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LETTER DATED 6 JUNE 1972 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
OF ISRAEL TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT
OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

On instructions from my Government I have the honour to refer to the letter addressed to you on 2 June 1972 (S/10677/Rev.1) by the Permanent Representative of Lebanon containing a declaration made on the same day by the President of Lebanon, Sleiman Franjeh.

Though Lebanon's responsibility for allowing its territory to become a centre of Arab terror organizations and a base for international terrorist operations is an established and well-known fact, the President of Lebanon attempts in the aforesaid declaration to conceal the facts, confuse public opinion and disclaim the responsibility of his country for this situation. In cynical callousness and in contempt for Lebanon's international obligations the declaration tries to explain away the terror activities carried on from Lebanese territory and even describes as "tragic" the foiling of the piratical assault on a Sabena aircraft on 8 May 1972, in which the lives of 100 passengers and crew members were put in jeopardy by Arab terror agents operating out of Lebanon.

In view of the gravity of the attitude expressed in the above declaration it is essential to recall the following:

1. Arab terror organizations have turned Lebanon and in particular its south-eastern region into a base of terror operations against Israel. Approximately 5,000 members of these organizations are concentrated in that area, commonly known as Fatahland. Lebanon's capital, Beirut has become the seat of the terror organizations' headquarters, where sanguinary attacks are initiated, planned and directed, recruitment and training conducted, military equipment obtained, operational communiques and other information openly disseminated. Additional recruitment and training centres are maintained in other localities on Lebanese soil.

The location of the headquarters and offices of the terror organizations is generally known. The international press has been reporting on it in great detail.

Thus "Het Volk" of Antwerp writes on 2 June 1972 that at least 20 Palestinian organizations are situated in Corniche Mazraa, a street in the centre of Beirut, and that the headquarters of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine are located in the Shatilla Refugees Camp, on the road from Beirut to the airport.

On the previous day "Le Figaro" of Paris stated:

"As we have already had the opportunity of recalling it here, the general operational headquarters of the Movement for the Liberation of Palestine (of which the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine is the activist and dissident wing) are located in Beirut."

Also on 2 June 1972, the German newspaper "Suddeutsche Zeitung" commented:

"At a time when the most terrible acts of murder take place at international airports, youngsters in Lebanon belonging to the 'Popular Democratic Front' or to other extreme left-wing organizations accept themselves the responsibility for them joyfully and with acclamation. The centers of activity and the headquarters of all of them are located in Beirut. Everybody knows them, can visit them and can see their equipment for communications. Commissars, on their behalf, control the camps around Beirut. The camps are called 'Liberated Areas', since nobody can enter them without the permission of the commissars.

"... Today Lebanon calls for help against Israel, but does not touch the murderers nor those who direct them."

It is difficult to believe that the President of Lebanon and the Lebanese Government are unaware of facts which are common knowledge to every visitor and journalist in Beirut. When the declaration of 2 June suggests that the problem is confined to Beirut's serving as a centre of information, and that only for one of the terror organizations, it is wilfully distorting facts and ignoring the criminal activities in and out of Lebanon that have already resulted in the loss of numerous human lives.

2. The massacre at Lod on 30 May was conceived, planned and organized in Lebanon by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine based in Beirut. The gunman captured at Lod has testified that he and his two accomplices had been recruited in Japan by an emissary of the Popular Front. The man, Kozo Okamoto, left Tokyo for Montreal on 29 February 1972 by Canadian Pacific Airways. On 4 March he flew from Montreal to Beirut by way of New York and Paris. He and his partners in crime, Takeshi Ukudaira and Yosuki Yasuda, were trained by the Popular Front in the use of automatic weapons and hand grenades at a camp in the vicinity of Beirut. During their training they met a number of the Front's leaders and active members, among them the spokesman of the terror organization Bassem Tewfiq Sharif alias Bassem Zayid. The others were Saleh Saleh, a former pilot and the man in charge of hijacking operations, Mohammed Abu el Hija, charged with the training of terror agents, Yusef Ibrahim Tewfiq, Ahmad Hassan Hadi and Ali Said Ali.

It is to be observed that Mohammed Abu el Hija and Yusef Ibrahim Tewfiq had participated in the murderous attack on the El Al plane in Zurich on 18 February 1969. They were convicted by a Swiss court and sentenced to 12 years imprisonment with hard labour, but were released in exchange for the

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hostages held by Arab air pirates on the planes hijacked on 6 September 1970 and taken to Zerka, Jordan. Ahmad Hassan Hadi had been arrested in Munich in February 1970 on suspicion of being involved in an attempt to hijack an aircraft, but was subsequently released. These professional assassins returned on their release to Beirut to pursue their acts of air piracy and murder.

It will also be recalled that the four hijackers of the Sabena aircraft on 8 May 1972 had been trained in an apartment in Beirut owned by the El Fatah terror organization and departed on their mission of air piracy from Beirut on 1 May 1972.

Similarly, the hijacking of the Lufthansa airplane on 22 February 1972 had been planned in Beirut, the ransom negotiations were conducted with the Beirut headquarters of the terror organization responsible for the hijacking, and the ransom money of \$US 5,000,000 was paid to it in a Beirut suburb.

After having completed their training in Lebanon, the three Japanese mercenaries left Beirut on 23 May by Air France for Paris and Frankfurt. From Frankfurt they proceeded by train to Rome where on 30 May they boarded the ill-fated Air France flight 132 to Lod.

The claim made in President Franjieh's declaration that Lebanese territory was not involved in the perpetration of the savage crime at Lod airport is therefore an unabashed attempt to misconstrue facts and evade the obligation incumbent on the Lebanese Government to put an end to terror operations from Lebanon.

This is reminiscent of the position adopted by Lebanon in 1968 when attacks on international aviation carried out by Arab terror agents based in Lebanon, compelled Israel to resort to counteraction in self-defence. On 1 July 1969 the Beirut daily Al-Hayat printed the following statement by Charles Helou, the then President of Lebanon:

"President Helou said inter alia: 'On 3 November 1968 the number of saboteurs in Lebanon did not exceed a few hundred and we were then dealing with their problem. But suddenly they began issuing propaganda publications against us and their numbers rose to over several thousands.' The President added: 'Lebanon had stressed in the Security Council that there were no saboteur bases on its territory in order to obtain a condemnation of Israel by the Council.'"

President Franjieh's declaration follows in the footsteps of the manoeuvre resorted to by his predecessor - the denial and distortion of facts with a view to evading responsibility for allowing Lebanese territory to become a base of criminal attacks against innocent civilians and in particular against international civil aviation.

3. It is the duty of every Government to prevent the use of its territory for criminal activities, and in particular crimes of violence directed against human life in other States. The Government of Lebanon is no exception. If it

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does not take effective measures to eliminate terror activities on and from its soil it must be considered as consciously violating the obligations incumbent on it.

4. The responsibility of the Lebanese Government is especially grave as it has not only failed to act against the criminal activities of the terror organizations but has entered into a pact of co-operation with them. The agreement signed formally in Cairo on 3 November 1969 and supplemented by additional agreements between the Government of Lebanon and the terror organizations extends to the latter the protection and support of the Lebanese Government. These agreements remain in force today and are observed in their letter and spirit by the Government of Lebanon.

On 1 January 1972, the Prime Minister of Lebanon reaffirmed his Government's support for terror warfare against Israel declaring:

"We always endeavour to help our fedayeen brethren and to supply them with whatever we possess."

It is highly imprudent for Lebanon to deal with this situation by trying to dismiss it or to whitewash its guilt for it.

5. It is equally thoughtless to try and excuse murderous terror attacks from Lebanon by referring, as President Franjieh does, to the presence in Lebanon of Palestinian refugees. The Arab refugee problem is an outcome of the Arab war of aggression launched against Israel in 1948, in defiance of the United Nations, and pursued till this day. The persistence of the problem is due to the refusal of Arab Governments, including the Government of Lebanon, to permit the integration of the refugees in their countries in the same manner that Israel has absorbed and integrated close to 1 million Jewish refugees from Arab States. By invoking the refugee problem as an excuse for terror operations against Israel, while being responsible, together with the other Arab States, for the problem's creation and continued existence, the Government of Lebanon is simply confirming its desire to find whatever pretext possible to justify its support for terror warfare. Moreover, Lebanon knows that there is no correlation between the presence of refugees in Lebanon and the existence or absence of terror activities in and from Lebanon against Israel. For many years the Israel-Lebanese frontier had been an example of tranquillity and coexistence despite the fact that refugees have lived on Lebanese soil since 1948.

It is to be noted that responsible Lebanese sources have criticized the Government of Lebanon for making unfounded and exaggerated use of the refugee problem for political purposes. Thus the authoritative Beirut daily Al-Hayat wrote as early as 25 June 1959:

"Here we have a further example of our hypocrisy. For is there an Arab country in which there has been a greater absorption of refugees than in Lebanon? Of the 120,000 refugees who entered Lebanon, not more than 15,000 are still in camps. Taking into account a natural growth of 15,000, we may conclude that 120,000 refugees have been absorbed in Lebanon and have become an integral part of her inhabitants, her society and her economy."

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It was the decision of the Arab Governments and the terror organizations sponsored by them, that Lebanon would be the most appropriate base for terror operations that has resulted in its becoming a centre for the activities of these organizations. When the Government of Lebanon resolves to terminate these activities and takes measures to bring this about, the crimes against humanity perpetrated by the terror groups from its territory will stop.

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President Franjeh's declaration professes a policy of "tolerance, liberty and humanity". If it exists at all, this policy seems to express itself in the tolerance and freedom of action granted by Lebanon to international criminals. Its "humanity" is reflected in Lebanon's serving as a base for terror, air piracy and murder. The misrepresentations and sophistry contained in the above declaration, and voiced by other Lebanese leaders, can in no way lessen Lebanon's responsibility for terror activities emanating from its territory or detract from Lebanon's duty to put an immediate and effective end to these activities.

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
