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THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Letter dated 13 October 1978 from the Permanent Representative of  
Lebanon to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to forward to you information contained in a statement by H.E. Mr. Assad Rizk, Minister for Social Affairs of Lebanon, made today, 13 October, in Beirut:

At present, there are 750,000 displaced and afflicted persons in Lebanon in need of immediate assistance, 500,000 of whom have either been displaced or afflicted as a result of the events which have taken place since the beginning of July.

In the areas still under "blockade" (blocus), there are approximately 23,000 families, about 150,000 people, whose situation is critical because of the shortage of drinking water and the lack of food. The number of refugees from East Beirut and neighbouring areas and villages and from the coastal area in North Lebanon has increased to 350,000 people, about 67,000 families.

Moreover, only 120 hospital beds in Ashrafieh can be utilized out of a total of 720 beds that existed previously.

In spite of the assistance that has been quickly rendered by various international organizations, this assistance remains symbolic as compared to the extent of the damage.

I request that this appeal of the Minister for Social Affairs be circulated as an official document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 30, and that it be given the widest possible distribution to the various groups, agencies, and organizations where help could be obtained.

(Signed) Ghassan TUENI  
Ambassador  
Permanent Representative