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LETTER DATED 31 MAY 1972 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE  
OF ISRAEL TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT  
OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

Further to my letter of today regarding the criminal armed attack at Lod airport (S/10668) I have the honour to bring to your attention the following excerpts from a statement delivered this morning in the Knesset by the Prime Minister, Mrs. Golda Meir:

"What happened yesterday caused the death of 23 and the wounding of 78 persons. Among those killed, identified so far, there are 5-6 Jews and 12 non-Jews, mainly Puerto Rican pilgrims who came to visit the Holy Land in good faith -- and they had reason to believe that they would enter in peace and depart in peace. As far as Israel and the Jewish people are concerned, this is the way it could and ought to have been -- but for the crime plotted abroad.

"As soon as the news of what happened broke, joy broke out in Cairo and in Beirut as well over the 'great victory'. Dozens of people were killed and scores of others wounded -- and there is no end to the rejoicing.

"Those who were unable to stand up against us on the battlefield are great heroes at hiding explosives in planes, at assaults on planes and passengers, and in their readiness to blow up a plane with a hundred people aboard -- as they did two years ago in the 'Swissair' disaster. This indeed takes great 'courage' and if the little 'courage' needed for that is lacking, foreigners are recruited for the purpose -- still, the joy is great.

"There is no need to tell ourselves that Israel shall not be deterred by this act. We have borne the brunt of many attacks and terrorist acts, and we have always found a remedy to overcome them. I am certain that this time, too, we shall find a way.

"Two years ago, after the 'Swissair' disaster, I made a statement to the Knesset, in which I said, inter alia:

'We are convinced that the international community is capable of putting an end to piracy and terrorism in the air by taking practical steps against the terrorist organizations, their emissaries and their accessories, and against those Arab states from where they set out,

in whose midst they operate, on whose soil they train, and whose Governments supply them with arms, funds and refuge. Indeed, those very Arab capitals, which harbour the headquarters of the terrorist organizations and their camps, continue to be visited by the planes of international aviation companies.'

"This was two years ago. Who can recall all those dozens of hijackings and attempts at murder, which have taken place since, not only in our region but throughout the world. This thing has spread like an infectious disease the world over. Unfortunately, what happened then, still goes on today.

"It is no secret that Beirut is openly enabling the centres of the terrorist organizations to reside in its midst. There they plot, from there instructors set out to various countries, and from there come the broadcasts of their 'great successes'. Can it be possible that Governments, that aviation companies should acquiesce in this state of affairs, on the presumption that they would emerge unscathed?

"Is it possible that there is no power in the entire world, in dozens of countries in Europe, North America and elsewhere, is it conceivable that there is no power in this world to put an end to this? Will it not be elementary justice to say that a state which harbours and enables the plotting of such crimes -- where the terrorists are free to plot, to set out, to hit and return safely with impunity -- is it at all conceivable, that on the soil of such a country foreign planes will continue to land?

"And now, it seems to me, we may already conclude that not only Israelis are the target. But even if Israelis were the sole target, our demand would be justified. When an Israeli plane is not safe, no plane can be safe -- and this has been proven, on both domestic and international flights. Yesterday it was a group of Puerto Ricans. Twelve of them were hit, maybe more. There are still seven casualties unidentified, and we do not know who they are. This hits every one of us. These organizations, the pioneers in murder and lawlessness, have placed a question mark against safety in the air.

"We, in Israel, shall do all that we possibly can to safeguard our planes -- and, indeed, they are secure. We have taken all the necessary steps to make sure that everybody coming to Israel or leaving Israel in our planes can fly in safety. We shall do everything that can be done, but I have not the slightest doubt that unless other Governments and airlines will cooperate and consider this as their concern -- and not merely for our sake -- the scourge shall remain to plague all.

"I am certain that even after this murderous crime, arrivals in Israel will not cease -- neither of immigrants nor of tourists -- and we shall find a way to vouchsafe this. Still, I feel duty bound to appeal today once more to Governments and aviation companies to cooperate, to take precautions, to make sure who boards every plane, and not to take these matters lightly.

"Only a short while ago, we had the 'Sabena' affair, in which security checks somewhere failed to be carried out. Yesterday, the same thing happened. What occurred yesterday could have easily been avoided, if the airline concerned had paid proper attention and carried out a check. I am aware that for El Al passengers, too, this is a nuisance and a loss of time, but against this, they are secure.

"On behalf of the Government and myself, I wish to express our heartfelt condolences to all those who suffered, both Jews and non-Jews, and to voice our appreciation to the medical staff. Yesterday I was at Tel Hashomer hospital. I believe that during the night they carried out 40 operations, and other hospitals did likewise.

"To Japan I want to say: we do not consider the Japanese terrorists who came last night as representatives of Japan. The ties of friendship which link us to the Japanese people and the Government of Japan shall endure.

"I am confident, and I believe that the certainty is shared by us all, that Israel will find a remedy and a way to make sure that this shall not recur. Let us hope that the baseness of this crime and this trend of the terrorist organizations will be pilloried by Governments throughout the world -- and that Arab states who join in the great rejoicing over the massacre, will carry the full responsibility for these acts."

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

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

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