of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed
to the Secretary-General

Upon instructions from my Government pursuant to my previous letters, which were circulated as documents A/9272-S/11067, A/9301-S/11094, A/9327-S/11119, A/9343-S/11132, A/9491-S/11219 and A/9498-S/11234, dated 1, 9, 19 and 26 November 1973, 13 February and 14 March 1974 respectively, concerning the violations of the cease-fire by Israel, and with reference to the letter addressed to you by the Permanent Representative of Israel on 19 March (A/9500-S/11236), I have the honour to inform you of the following:

1. Since the Security Council adopted resolutions 338 (1973) and 339 (1973), of 22 and 23 October 1973, concerning the cease-fire, which called for the immediate cessation of all military action and urged that the forces of the two sides be returned to the positions they occupied at the time the cease-fire became effective, not a single day has passed without there being persistent and flagrant violations of the cease-fire by Israel. These violations have been confirmed by the observers of the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO). The reports of UNTSO, which have been circulated regularly by the United Nations Secretariat, give the approximate times and co-ordinates of these violations, regarding which detailed complaints have been made to the headquarters of the United Nations observers.

2. I shall not quote the very long list of Israeli violations, but merely make a brief reference to the most recent violations. On 17 March, Israel took the initiative in opening fire on six occasions with tanks and guns on the Syrian defence lines from various positions on the cease-fire line.

3. On 19 March at 7.30 in the morning, Israeli artillery once more launched an attack, shelling the village of Durbol, which is heavily populated and is situated behind the Syrian defence lines. Neither in the village nor in its environs is there any military or defence establishment or centre. During the shelling, a number of innocent civilians were killed or wounded. Several houses were destroyed. A United Nations observation post was damaged and two UNTSO observers were wounded - a Finnish captain, Arto Koivula, and a Danish captain, Flaming Nilson. In addition, a Syrian liaison officer was wounded.

4. Israel's criminal acts injuring or damaging UNTSO personnel or posts are continuously repeated. On 15 February 1974, Israeli military positions opened fire on Syrian defence positions, taking advantage of the presence of United Nations vehicles and families which were travelling from Kuneitra to Damascus, not far from the Syrian positions. Despite a request by the United Nations observers for a cessation of the shooting from the Israeli positions, the Israeli forces continued to fire, ignoring their request. The Syrian forces held their return fire in order to save the lives of members of United Nations families. The continued shooting by the Israeli forces thus endangered the lives of wives and children of United Nations personnel.

5. Other similar criminal acts, directed against United Nations officers as they were performing their duties, took place after the resolutions on the cease-fire took effect. Some of those acts are described in my letter of 26 November 1973, circulated as document A/9343-S/11132.

6. When Israel shelled the village of Durbol, it undoubtedly knew very well the location of the village and the co-ordinates of the observation post, just as it knew that there was no military target or position there; this means that the shelling was deliberate and prepared in advance. The shelling was a brazen violation of Security Council resolutions 338 (1973) and 339 (1973). Israel, by this flagrant outrage, cynically flouted the immunities of the United Nations observers, scorning the international provisions relating to UNTSO.

7. There is no doubt that Israel is pursuing a policy of intimidation by force of arms in order to compel the Syrian Government to accept its point of view concerning the disengagement of their armed forces in the occupied Syrian territory of the Golan Heights, with a view to achieving the first stage in the confirmation of the final annexation of the Golan.

8. Israel has always insisted on the principle of safe geographical boundaries in order to justify the annexation of the occupied Syrian territory of the Golan Heights. World public opinion, however, has stripped this principle of any authenticity by conforming to the principles of justice and international law. Thus, Israel has constantly reaffirmed its wish to annex the Golan and has accompanied such statements with a policy of threats of daily confrontation, hoping thereby to be able to induce the Syrian Government to accept its ideas and also to win over other Governments.

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9. This policy is illustrated by the many statements made by the Israeli authorities. The latest documents incorporating this aggressive, colonialist, expansionist policy of Israel can be studied in the letters which I have addressed to you, in particular those circulated as documents A/9367-S/11138, A/9468-S/11160 and A/9493-S/11220 dated respectively 30 November 1973, 18 December 1973 and 14 February 1974.

10. This recent evidence, added to the considerable amount of evidence submitted previously, confirms decisively and explicitly that the policy of aggression and annexation pursued by Israel is contrary to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, to the principles and provisions of international law concerning occupation, to the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity, and to the relevant resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly.

11. Syria, aware of the Israeli policy of provocation, cannot remain passive in the face of Israel's aggression and its reaffirmations concerning the annexation of the occupied Syrian territory of the Golan. Similarly, the daily violation of the cease-fire by Israel cannot divert the attention of world public opinion, which has perceived the deceit and falsification concealed behind its propaganda and can thus see its expansionist intentions taking form.

12. My Government takes this opportunity to draw the attention of the Security Council and of States Members of the United Nations to the seriousness of the situation that is caused solely and directly by Israel's aggressive and expansionist policy, which is destroying the fundamental principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the peace and security of the region and of the whole world.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of this letter circulated as an official document of the General Assembly and the Security Council.

(Signed) Haissam KELANI
Ambassador, Permanent Representative
of the Syrian Arab Republic to the
United Nations
