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THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST

SECURITY COUNCIL
Thirty-fourth year

Letter dated 5 June 1979 from the Permanent Representative of Israel
to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I wish to draw your attention to ongoing and increasing attempts by PLO criminals based in Lebanon to conduct acts of indiscriminate terror against the civilian population of Israel.

On 4 June 1979, a coastal patrol of the Israel Navy intercepted a speedboat attempting to enter Israel waters off Rosh Hanikra on the border with Lebanon. A number of missiles were spotted aboard and the boat was ordered to stop. When it resisted and tried to make off, it was engaged in an exchange of fire in the course of which it was sunk. In the wreckage a floating rocket launcher was found with a delaying device which could be operated after the "mother ship" had returned to its base in Lebanon.

This criminal attempt must be seen against the background of a series of related events. As will be recalled, the Israel Navy foiled a similar PLO attempt against Israel civilians at the beginning of April when the 500-ton cargo ship Stephanie was intercepted off Israel's Mediterranean coast. The six heavily armed terrorists aboard all admitted that they belong to Fatah, headed by Yasser Arafat, and that the object of their mission was to engage in mass murder (see my letter of 22 April 1979, circulated under the symbol A/34/207-S/13264).

On 22 April 1979, a design of this kind took its tragic toll. On that occasion, as reported in the same letter, four PLO terrorists landed by means of a rubber dinghy at Nahariya some six miles from the Lebanese border. As a result of the ensuing violence, four Israel civilians, including two little sisters, died, and two other civilians were wounded.

* A/34/50.

All these attempts are part of a concerted PLO campaign of violence which, as you noted in your statement to the Security Council on 31 May 1979, has a direct bearing on the situation in southern Lebanon, even though they take place outside the UNIFIL area of operations (S/PV.2146, pp. 4-5).

In the morning and evening of 24 May 1979, civilian centres in northern Galilee were shelled from across the Lebanese border. Two persons were injured.

Also on 24 May, an explosion occurred in a supermarket in Jerusalem and one man was injured.

On 28 May, an explosive device went off on a bathing beach in Haifa, injuring one woman.

On 3 June, an explosion occurred in a bookstore in Jerusalem, and as a result three people were injured.

As is its wont, the PLO boasted of its responsibility for all these incidents, within hours of their occurrence, through its news-agency in Lebanon, its radio station in Baghdad and on radio Damascus.

Moreover, on 30 May, a cache of sabotage matériel was found near Har-Dov on the Lebanese border. The cache, apparently meant to be used by PLO criminals, included Kalachnikov assault rifles, Karl Gustav machine guns, hand-grenades and several sabotage devices.

Beyond indiscriminate terror for its own sake, the purported aim of this campaign of violence by the PLO is to subvert the ongoing peace process in the Middle East.

Given the true character and aims of the terrorist PLO, the Government of Israel is duty-bound, as I have indicated in previous letters, to take all measures necessary to protect the lives and safety of its citizens.

I have the honour to request that this letter be circulated as an official document of the General Assembly, under item 25 of the preliminary list, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Yehuda Z. BLUM
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Israel
to the United Nations
