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SECURITY COUNCIL
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Letter dated 9 April 1973 from the Permanent Representative of
Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour, on instructions of my Government, to refer to the letter addressed to you on 3 April 1973 by the Permanent Representative of Egypt (A/9054-S/10908).

It is an established and well-known fact that Egypt identifies itself with the savage atrocities carried on by Arab terrorist organizations against innocent civilians. The Egyptian Government has never concealed its full support for these crimes. Its Prime Minister at the time of the Lod airport massacre publicly praised that barbaric outrage. Egypt rejected a request by the Federal Republic of Germany to assist in a last-minute effort to prevent the murder of the Israeli athletes at the Munich Olympic Games. It remained silent when Governments throughout the world raised their voices against the ghastly assassination by Arab terrorists of American and Belgian diplomats in Khartoum. Indeed, it is evident to all that Arab terrorist organizations would have been unable to pursue their operations without the backing of the Egyptian and other Arab Governments.

In its letter of 3 April 1973, Egypt's defiance of the civilized world reaches a new point. It no longer confines itself to lending support to Arab terrorism, but complains that terrorists are not granted impunity in their blood-thirsty rampages and are hurt in actions taken against them.

Mohammed El Assouad, Kamal Abdel Aziz Hanoun and Abdel Hadi Ibrahim Hayek, whose death is the subject of the Egyptian complaint, were not killed when they "happened to be in a house belonging to Dr. Rashed Musmar", as alleged in the aforesaid letter. They were notorious terrorists responsible for a series of murderous attacks in the Gaza area and whose headquarters and hide-out were located in an especially constructed bunker in that house. The Egyptian Government's concern for human life was non-existent when these terrorists were perpetrating their crimes, including the murder of local Arab inhabitants and refugees. Its ire was aroused only when the murderers were hunted down.

* A/9000.

Among the crimes for which the three men were responsible was the murder of the head of the Shatti refugee camp, Div el-Kharbiti, on 11 February 1973 and the murder of the local Catholic community's priest, Father Yokhana el-Nimeiri, on 26 February. They were also guilty of the attempted assassination on 12 February of Rashad a-Shawa, the former mayor of Gaza. On 8 March, they threw a grenade in a Gaza street killing an Israeli soldier and wounding another.

Their headquarters in a bunker in Dr. Musmar's house was discovered by an Israeli patrol on 9 March. The three men, hiding at the time in the bunker, opened fire on the patrol and were killed in the ensuing exchange of shots.

The following was found in the hide-out: 2 automatic Klachnikov rifles, a Karl Gustav submachine gun, 3 pistols, 30 grenades and a box of detonators. There was also a file cabinet containing IL 42,000 and correspondence with the Beirut headquarters of the terrorist organization known as the "Popular Front", including reports on the above-mentioned murders.

On 9 March, the terrorist "Popular Front" issued a communiqué in Beirut announcing the death of its three agents in a "clash with the Israelis in Gaza that followed an escalation of attacks by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine which inflicted a large number of casualties on the enemy". The communiqué declared that El Assouad was a member of the Political Cabinet and the commander of the "Front" in Gaza. The other two men were described as "leading commanders". On 18 March, the fanatic George Habash, head of the "Popular Front", eulogized the three murder agents in an hour-long speech at the organization's Beirut headquarters.

Dr. Musmar, in whose house the terrorist headquarters and hide-out were established, was sentenced in 1971 to five years' imprisonment for participating in acts of terrorism. He was released several months ago when he undertook to refrain from such activities in the future. In accordance with local law, which has remained in force since the periods of the British Mandate and the Egyptian occupation, the hide-out house was demolished.

The Egyptian representative's complaint that an end was put to the sanguinary crimes of the three terrorists is obviously grotesque. It is not, however, his letter's only trait. As in the past, he has again no qualms about resorting to blatant falsification. Thus the letter claims that, on 17 March, "an Israeli army spokesman announced that the occupying forces killed three civilians and arrested 20 others in the Gaza Strip". In fact, the Israeli army spokesman announced that day only the arrest of 20 suspected terrorists. Falsehood and absurdity have always been the handmaidens of Egyptian propaganda.

The letter does, however, serve a purpose in that it is a reminder of Egypt's real posture on the Middle East situation, of its identification with the Arab terrorist organizations and their designs on Israel and of its unhappiness with the failure of terrorist atrocities in the Gaza area.

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Indeed, Egypt is well aware that, while in January 1971 terrorists murdered in the Gaza area five persons and wounded 25, there were no casualties at all in January 1973. In February 1971, the terrorist toll was 10 killed and 79 injured. In 1973, there were two killed and one wounded. In March 1971, terrorist attacks resulted in 15 killed and 24 wounded. In the same period in 1973, there were one killed and one wounded. It is to be observed that the majority of the above casualties in 1971 and in 1973 were local Arab inhabitants and refugees.

Egypt's discomfiture over the débâcle of terrorism in the Gaza region is further strengthened by the fact that, since 1967, that area has moved from a state of stagnation and suppression by the Egyptian occupation authorities to one of development and improvement in the conditions of life. This, of course, is unpalatable to a régime whose methods in Gaza had been compared by other Arab Governments to those "Hitler used in the countries that he occupied during the World War".

As is customary with Egyptian propaganda missives, the letter of Egypt's representative tries to embellish its unfounded charges by references to international law and international instruments. No principle of international law and no international convention does or indeed can serve as a licence to resort to violence, to commit sabotage, to break the law, to undermine public order or in any way to commit hostile acts injurious to the life of the local population or against the authorities responsible for the safety and security of the area and its inhabitants.

As regards the letter's references to United Nations resolutions, it is bizarre that Arab Governments still exploit their numerical weight in United Nations organs to force through one-sided resolutions that brush aside the merits of questions at issue and disregard Israel's legitimate rights and interests, and then expect Israel - or for that matter other Member States - to attach any political, moral or juridical value to these texts. In fact, by this policy the Arab States have virtually deprived the United Nations of its ability to play a meaningful role in solving the Middle East conflict. In these circumstances, Arab Governments invoking the United Nations bring to mind the young man who, having killed his parents, pleads for leniency as an orphan.

I have the honour to request that this letter be circulated as an official document of the General Assembly and the Security Council.

(Signed) Yosef TEKOA
Permanent Representative of Israel
to the United Nations
