



**Economic and Social
Council**

Distr.
GENERAL

E/CN.4/2004/G/6
10 July 2003

Original: ENGLISH

COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
Sixtieth session
Item 5 of the provisional agenda

**THE RIGHT OF PEOPLES TO SELF-DETERMINATION AND ITS
APPLICATION TO PEOPLES UNDER COLONIAL OR ALIEN
DOMINATION OR FOREIGN OCCUPATION**

**Letter dated 19 June 2003 from the Permanent Representative of Israel
to the United Nations Office at Geneva addressed to the Chairperson of
the Commission on Human Rights**

On 24 March 2003, at a plenary meeting of the fifty-ninth session of the Commission on Human Rights, I made a statement under item 5 while you were presiding in the chair. The statement referred to an earlier intervention by the Syrian Arab Republic. I cited 10 names of the major terrorist organizations headquartered in Damascus, 5 of which also happen to be on the European Union's list of terrorist organizations. I named their leaders and indicated that their headquarters were in Damascus.

The third name on the list of terrorist organizations was the "Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, General Command", headed by Ahmad Gibril.

Taking the floor to defend these organizations, the distinguished Ambassador of Syria, H.E. Mr. Toufik Salloum, stated, and I quote from the French edition of the 24 March 2003 (afternoon session) United Nations press release, that:

"Accusées de terrorisme, elles exercent en fait leur droit à l'autodétermination. Leurs bureaux en Syrie ont été établis à des fins d'information, et non pas pour préparer des opérations militaires."

On 17 June 2003, while travelling on a major highway in Israel, in the direction of Haifa, an Israeli family comprising two grandparents, parents and four young children, was ambushed in a shooting attack with automatic weapons. Noam Leibowitz, 7 years old, was killed. Her 3-year-old sister, Shira Leibowitz, and their grandfather were injured in the attack.

Both the military wing of the Fatah, the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, General Command, jointly took responsibility for this terrorist operation. (Please see article from the *New York Times* of 18 June 2003.) Both organizations claimed, in a joint statement to the French news agency in Beirut, that they had executed the operation in partnership. Therefore, it is clear that the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, General Command, headquartered in Damascus, is directly responsible, and has claimed credit, for participating in the terrorist operation.

Evidently, an ambassador taking the floor under your chairmanship knowingly and blatantly misrepresented the truth to a United Nations body by claiming that such organizations headquartered in Damascus engage only in "information activities", when in reality they continue to direct and instruct their members to perpetrate terrorist attacks against Israeli civilians, including women and children.

Radical Palestinian organizations, with the acquiescence and support of the Government of Syria (by the mere presence of 10 terrorist organizations in their capital, one of which claims responsibility for such an act), are conducting terrorist activities at the same time that the international community, the Quartet and the leaders of Israel and the Palestinian Authority are in the process of attempting to renew direct negotiations according to the road map as adopted by the Government of Israel. Such behaviour violates the values the United Nations stands for.

The very fact that a Member State of the United Nations would lend its hand to the continued presence and terrorist activities of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, General Command in its capital is in contrast to its solemn obligations as a Member State of the United Nations.

I am writing to you not only to strongly protest this gross violation of the inherent right to life of Israeli citizens, but also to request that you take whatever action you deem appropriate within the framework of the Commission on Human Rights, as well as vis-à-vis the Government of Syria, in order to address this abuse of a United Nations body.

I would appreciate it if this letter could be circulated to all delegations, members and observers, to the Commission on Human Rights.

(Signed): Yaakov LEVY
Ambassador
Permanent Representative
