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THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST

SECURITY COUNCIL
Forty-third year

Letter dated 21 October 1988 from the Permanent Representative of Lebanon to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

On instructions from my Government, and further to my previous letters of complaint relating to Israeli air attacks on Lebanese territory, I have the honour to inform you of the following:

On the morning of Friday, 21 October 1988, the Israeli air force launched a series of air raids on the outskirts of the city of Sidon, the Palestinian camps, the Iklim al-Toufah area, and the towns of Machghara and Ain-Tine, both of them located deep inside Lebanese territory at a distance of 30 kilometres from Lebanon's southern borders, and bombed the villages of Lawizeh and Jabal Safi in the central zone of southern Lebanon.

At 10 a.m., a squadron of Israeli aircraft bombed residential neighbourhoods in the outskirts of Sidon and in the Palestinian camps, causing damage to numerous buildings and successive violent explosions which made it impossible to carry out rescue operations, clear the wreckage and count the dead and wounded; as of the present moment, there are three known dead and about 10 wounded, including 7 doctors.

Twenty minutes after the first attack, a squadron of Israeli aircraft made up of six warplanes and two helicopters of the Cobra type carried out a concentrated attack on the towns of Machghara and Ain-Tine in the Iklim al-Toufah area south of the Baqa plain. The savage and indiscriminate bombing caused the destruction of numerous homes and a clinic, whose collapse killed six persons, including three patients, two nurses and a child under the rubble. About 20 persons were wounded, and rescue workers are continuing to clear the wreckage and search for missing

persons. These numbers are bound to increase after completion of the search operations, which are still continuing some seven hours after the attack, in view of the great quantity of wreckage and the shortage of equipment necessary to clear it away. Voices and cries for help from those buried beneath the wreckage can still be heard at the present moment.

The Lebanese Government strongly condemns these savage Israeli attacks, of which there have been 18 so far this year. It holds Israel fully responsible for them.

The Lebanese Government rejects absolutely any Israeli justification for its assault against Lebanese towns and villages and innocent civilians. It calls upon the international community, the United Nations and the Security Council to take swift and decisive action to prevent Israel from repeating its acts of aggression and to induce it to abide by the Charter of the United Nations, international law and relevant international conventions. The Security Council, which is responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security, is also answerable for the sovereignty of Member States, their territorial integrity and the integrity of their air space and territorial waters. The Lebanese Government has frequently warned that the Council's reluctance to deter Israel is a basic factor in the latter's continuing to pursue its aggressive policy against Lebanon and its violation of Council resolutions.

The Lebanese Government, in reserving its right to call for a meeting of the Security Council at any time it might choose, asserts once again that there is no way to bring security, peace and stability to southern Lebanon other than through Israel's full implementation of Security Council resolutions, particularly Council resolutions 425 (1978), 426 (1978), 508 (1982), and 509 (1982), and the resolutions subsequent thereto, and through Israel's immediate and unconditional withdrawal from Lebanese territory, because Israel's presence in the south is the single immediate cause of the tragedy taking place in the region and the travails suffered by the Lebanese people there.

I request you to have my letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 40, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Rachid FARHOURY
Ambassador and Permanent Representative
