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OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER
FOR REFUGEES: REPORT OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER

Note verbale dated 24 October 1979 from the
Permanent Representative of Israel to the
United Nations addressed to the Secretary-
General

The Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations presents his compliments to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and, with reference to the plight of refugees from South-East Asia which has stirred the conscience of the world, has the honour to bring the following to his attention:

The Government of Israel decided some time ago to extend medical and other humanitarian aid to the Cambodian refugees. Indeed, Israel had launched this venture even before the Secretary-General's recent appeal on behalf of those refugees and in doing so was one of the first countries to embark upon a relief programme aimed at alleviating the plight of the refugees in question.

As a first step, medical supplies and equipment will be sent to the field clinics, which are presently located along the Thai-Cambodian border, and where a 15-man team of medical volunteers from Israel will be working.

In addition to such measures being taken at the official level, many ordinary Israelis involved in humanitarian causes, are showing their concern for the refugees. A number of private Israeli citizens are already in Thailand, where they are assisting in relief activities by distributing food supplies.

It will be recalled that the Government of Israel offered asylum in June 1977 to 66 Vietnamese refugees. Later, in January 1979, a further 101 "boat people" from South East-Asia were absorbed and rehabilitated in Israel. Furthermore, in June 1979, prior to the International Meeting on Indochinese Refugees held in

Geneva in July 1979, the Government of Israel appealed to heads of State to follow Israel's decision and to accept a number of Indochinese refugees, in proportion to the size of their population and territory. Israel translated its appeal into action by announcing at the Geneva Meeting its readiness to absorb and rehabilitate a further 200 refugees. One hundred ninety-seven of these refugees arrived in Israel yesterday. These figures include 41 Vietnamese "boat people" who were rescued, after being found adrift on the open sea, by the freighter Zim Sydney, of Israel's Zim Shipping Company.

The Permanent Representative of Israel has the honour to request that this letter be circulated as an official document of the General Assembly under item 83 on the agenda.