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THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST

SECURITY COUNCIL
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Letter dated 4 March 1985 from the Permanent Representative of Lebanon
to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Further to my letters dated 21, 25 and 26 February 1985 (A/40/148 and Add.1, and A/40/156-S/16990) relating to Israel's abusive operations and practices in southern Lebanon, the western Bekaa and the Rashaya district, and on instructions from my Government, I have the honour to inform you of the following:

At 7.30 a.m. on Saturday, 2 March 1985, Israeli forces took it upon themselves to surround and storm the village of Maarakah (located south of the Litani River in the vicinity of the town of Tyre). More than 800 Israeli soldiers and over 50 armoured vehicles (tanks, personnel carriers and two bulldozers) took part in the operation, after which 350 citizens were locked up at the village school after being interrogated; 17 of them were later taken away to an unknown destination. In addition, one vehicle and four houses were totally destroyed.

Before leaving the village of Maarakah, the Israeli forces also planted mines and explosives at the village mosque (Husseynieh) and blew it up when villagers were gathered there at midday on Monday, 4 March 1985. It is estimated that as many as 200 people were inside the mosque when it was blown up. According to preliminary reports on this massacre which have reached us, at least 15 were killed, another 45 wounded, dozens are still trapped amid the rubble, and rescue operations are continuing.

The Israeli forces prevented ambulances and other emergency vehicles from entering the village; they surrounded the hospital in the village of Jebel Aamel, the village closest to Maarakah, and fired shots in the air to terrorize the people and prevent the wounded from being taken to the hospital.

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This massacre, which was perpetrated by the Israeli occupation forces at a sacred place of worship, constitutes a violation of the most elementary rules of morality and a breach of the principles and norms of law and international agreements.

The Lebanese Government, which has consistently warned the international community about Israel's constant and perpetual abusive practices in southern Lebanon, the western Bekaa and the Rashaya district, condemns this new massacre, this criminal act perpetrated at Maarakah by the Israeli forces. It is not yet possible to determine fully the sad toll in terms of the number of victims. The Lebanese Government reiterates its call and appeal for the condemnation of Israel's abusive operations and practices, and for an immediate end to those operations and practices in the occupied Lebanese territories.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter circulated as an official document of the General Assembly under item 38 of the preliminary list, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) M. Rachid FAKHOURY
Ambassador
Permanent Representative
