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PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE TWO THOUSAND
EIGHT HUNDRED AND EIGHTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Friday, 22 April 1988 at 10.30 a.m.

President: Mr. ZUZE

(Zambia)

Members: Algeria
Argentina
Brazil
China
France
Germany, Federal Republic of
Italy
Japan
Nepal
Senegal
Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
United Kingdom of Great Britain and
Northern Ireland
United States of America
Yugoslavia

Mr. DJOUDI
Mr. DELPECH
Mr. NOGUEIRA-BATISTA
Mr. DING Yuanhong
Mr. BLANC
Mr. Count YORK von WARTENBURG
Mr. BUCCI
Mr. KAGAMI
Mr. RANA
Mr. SARRE
Mr. BELONOGOV

Mr. BIRCH
Mr. OKUN
Mr. PEJIC

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The meeting was called to order at 11 a.m.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The agenda was adopted.

LETTER DATED 19 APRIL 1988 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF TUNISIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL (S/19798)

The PRESIDENT: In accordance with the decisions taken at the 2807th meeting, I invite the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Tunisia to take a place at the Council table; I invite the representatives of Egypt, Gabon, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Morocco, Mozambique, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Somalia and the Syrian Arab Republic to take the places reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber; and I invite the representative of the Palestine Liberation Organization to take a place at the Council table.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Mestiri (Tunisia) took a place at the Council table; Mr. Badawi (Egypt), Mr. Biffot (Gabon), Mr. Salah (Jordan), Mr. Abulhasan (Kuwait), Mr. Fakhoury (Lebanon), Mr. Bennouna (Morocco), Mr. Dos Santos (Mozambique), Mr. Shah Nawaz (Pakistan), Mr. Shihabi (Saudi Arabia), Mr. Osman (Somalia) and Mr. Al-Masri (Syrian Arab Republic) took the places reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber; Mr. Al-Kidwa (Palestine Liberation Organization) took a place at the Council table.

The PRESIDENT: I should like to inform members of the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Bangladesh, Cuba, Mauritania, Qatar, Turkey, the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Siddiky (Bangladesh), Mr. Nunez Mosquera (Cuba), Mr. Ould Boye (Mauritania), Mr. Al-Kawari (Qatar), Mr. Turkmen (Turkey), Mr. Oudovenko (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic), Mr. Al-Shaali (United Arab Emirates) and Mr. Basendwah (Yemen) took the places reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The PRESIDENT: The Security Council will now resume its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Mr. BUCCI (Italy): The Security Council is meeting at the request of Tunisia, which has complained about a serious violation of its sovereign rights caused by an incursion which led to the death of four persons, one of whom, Khalil al-Wazir, held a prominent position in the hierarchy of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). I wish at the outset to extend my delegation's sympathy and condolences to the families of all the victims.

The world media have reconstructed the event in detail and unanimously pointed out the existence of Israel's involvement in the killing of Khalil al-Wazir. Israel has neither denied nor confirmed officially its involvement in the operation, although some Government officials expressed praise for and solidarity with those who executed the slaughter. These elements lend credibility to the current version of the events.

On principle and, I should like to say, by virtue of its culture, my country is averse to attributing responsibility when the facts are not ascertained unequivocally.

Our serious concern over what has happened is motivated by the fact that we are facing an occurrence which, were its origin to be confirmed, would be extremely grave. In fact, this horrific slaughter appears to be the deed not of a terrorist group but of a State. Furthermore, it has also infringed on the rights of a

(Mr. Bucci, Italy)

friendly nation, one known for its moderation, to which we wish to express in this Chamber our sympathy and solidarity.

The Tunis slaughter is unfortunately part and parcel of that cycle of violence which is characterized, as we see again today, by recourse to terrorism, the same terrorism which has punctuated the tragic story of the Middle East crisis.

The elimination of a prestigious and important leader resolves nothing. Indeed, experience teaches us that violence only serves to pave the way to further violence. It incites passions and leads to new uprisings, new repressions, additional victims.

We are also concerned by the political aspect of the situation. In fact, this episode is disruptive of the efforts being made by Secretary of State Shultz, who is striving to keep alive the hope of concrete peace prospects, notwithstanding the reservations that have been expressed on some aspects, even essential ones, of the American peace plan. Nor does it facilitate the visit of the Soviet Foreign Minister to the area from which a positive contribution to the prospect of a peaceful solution of the Middle East crisis could be expected. In short, the death of four persons and the violation of the rights of a peaceful country can only weaken further the already fragile peace process - to the point that one may wonder whether this is indeed the goal of the perpetrators of this crime.

The facts that have been brought to the attention of the Security Council confirm that a negotiated solution to the Middle East crisis, at the heart of which is the Palestinian problem, cannot be delayed.

The basis of the solution can only be resolution 242 (1967), which requires from one side the recognition of Israel and from the other the willingness to withdraw from the occupied territories. In short, both parties should accept a compromise based on the formula "territory for peace".

(Mr. Bucci, Italy)

There is no alternative to that outcome, and this should be borne in mind while we debate an extremely serious episode which goes against that outcome. As we affirmed very recently in this Chamber, ways and means have to be agreed upon through an international conference to be held under the auspices of the United Nations. All interested parties should be represented at the conference, including the PLO, which is so widely representative of the Palestinian people, a people that has recently undergone such dramatic trials and to which our solidarity goes.

But it is necessary to hasten our pace, since the increase in violence which we are witnessing weakens the prospects for peace.

Mr. DING Yuanhong (China) (interpretation from Chinese): The Chinese delegation wishes to extend a warm welcome to His Excellency Mr. Mahmoud Mestiri, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Tunisia, who is attending these meetings of the Council; we give a high appraisal of his important statement, made on 21 April.

It was with shock, anger and grief that the Chinese Government and people learned of the tragic death by assassination of Abu Jihad, member of the Executive Committee of al-Fatah of Palestine and Deputy Commander-in-Chief of the Palestinian armed forces. Here the Chinese delegation wishes to request the Permanent Observer of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) to the United Nations to convey its profound condolences and sympathy to the PLO, the Palestinian people, the bereaved family and the families of other victims.

Abu Jihad was an outstanding, experienced leader of the Palestinian people. He made great contributions to the Palestinian national cause and won the love and esteem of his people and his fighters. His most unfortunate death is an immense loss to the Palestinian people and their cause. We are convinced, however, that the heroic Palestinian people will turn sorrow into strength and, under the leadership of the PLO, carry their struggle through to the end with even greater determination so as to achieve the lofty goals of the Palestinian national cause.

(Mr. Ding Yuanhong, China)

The Chinese Government and people have all along treasured the friendship between the Chinese and the Palestinian peoples, and will as always resolutely support the Palestinian people in its just struggle to regain its national rights.

The investigation by the Tunisian Government and the important statement made in this Council by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Tunisia have indicated that the Israeli authorities were responsible for the murder of Abu Jihad. We strongly condemn the Israeli authorities for their despicable act of assassination and gross violation of Tunisia's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

It must be pointed out emphatically that the assassination of Abu Jihad was an elaborately planned terrorist act and a political conspiracy aimed at undermining the PLO and the Palestinian national cause, particularly the anti-Israel struggle of the Palestinian people in the occupied territories. Although the conspiracy to kill Abu Jihad succeeded, the plotters will never have their way in defeating the cause of the Palestinian people. We can say so with absolute certainty. The death of Abu Jihad cannot but further arouse the wrath of the militant Palestinian people. Those who are bent on putting down the just struggle of the Palestinian people with terrorism will find that their design backfires, and will eat their own bitter fruit in the end.

It must also be pointed out emphatically that this is not the first time Israel has grossly violated Tunisia's sovereignty. The repeated encroachments and provocations by the Israeli authorities against so peace-loving a country as Tunisia have demonstrated that those authorities have no respect whatsoever for the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter or for the norms governing international relations. Their behaviour has posed a threat to international peace and security. We support the Tunisian Government and people in their just struggle

(Mr. Ding Yuanhong, China)

to safeguard their sovereignty and territorial integrity. We hold that the Security Council should take the necessary steps to prevent the Israeli authorities from conducting similar illegal actions in the future.

Mr. BELONOGOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): First of all, I should like on behalf of the Soviet delegation to express our profound respect for the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Tunisia, Mr. Mahmoud Mestiri. The Soviet delegation listened attentively to Mr. Mestiri's statement and to the statement of the representative of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) to the United Nations.

Like the overwhelming majority of other delegations in this Chamber, we learned with profound indignation of the actions taken by Israel on the territory of a sovereign Arab country, Tunisia. As a result of the bandit-like raid recently perpetrated in Tunisia, a prominent Palestinian figure, Mr. Khalil al-Wazir, "Abu Jihad", was cut down in the presence of his wife and daughter. He had devoted his entire life to the struggle for the just cause of the Palestinian people, which is defending its freedom and independence.

The Soviet delegation wishes to voice its deep condolences to the Executive Committee of the PLO, to the Palestinian people and to the bereaved families on the death of Abu Jihad and his associates.

This act was carefully planned and carried out in cold blood by Tel Aviv. It was intended to violate the sovereignty and territorial integrity of a peace-loving independent State Member of the United Nations. Indeed, even Israel - where an extensive campaign glorifying the so-called heroes of this operation has been set in motion - has not denied that the murder of Abu Jihad was carried out by Israeli special services. Moreover, we have learned from the information media that it was endorsed by the so-called inner cabinet of Israel.

(Mr. Belonogov, USSR)

Thus, this is yet another example of the policy of State terrorism that has long been pursued by the Government of Israel. It is yet another manifestation of its cynical contempt for world public opinion, which was severely jolted by the crimes of the Israeli occupation forces and which has resolutely called for an end to the violence in the region.

(Mr. Belonogov, USSR)

Suffice it to refer to Israel's repeated incursions into Lebanon, its attack on the Iraqi nuclear reactor, its raid on the Entebbe airport in Uganda and its deliberate destruction of a Libyan civilian aircraft.

Tunisia has now for a second time become the target of Israel's criminal acts. Many speakers here have recalled that on 1 October 1985 the Israeli air force bombed the southern suburbs of Tunis. At that time the Security Council adopted resolution 573 (1985), in which, in particular, it demanded that Israel refrain from perpetrating such acts of aggression against the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Tunisia or from threatening to do so. Now Israel has violated that resolution, in open defiance of the Security Council.

The practice of State terrorism has repeatedly been condemned by the United Nations General Assembly. In that connection, in 1985 the Assembly adopted a resolution in which it

"Resolutely [condemned] policies and practices of terrorism in relations between States as a method of dealing with other States and peoples".

(General Assembly resolution 39/159, para. 1)

At its forty-second session the General Assembly adopted a resolution on measures to prevent international terrorism, in which, in particular, it

"[Called] upon all States to fulfil their obligations under international law to refrain from organizing, instigating, assisting or participating in terrorist acts in other States, or acquiescing in activities within their territory directed towards the commission of such acts". (General Assembly resolution 42/159, para. 4)

Israel has paid no heed to such appeals by the world community and has once again deliberately defied the wishes of the United Nations. The terrorist act perpetrated by Israel cannot be viewed as an isolated phenomenon unrelated to its overall policies. It is blatantly obvious that there is a direct connection

(Mr. Belonogov, USSR)

between the Israeli action in Tunisia and the Israeli actions in the occupied Arab territories. The latest reports from the occupied territories attest to an increase of acts of terror, to mass beatings of Palestinians by Israeli soldiers and to a new wave of arrests, pogroms and deportations. The Israeli authorities have sent growing numbers of army and police reinforcements, tanks and armoured personnel carriers against the population and have continued to raze Palestinian settlements and villages. They have continued to carry out massacres in refugee camps. The number of victims of such acts of violence against the Palestinian population has been increasing.

It is difficult to exaggerate the crimes Israel has been committing in the occupied territories. They have frequently been referred to here. Israel's mass violations of human rights have been condemned in many United Nations documents, and no vociferous assertions of peaceful intentions by Tel Aviv can justify its blatant contraventions of the norms of international law and the provisions of the United Nations Charter.

All those barbarous crimes - murder, torture, repression, beatings, deportations - are futile and powerless against the struggle of the Palestinian people to achieve its legitimate national rights. As the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Mikhail Sergevich Gorbachev, stated at a recent meeting with Yasser Arafat, the Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO):

"The Palestinians are a people whose fate is difficult, but they are not alone in their defence of their just cause. They enjoy broad international support, and that support includes a pledge that the central issue for the Palestinian people - self-determination - will be resolved. The ascendancy of the popular Palestinian movement has now become an important impetus to the quest for practical solutions leading to a comprehensive settlement. The strength of

(Mr. Belonogov, USSR)

that mass uprising resides in its profoundly democratic nature. It has not veered towards extremism, in spite of the provocative and cruel acts of repression inflicted by the occupiers. Thus the movement has won ever-greater international support and sympathy in a broad range of circles."

Yet the murder of Abu Jihad and the events in the occupied territories have once again compelled us to ask: Why is it that the Arab-Israeli conflict has not yet been solved? Why has the fundamental problem, the Palestinian issue, not yet been solved? The reason lies in Israel's refusal to agree to the convening of a plenipotentiary international conference on the Middle East and its rejection of any co-operation or even contact with the Palestine Liberation Organization, which has been and remains the spokesman of the yearnings of the Palestinian people and its sole, legitimate representative.

The Israeli leadership's reliance on force, aggression and the suppression of the liberation struggle of the Palestinian people cannot solve the Arab-Israeli conflict. The true path towards a settlement lies in eliminating the potentially explosive situation in the Middle East through political means and collective efforts. Promising initiatives now being taken in international affairs are creating conditions favourable to that end. There has been a clear expression of the international community's desire to bring about radical change in the Middle East through the convening of an international peace conference. The specific proposals made to that end are well known. Their implementation would furnish a palpable impetus towards peace and put an end to the adverse, potentially explosive trends in the region.

The Soviet delegation resolutely condemns the murder of Abu Jihad and supports Tunisia's justified appeal to the Security Council. The Council must resolutely condemn this action on the part of Israel, which has once again blatantly violated the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Tunisia by the perpetration of a deliberate act of political murder.

(Mr. Belonogov, USSR)

The Security Council cannot and indeed has no right to overlook those instances in which Israel has carried out an increasing number of violations of other States' sovereignty, and pursued a policy of State terrorism and piratical raids, trampling underfoot peoples' legitimate rights. It is also the Council's duty to take effective measures so as to secure a just solution of the Middle East problem.

Once again we call upon all States to do their part to help break the deadlock in the state of conflict in the Middle East. We wish to place on record our readiness to co-operate with everyone desiring to implement a Middle East settlement on a just and durable basis, taking into account the interests and rights of all States and peoples of that region - including, naturally, the Arab people of Palestine.

Mr. PEJIC (Yugoslavia): First of all, I should like to express our warm welcome and appreciation to His Excellency Mr. Mahmoud Mestiri, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Tunisia, who enjoys great respect and esteem in this Organization and has come before the Council to set forth his country's case with regard to an act of armed aggression against its territorial integrity and sovereignty. He has set before us clear evidence of renewed State terrorism committed by Israel against peaceful and non-aligned Tunisia the objective of which was to assassinate one of the most prominent leaders of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), Mr. Khalil al-Wazir.

In his statement of 20 April, the Secretary-General of this Organization, Mr. Perez de Cuellar, too, left no doubt as to who was behind the armed action against Tunisia. He recalled that, by its resolution 573 (1985), the Security Council had already vigorously condemned an earlier attack of armed aggression by Israel against Tunisia.

(Mr. Pejic, Yugoslavia)

Yugoslavia condemns most strongly the latest act of armed aggression by Israel against the sovereignty and independence of non-aligned Tunisia, a country which through its constructive and peaceful policy has gained the broadest international recognition and respect.

At this difficult moment when they are parting with one of their most able and popular leaders, Mr. Khalil al-Wazir, who has been brutally assassinated, we should like to express once again our full solidarity with the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian people engaged in a historical and just struggle against foreign domination and occupation. We express deep condolences to the PLO and the bereaved family of Mr. al-Wazir.

That this latest Israeli act of international terrorism, part and parcel of years-long arrogant policy, practice and behaviour of Israel, comes as no surprise to anybody does not diminish the obligation of the international community and the Security Council to stand up and oppose it forcefully and unequivocally. This we should do not only for reasons of principled support to the victims of aggression, foreign intervention and domination, but also and all the more so since, in our opinion, there has never been any doubt about the goals and motives of this action. An extensive and documented statement on them was presented yesterday to the Security Council by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Tunisia. Besides, certain political circles in Israel have made no particular effort to conceal their involvement.

In emphasizing these facts we have in mind that this senseless terrorist act of assassination of a member of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization, Mr. Khalil al-Wazir, by Israeli commandos was directed not only against Tunisia's sovereignty and the Palestine Liberation Organization as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people but also against the broadest

(Mr. Pejic, Yugoslavia)

demands of the international public that the solution of the Middle East crisis be addressed urgently and that peace and security be restored to that troubled region. Indeed, the shots fired in Tunisia are shots against peace in the Middle East.

This dangerous terrorist act comes as yet another warning of the complexity and gravity of the situation in the Middle East. In this context, the terrorist action against Tunisia's sovereignty and independence is an additional element of tension in the explosive situation prevailing in the region. It is also proof that certain circles in Israel continue to entertain dangerous illusions that they can use any means they feel fit in their vain attempts to suppress the months-long uprising of the Palestinian people in the occupied territories. However, the mass demonstrations of Palestinians in the occupied territories on 16 April and their defiant support of and solidarity with their legitimate leaders have exposed those expectations for what they really are, in the most telling way.

We are therefore of the opinion that there exist a great many reasons for the Security Council to take a firm and clear position. The action of Israeli commandos constitutes a flagrant violation of the territorial integrity and independence of a sovereign and peace-loving State Member of the United Nations as well as of the basic principles of the United Nations Charter and international law. It was a premeditated action the aim of which was to demoralize and smash the Palestinian uprising in the occupied territories by the physical elimination of PLO leaders and thus eliminate it as an unavoidable factor in the solution of the problem of Palestine and suppress the just struggle of the Palestinian people for the realization of the inalienable rights and aspirations denied it for many decades.

(Mr. Pejic, Yugoslavia)

Last but not least, this was also an act of international terrorism on which the General Assembly adopted - almost unanimously - a resolution during its forty-second session which stresses the need for the broadest possible international co-operation in combating this dangerous phenomenon which has destructive consequences for international relations.

On many occasions the Security Council has raised its voice in unanimous condemnation of all types of international terrorism, regardless of its motives and perpetrators. It is its duty and obligation to reaffirm that position this time again.

We therefore earnestly hope that the Security Council will unanimously condemn the armed aggression against Tunisian territory as a flagrant violation of the United Nations Charter and norms of international behaviour. Failure to do so would amount to the silent condonation of unacceptable practice and behaviour which constitute a serious threat to international peace and security and further aggravate the already precarious peace and stability in the Middle East.

Mr. KAGAMI (Japan): At the outset, I wish to express the most cordial respect of our delegation to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Tunisia, a country with which Japan has always maintained and enjoys close relations of friendship and co-operation.

The assassination of Mr. Khalil al-Wazir, a leading representative of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), was a vicious act of terrorism. Japan is appalled by that act and understands very well the outrage expressed by the Government of Tunisia at having its sovereign borders violated and the peaceful existence of its inhabitants shattered. Any State is entitled to be free of threat of terrorism; and any State which supports, sponsors or sympathizes with terrorism should be condemned.

(Mr. Kagami, Japan)

We in the United Nations, whose primary purpose is the peaceful settlement of disputes, condemn all acts of terrorism, for terrorism can never lead to peace.

In recent months we have witnessed in horror the acts of violence that have been occurring almost daily in the occupied Arab territories. The murder of Mr. Khalil al-Wazir and three other persons in Tunisia is abominable in itself, but it is also dangerous in that it could lead to a further escalation of violence throughout the Middle East. Japan therefore calls upon all parties in the region to seek a just, lasting and comprehensive settlement of the Middle East problem through peaceful negotiations. Otherwise, any constructive efforts on the part of the international community will be in vain.

I feel obliged to add that, in view of the responsibility and authority that the international community has vested in the Security Council, any expression of condemnation it makes against a particular party must be based on solid and unequivocal evidence. Thus, I listened with great care to the statements made by the previous speakers regarding Israel's alleged role in the assassination, and my delegation is prepared to examine any information that may be presented to substantiate that allegation.

In concluding my remarks, I wish on behalf of the Government and the people of Japan to express my sincere condolences to the bereaved family of Mr. Khalil al-Wazir and to the families of the other three victims of this tragic and meaningless act of terrorism.

Mr. DELPECH (Argentina) (interpretation from Spanish): First allow me, Sir, to extend a very warm and cordial welcome to the Foreign Minister of Tunisia, Mr. Mahmoud Mestiri, and to thank him for the very valuable information he gave us in his statement yesterday, which will most assuredly guide us in our debate. Tunisia and Argentina have the most cordial relations both in our many and varied bilateral contacts and in the Council.

(Mr. Delpech, Argentina)

The Security Council has met in response to the request of the Government of Tunisia in order to consider the criminal act that took place on Saturday, 16 April, in the district of Sidi Bou Said, located in the northern suburbs of Tunis, when four persons were killed: Khalil al-Wazir, a member of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), two guards and a Tunisian citizen employed as a gardener. This wanton act has shocked the entire international community and has been unanimously and internationally condemned, for it is unacceptable that even today recourse should be had to such methods. The Government of Argentina unequivocally condemns this savage act, which will surely only further intensify the cycle of violence in the region. On this occasion, we would like to extend our heartfelt condolences to the families of the victims.

History has taught us that the use of force as a form of individual or collective action always breeds a like response, or, what is worse, the use of even greater force.

The Government of Argentina vigorously and unequivocally maintains that nothing can justify the use of methods such as those employed on 16 April. Political assassination as a means of action or coercion is illegal and unjustifiable, and it must be most vigorously condemned by this body.

Consequently, the international community must give most serious thought to the causes of these acts as well as to what action can be taken to prevent their recurrence in the future.

When faced by events such as those described by the Foreign Minister of Tunisia in his statement on 21 April, the Government of Argentina can only repeat that civilized peoples are in duty-bound to use every peaceful means to settle their disputes.

(Mr. Delpech, Argentina)

A few days ago my delegation stated in the Council that in its opinion the most appropriate machinery to move towards a just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine and to put an end to the cycle of violence that characterizes it is the convening of an international peace conference on the Middle East under the auspices of the United Nations, with the participation of all the parties concerned. Only when the rule of law replaces the irrational use of force in relations among nations will it be possible to find just and comprehensive solutions to the serious problems besetting the international community.

Mr. NOGUEIRA-BATISTA (Brazil): Allow me to begin by extending a warm welcome to His Excellency Mr. Mahmoud Mestiri, Foreign Minister of Tunisia, and thanking him for honouring the Security Council with his presence and his words as we meet at the request of the Tunisian Government.

The Brazilian Government is appalled by the action which resulted in the assassination of Mr. Khalil al-Wazir in Tunisia on 16 April and wishes to express its condolences to his bereaved family, to the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and to the families of those who were also killed as a result of that brutal terrorist act.

This instance of political violence has not only infringed the sovereignty of Tunisia, a State Member of the United Nations, but it also runs counter to the most basic principles of international conduct and should be denounced by the entire international community. We therefore consider it justifiable and appropriate that the Security Council has been convened, at the request of Tunisia, to examine this serious matter.

(Mr. Nogueira-Batista, Brazil)

It is our opinion that the Council should respond by vigorously condemning such a terrorist action and the fact that it has taken place by encroachment on the territorial integrity of a Member State.

Brazil has always deplored in any circumstances the resort to violence and terror to settle disputes or to attain objectives, whatever they may be. Each such act sows the seeds of more violence and terror in a vicious and endless circle, regardless of the victim's age, sex, nationality or beliefs.

At this time, I wish to reiterate my Government's resolute condemnation of all acts of political violence and aggression, including those supported, sponsored or perpetrated by States, which result in the loss of human life and jeopardize the normal functioning of international relations.

The international community has adequate legal instruments and political forums to deal with controversies in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter and civilized patterns of coexistence.

The refusal to make use of these means and the belief in any kind of exceptionalism can only lead to intolerance and a growing spiral of aggression. This is particularly true with regard to the situation in the Middle East where resort to violence imposes a still heavier toll of suffering on the civilian populations and may escalate in such a way as to pose serious dangers to international peace and security.

My delegation wishes further to express its concern that this act has taken place at a time of extreme volatility in the occupied Arab territories and may create further obstacles to the attainment of a comprehensive negotiated settlement, to which all parties concerned must contribute by acting in a responsible and constructive manner.

(Mr. Nogueira-Batista, Brazil)

In conclusion, I should like to read out a press communique on this subject issued by the Minister of Foreign Relations of Brazil on 20 April 1988. It reads as follows:

"The Brazilian Government profoundly deplores the attack which took place recently in Tunisia resulting in the assassination of the Palestine leader, Khalil al-Wazir, also known as 'Abu Jihad'. In accordance with its convictions that all acts of political violence deserve the widest rejection of the international community wherever they occur and regardless of their motivations, Brazil regrets that acts of this nature continue to take place, leading to the intensification of hatred and of tensions between peoples and to aggravation of the crisis in the Middle East."

The PRESIDENT: The next speaker is Mr. Clovis Maksoud, Permanent Observer of the League of Arab States to the United Nations, to whom the Council has extended an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. MAKSOUD: I should like at the outset, Mr. President, to express the appreciation of the League of Arab States for the kind invitation that you have extended to me. I wish also to extend our appreciation, through you, to the other members of the Security Council.

During the many years that the international community has been seized of this question, and more emphatically during the last few months since the Palestinian uprising, we have seen how Israel has tried, at all costs, to procrastinate with respect to its compliance with the various United Nations resolutions and, more particularly, with the articles of the Geneva Convention, inasmuch as Israel does not consider itself either answerable to this body or accountable as an occupying Power.

(Mr. Maksoud)

We have seen from this instance of naked aggression against Tunisia, which violates the sovereignty of a State Member of the League of Arab States as well as that of a State Member of the United Nations, that Israel has a hand which is able to reach anywhere, thus rendering the territorial integrity of many States vulnerable to its aggression. Israel therefore has total freedom to commit acts in violation of a State's sovereignty with impunity. However, in this instance, we find that Israel seeks to impose a certain artificial silence in order to allow itself to dodge international condemnation. Is Israel so embarrassed and ashamed of what it has done to Tunisia that it therefore does not admit its act? Or is Israel proud of the naked aggression that it has committed? We note that when a member of the inner Cabinet of Israel, Mr. Weizman, predicted that this action would backfire on Israel, his Prime Minister, Mr. Shamir, in referring to that action, stated:

"Let us hope that our enemies will realize and understand that Israel knows how to wage war and that all those who hurt us will be hurt manifold." That is the statement of the Prime Minister of Israel rebuking one of his Cabinet members for having opposed and protested against Israel's action undertaken against Tunisian sovereignty.

Furthermore, the Israeli Mission yesterday, on its independence day, stated the following:

"To set the record straight, Israel has made no such admission" - that it attacked Tunisia - "or declared any such intention with regard to Tunisia." To lie with a straight face has become a pattern of plausible deniability by Israel. This plausible deniability, by the increment of evidence, is no longer plausible but is definitely implausible, and, in this respect, we ask the following question: Did Israel, or did it not, attack Tunisia? All the evidence - and this

(Mr. Maksoud)

is the issue - points without equivocation very categorically to Israel, the Mossad and the operatives of the Israeli army.

Last night one of the so-called experts on terrorism - who at this time usually proliferate in the media - spoke admiringly of Israel's "precision" and stated that the special regiment, headquarters regiment 269, and the naval force 13, in addition to Mossad, had been planning this operation for six months. They infiltrated into Tunisia in December.

I do not need to refer to the various press reports that have appeared during the last two or three days, but Israel wants to have it both ways. Unfortunately, some entertain the idea that by having it both ways Israel might extricate itself from responsibility with respect to international peace and security. Israel does want to have it both ways: It wants to satisfy its primitive instincts to show that it is capable of vengeance against Palestinians, and it wants to equivocate so as not to admit at all what it has done and, as it has stated, "to set the record straight, Israel has made no such admission or declared any such intention with regard to Tunisia."

(Mr. Maksoud)

What does that Israeli position mean? Israel wants to prevent any international legal action or condemnation. Perhaps certain elements feel that on Israel's fortieth anniversary it might not be propitious to suffer condemnation. Even our friends in the United States felt that Israel's fortieth anniversary might be an occasion to compensate it by yesterday's signing of the strategic agreement as a formal document.

This is a time of the brutality of Israel's aggression in the occupied territories and then its violation of Tunisian sovereignty, which led to the martyrdom of a distinguished and historic leader of the Palestinian resistance movement and of four of his colleagues and a Tunisian gardener. It is bewildering that at such a time, instead of there being instant condemnation, there should be any doubt about the accumulated evidence that once and for all renders Israel accountable and in total contempt of all the norms of international law and behaviour.

That is why Tunisia came to the Security Council, because it sought to bring to the attention of the world community the need for Israel to be deterred, through the exercise of the proper functions of the Security Council, from having a free hand to attack anybody at any time. Then yesterday the Israeli Mission, having stated that

"The Security Council is not a court of law and Israel is not prepared to be the target of accusations ..."

spoke of the Security Council's being

"seized with the discussion of the fate of a terrorist who has planned, perpetrated, glorified and openly accepted ... responsibility ..."

In this case the killing of Khalil al-Wazir was a by-product of Israel's violation of Tunisian sovereignty. The Security Council is now seized of the issue

(Mr. Maksoud)

because Tunisia's sovereignty has been violated. It was as a result of that violation that the martyrdom of Khalil al-Wazir took place.

That total distortion of the reasons why Israel does not accept the Security Council's being seized of the issue is a deliberate attempt to continue its institutionalized contempt for this body. Israel says that the Council is not seized of the matter every time there is an attack. If that were the reason, when more than 200 people have been killed in the occupied territories, when day in and day out Israel attacks and kills - with cluster bombs and in other ways - Palestinians and Lebanese in the south of Lebanon and sometimes in the north of Lebanon, the Security Council would be meeting night and day. Yet Israel lies.

Therefore, the question that the Security Council must ask is: Did Israel conduct aggression against Tunisia? Is Tunis the victim of aggression by Israel, let alone of the consequences of the killings?

It was not the PLO that brought this case before the Security Council, although the PLO has a vested interest in every issue pertaining to the Middle East, and more particularly the Palestinian question. It was Tunisia that brought the complaint, because its territorial sovereignty had been violated. Therefore, to dodge the issue and rephrase it in a manner that distorts the objective of the meetings of the Security Council is but an indication of what Israel intends to do now and in the future. Accordingly, measures should be taken to deter it and to make it costly for it, morally, politically, diplomatically and in other ways.

As long as there is a possibility of Israel's being able to get away with murder, it behoves the Security Council to bring itself to a moment of decisiveness and not allow itself, because of extraneous considerations, to become the prisoner of indecision. Therefore, we find ourselves returning again to the Security Council. We have been told that continuous recourse to the Council devalues the impact, that in a way we use the Security Council. True, we do. And we will

(Mr. Maksoud)

continue, because the Security Council is the alternative to any military option; it is the vehicle to salvage the peace option. It is our attempt to exhaust all diplomatic efforts, to put an end to aggression, to prevent an irreparable rupture and polarization. Instead of being thanked for coming to the Security Council, we are criticized by some for our repeated anchoring of our aspirations, hopes and frustrations to this body.

Tunisia's complaint today must be addressed on its merits. Khalil al-Wazir became a victim because of the hope of some of the Israeli racists that if one leader of the Palestinian movement were murdered that might demoralize the Palestinian constituency. Israel's resort to an attack on Tunisia and the murder of Khalil al-Wazir was an obvious, clear-cut attempt to restore the morale of its armed forces, which have been bogged down in the occupied territories for the past four and a half months by the most ennobling acts of resistance that the Palestinian people in occupied territories have demonstrated.

(Mr. Maksoud)

Therefore, for Israel to have recourse to secretive murderous techniques - the ultimate acts of the coward - in order to bring about self-satisfaction and bolster the morale of its so-called defence forces is an indication that it is using techniques that are repugnant, immoral and death-dealing in order to restore its own morale - which goes to show that its own morale is predicated on immoral acts, immoral behaviour and immoral policies.

That is why the instance of aggression against Tunisia today must bring about a measure of decisiveness that would only enhance the credibility and the effectiveness of the United Nations as a crisis manager and peace-maker in the region.

The PRESIDENT: The next speaker is the representative of Somalia. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. OSMAN (Somalia): Let me first of all add my voice to the words of welcome extended to His Excellency Mr. Mahmoud Mestiri, Foreign Minister of Tunisia, and thank him for the statement he delivered in the Security Council yesterday.

I wish to thank you, Mr. President, for having acceded to my request to participate, on behalf of the African Group, in the current debate in the Council on Tunisia's serious complaint against Israel.

Before proceeding to the substance of my statement, may I take this opportunity to congratulate you most warmly on the excellent manner in which you are conducting the affairs of the Council during the month of April. Speaking in my capacity as Chairman of the African Group and also as representative of Somalia, I should like to say that your presence on the Council, and particularly as its President, is a source of pride to all the African States. You represent a country whose Head of State, President Kenneth Kaunda, is not only one of Africa's most

(Mr. Osman, Somalia)

distinguished leaders but also Chairmn of the Organization of African Unity. I am sure that your diplomatic and personal qualities, together with the prestige of your country, will make it possible for the Council to meet the challenges before it.

I wish also to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the excellent manner in which Ambassador Dragoslav Pejic of Yugoslavia conducted the proceedings of the Council during his presidency last month.

It is most disturbing that for the second time in little more than two years Tunisia has had to call for the convening of the Security Council to protest against Israel's violation of its territorial integrity and sovereignty and to ask the Council to condemn a murderous Israeli assault carried out on Tunisian soil.

The evidence is clear that it was an Israeli-organized and directed commando group which carried out the premeditated and politically motivated assassination of Khalil al-Wazir, Abu Jihad, at his home in Tunis last Saturday, in the presence of his wife and daughter, as well as the murder of three other innocent persons who happened to be on the premises at the time. It was purely a terrorist act and no argument of self-defence can justify this brutal action.

I wish to express the great sense of outrage felt by the African Group over the killing of Abu Jihad, who apart from being a true Palestinian patriot was also a high-ranking official of the Palestine Liberation Organization.

I am sure that the vast majority of Member States share the concern expressed by the Secretary-General, who has reiterated his long-standing condemnation of acts of assassination.

I need hardly remind the Council of Israel's record as a perpetrator of State terrorism. The Council has been called on in the past to condemn Israeli terrorism against Iraq and against Lebanon. As we are all aware, the Lebanese people have

(Mr. Osman, Somalia)

suffered tragically from Israel's terrorist acts of aggression and continue to be subjected to such acts on a regular basis. Israel's previous act of armed aggression against Tunisia constituted a grave affront to Tunisian sovereignty and was rightly condemned in the strongest terms in Security Council resolution 573 (1985).

I believe that I speak not only for the African Group but also for the vast majority of Member States when I say that it would be unconscionable if Israel were to be allowed to repeat with impunity the same kind of aggression against Tunisia which was specifically condemned in 1985 by the Security Council.

Israel's interventions in the affairs of other countries and its violation of their sovereignty and its aggressive use of force are serious infringements of the principles of the United Nations Charter and the norms of international law.

It is pertinent to recall that General Assembly resolution 40/61 on international terrorism, adopted by consensus, unequivocally condemns as criminal all acts, methods and practices of terrorism wherever and by whomever committed, including those which jeopardize friendly relations among States and violate their security. On the basis of resolution 40/61, and by the nature of Israel's behaviour towards Member States of this Organization, in particular this latest criminal action, Israel is without doubt a State which for all practical purposes embraces terrorism.

(Mr. Osman, Somalia)

The members of the African Group are profoundly conscious of the danger such behaviour poses to international peace, and particularly to the security and stability of the States of the Mediterranean region. Israel's lawless actions require an appropriate response by the international community. It is clearly necessary in cases of international as in cases of national crime to deal firmly with frequent offenders so that those at risk can be protected and the rule of law upheld. The duty of the Security Council in this regard is clear.

We strongly hope that as the Security Council considers what action it should take in response to Israel's latest violation of international law it will also keep in mind the broader implications of Israeli terrorism.

Paradoxically, Israel seeks the protection of the United Nations Charter when its interests are at stake; yet it violates the Charter when it considers this convenient and as serving its purposes. To allow a Member State of the United Nations such latitude would reduce to a farce the provisions of Article 2 (4) of the Charter of the United Nations, which calls on all Member States to

"refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State, or in any other manner inconsistent with the purposes of the United Nations."

It must be emphasized that the assassination of Abu Jihad comes at a time when it is more widely recognized than ever before that there will be no lasting peace in the Middle East without a just solution to the Palestinian problem and that it is necessary to deal directly with the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, in any negotiation for a lasting peace.

Israel's response to these developments, unfortunately, has been to choose violence and intransigence rather than a political process leading to a just and comprehensive settlement.

(Mr. Osman, Somalia)

The African Group is very sympathetic towards the Government and the people of Tunisia in this moment of trial, and fully understands their outrage at the dastardly crime committed on their soil. The African Group also expresses its condolences to the family of Mr. Khalil al-Wazir and to the Palestinian people as a whole upon their irreparable loss. I should like it to be known that the African group expresses its full support and solidarity to the people and Government of Tunisia and to the Palestinian people in the face of this blatant act of aggression.

I said earlier that the international community must make an appropriate response to Israel's act of aggression against Tunisia. I hope that the Council will condemn vigorously and in no uncertain terms Israel's act of aggression and demand that it refrain from repeating such acts in the future.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Somalia for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Kuwait. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. ABULHASAN (Kuwait) (interpretation from Arabic): I am pleased to be making a statement once more, Sir, under your able and distinguished presidency of the Security Council for this month.

At the end of last week, the Council met to discuss Israel's brutal and savage practices and its use of brute force against the uprising by the Palestinian people, a people that, despite owning the land and having the right to life and sovereignty, lives under brutal Israeli occupation.

Less than a week later, the Council is meeting again to consider further aggression committed by that same outlaw entity against the sovereignty and territorial integrity of a peaceful independent State, Tunisia.

(Mr. Abulhasan, Kuwait)

The question is the same; the accused is the same. The accused has been flouting international instruments, values and laws; it has launched aggression upon aggression internally and externally, unrestrained by legal obligations, moral deterrents, universal norms or the will of the international community. Its goal has always been and remains the liquidation of the Palestinian people wherever it may be found; the means to that goal is brute force in its most abhorrent form; the arena for its aggression encompasses the entire world; it is motivated by innate arrogance and a philosophy based on hegemony and expansion.

The comprehensive statement made yesterday by Mr. Mahmoud Mestiri, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the sister republic of Tunisia, spares me the need to detail the aggression against Tunisia, in which the sovereignty and sanctity of its national soil was violated. That aggression claimed the lives of one of the symbols of the legitimate national resistance of the Palestinian people, the late Khalil al-Wazir, "Abu Jihad", and of a number of his companions and guards.

This latest Israeli aggression constitutes, among other things, an insult to the Security Council, which embodies international opinion at its highest level.

(Mr. Abulhasan, Kuwait)

Two and a half years ago the Security Council adopted resolution 573 (1985), in which it condemned Israel's treacherous act of armed aggression against Tunisian sovereignty and territorial integrity, in the course of which the headquarters of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in Tunis was destroyed. That act of aggression also caused heavy loss of life among innocent persons and extensive material damage. In that resolution the Council demanded that Israel refrain from perpetrating such acts of aggression or from the threat to do so, and requested the States Members of the United Nations to take measures to dissuade Israel from resorting to such acts of aggression.

Yet Israel, which was established and has prospered on aggression, has, as is its custom, ridden roughshod over that resolution. It has used the sword of power to realize its expansionist goals and policies and to put down the uprising of the Palestinian people. It has harnessed all its expertise and the technological equipment supplied to it to attack the Palestinian people wherever they exist, pursuing them like a cyclone that ravages everything that stands in its way towards its goal, in defiance of all international norms and principles.

From its violent act of aggression against the sovereignty of Iraq in attacking that country's peaceful nuclear installation to its repeated raids against Lebanon, from its threats against the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia because of that country's legal and rightful possession of a missile force to protect its national security to its continuous persecution of symbolic figures in the Palestinian struggle wherever they may be, following a scheme of official terrorism, Israeli carries out its policies in full view of the international community, notwithstanding the flood of resolutions adopted by the United Nations Security Council and General Assembly condemning them.

(Mr. Abulhasan, Kuwait)

In its latest operation Israel has proved that its desire to dominate the region and to destroy Arab capability and potential is really a frantic and unbridled obsession and that nothing can deter the Zionist entity from carrying out such despicable acts of aggression, which are aimed directly against the Palestinian people and at denying them their right to live in dignity and freedom and to establish an independent State on their own national soil. However, as the martyred hero Abu Jihad himself stated only two days before his death, the continuing Palestinian uprising against occupation and infringement has created a new reality on the political map of the region. Abu Jihad spoke eloquently about the massive popular uprising in the occupied territories, and his words are a clear message to the enemy that it will not end but that, on the contrary, it will take on new strength and escalate until the legitimate goals of the Palestinian people have been realized.

This criminal act of assassination is clear indication that the Zionists realize that they have reached an impasse and that the uprising is weighing heavily upon them. However, the Zionist entity is still suffering from the delusion that through assassination it can destroy the will of the Palestinian people. It should have realized that the assassination of Khalil al-Wazir would not silence the voice of the Palestinian people but that it would lead to a stronger determination to continue the struggle until their legitimate rights are achieved and their usurped lands regained.

We in Kuwait strongly condemn this new act of aggression against Tunisia's sovereignty and the sanctity of its national soil. We declare our full solidarity with Tunisia. We suffer at the loss of an honourable symbol of the liberation struggle in the world and at the loss of the other noble freedom-fighters who perished with him. We stand beside the Palestinian people and their leadership, represented by the PLO, their sole, legitimate representative. We support the

(Mr. Abulhasan, Kuwait)

uprising of the Palestinian people in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip as part of the national struggle and as a source of inspiration to all peoples subjected to foreign occupation.

After its bitter experiences with Israel the Security Council is more than ever called upon to defend its dignity and credibility before the world community by condemning Israel in the strongest possible terms for its latest act of aggression and by exercising all of its authority to prevent Israel from repeating such acts of aggression against peoples and States. The Council must be aware that the Palestinian people will continue their legitimate struggle, with international support, until they establish their own independent State on the soil of their homeland, Palestine.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Kuwait for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Pakistan. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. SHAH NAWAZ (Pakistan): I have had the privilege of addressing the Security Council under your presidency on another occasion during this month, and I take this opportunity to reiterate to you our trust and confidence in your leadership. Once again, we wish you every success in guiding the present deliberations of the Security Council on the situation which has arisen as a result of the assassination of the respected Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) leader, Mr. Khalil al-Wazir, Abu Jihad, in Tunis on 16 April.

We welcome the presence at the Council table of His Excellency Mr. Mahmoud Mestiri, Foreign Minister of Tunisia. It is a matter of deep regret that his return to the United Nations, where only a short while ago he served his country with such distinction as its Permanent Representative, takes place in the somber circumstances of the tragic occurrence in Tunis.

(Mr. Shah Nawaz, Pakistan)

The contents of the letter of 19 April addressed to you, Sir, by the Tunisian Permanent Representative and the statement made yesterday in the Council by His Excellency Mr. Mahmoud Mestiri clearly indicate that it was Israel which had, indeed, financed and ordered the execution of Mr. Khalil al-Wazir.

The letter of the Permanent Representative of Tunisia also says that, apart from acknowledging responsibility for that odious crime, the statements of the Israeli authorities amount to an admission that Israel has attacked an independent country which is a member of the United Nations and has violated its territorial integrity and sovereignty in total disregard of the norms of international law and of the principles embodied in the United Nations Charter.

Strong corroborative evidence is available establishing Israel's responsibility for the tragedy in Tunis. In yesterday's issue, the Washington Post published a report, based on information compiled from a Tunisian investigation and Israeli sources, which said that the operation was planned and carried out by Israel's Mossad agency, army, navy and air force, and the actual assassination by a special army commando unit. According to that report the raid was overseen by several senior Israeli military commanders in a specially equipped Boeing 707, who were in constant radio contact with the commando squad on the ground. It also stated that Israel's 10-member inner cabinet discussed the assassination twice before approving it.

(Mr. Shah Nawaz, Pakistan)

It is not the first time that Tunisian territory and sovereignty have been violated by Israel in this manner. On 1 October 1985 also, Tunisia made a similar complaint against Israel when an Israeli attack on Tunisian soil caused heavy loss of human life and extensive material damage. As a result of that complaint the Security Council adopted resolution 573 (1985), which vigorously condemned Israeli acts of armed aggression, demanded that Israel refrain from repeating such acts of aggression, urged Member States to take measures to dissuade Israel from doing so, and considered that Tunisia had the right to appropriate reparations as a result of the losses it had suffered and for which Israel had claimed responsibility. Far from being deterred by that resolution - which has remained unimplemented - the Israeli authorities have defiantly repeated with impunity such acts of aggression.

On being informed of the latest incident of Israeli aggression against Tunisia, the Secretary-General expressed his deep concern at Israel's further infringement of Tunisia's sovereignty and territorial integrity. He recalled Security Council resolution 573 (1985) and reiterated his condemnation of acts of assassination.

The assassination of Mr. Khalil al-Wazir, a highly respected member of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), was carried out in the presence of his wife and daughter, which shows how predatory was the nature of the act and how the assassins were total strangers to all civilized norms of behaviour and devoid of the finer feelings of compassion and respect for innocent life. His assassination is an act of stark terrorism which should not be allowed to go unpunished. Terrorism may have a long arm, but justice has a longer reach.

These acts of barbarity and the unabated campaign of cruel repression against the Palestinian population of the West Bank and Gaza are the products of the continued denial of the Palestinian people's right to self-determination and

(Mr. Shah Nawaz, Pakistan)

statehood. It is this denial which lies at the heart of the Middle East problem, as the international community has known it for the past four decades.

Accordingly, it is not enough for the Security Council merely to condemn Israel for its failure to heed the Council's resolutions on the question of Palestine - which it must - but also to address the problem at its core.

The contents of the letter of 19 April addressed by the Permanent Representative of Tunisia to you, Mr. President, clearly connect the assassination of Mr. Khalil al-Wazir, a member of the PLO Executive Committee, by a terrorist commando group to the massive repression of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza.

The Security Council has been continuously seized of the worsening situation in the occupied Arab territories of the West Bank and Gaza since December of last year, when the oppressed Palestinian population of those areas was driven to resist, with bricks and stones, the vicious campaign of violence and suppression unleashed against it by the occupation forces, who are armed to the teeth with the most modern weapons and devoid of any inhibition to use them. The uprising which began on 9 December remains unabated and innocent lives continue to be lost in the process of unbridled repression by the Israeli occupation forces. Nearly 150 Palestinians have been killed and enormous damage has been inflicted on Palestinian property. Not only have many Palestinians been deprived of their means of livelihood but their homes have been demolished or they themselves have been deported from their land of birth. Not only are all these cruel and heinous acts of violence totally illegal but they constitute a flagrant violation of the Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War and an affront to civilized norms of behaviour.

The agony of the people of Palestine will persist, and the worsening situation will continue to deteriorate and threaten peace and stability in the entire region

(Mr. Shah Nawaz, Pakistan)

until the Palestine question has been resolved satisfactorily. The international community must insist on the implementation, without any delay, of the proposal for the holding of an international conference on the Middle East with the participation, on an equal footing, of the PLO as the sole representative of the Palestinian people. This is the only viable proposal in the field, and the convening of the conference, alone, offers the prospect of a lasting peace in the region.

Pakistan has always supported a just and lasting settlement in the Middle East, on the basis of the principle of self-determination and statehood for the people of Palestine. It has unequivocally condemned Israeli acts of aggression against the Palestinian people.

The President and the Prime Minister of Pakistan, in separate messages to Mr. Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization, have expressed their condolences at the death of the PLO leader Mr. Khalil al-Wazir. In his message of condolence, the President of Pakistan has said:

"... the news of the criminal and cowardly assassination of brother Abu Jihad has produced a wave of sorrow and anger in the heart of the Pakistani people. Abu Jihad was a valiant son of the Palestinian people who gave his precious life while leading his people in the epic struggle for the liberation of their homeland. The memory of Abu Jihad will serve as a beacon for those who will now be called upon to carry forward this struggle with renewed vigour."

Similarly, the Prime Minister of Pakistan in his message has expressed his deep shock and sorrow at the dastardly act of assassination and has said:

"... the martyrdom of Abu Jihad will reinforce, rather than diminish, the resolve of the Palestinian people in carrying forward their struggle for the liberation of their homeland."

(Mr. Shah Nawaz, Pakistan)

My delegation once again appeals to the members of the Security Council to take a serious view of the heinous crime that has taken place in Tunis and to adopt the necessary measures that would deter such acts of terrorism and aggression and safeguard the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of States Members of the United Nations.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Pakistan for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Lebanon. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. FAKHOURY (Lebanon) (interpretation from Arabic): On behalf of the delegation of Lebanon, it gives me great pleasure to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for this month and to express our complete confidence in your capabilities, experience and wisdom in successfully guiding the Council's work.

We are also pleased to extend to your predecessor, the Permanent Representative of Yugoslavia, our thanks and appreciation for his judicious presidency of the Council last month.

It seems that this year is "the year of Israel" in the Security Council: the Council has been convened six times in four months to consider Israeli acts of aggression and practices in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and Lebanon; today it is meeting for the seventh time in response to a request from sister Tunisia to consider the new act of aggression by Israel against its sovereignty and territorial integrity. This is the second time that Tunisia has been the victim of a brutal act of aggression the details of which have been very thoroughly and accurately presented by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Tunisia. I shall therefore not repeat the painful facts which led to the martyrdom of a great Palestinian freedom fighter at the hands of murderous terrorists.

(Mr. Fakhoury, Lebanon)

Lebanon, which stands in solidarity with Tunisia - is still suffering from Israel's persistently violent practices, including the policy of terrorism - appreciates the significance of national sovereignty and territorial integrity and fully supports Tunisia's just demands for Israel's condemnation and deterrence.

What means of violence have not been practised by Israel in the occupied Palestinian Arab territories and in Lebanon, beginning with detention, abduction, destruction and murder, and culminating in the occupation of territory and the exploitation of that occupation as a bridgehead for aggression and for trampling underfoot the sovereignty of Lebanon?

The most recent example of such cynicism and disregard for the Security Council's resolutions was the illegal deportation to Lebanon of eight Palestinians on Tuesday, 19 April, to join the other 12 Palestinians deported since the beginning of the year.

What means of State terrorism have not been employed by Israel in the neighbouring - and the not-so-neighbouring - Arab countries, from Iraq to Tunisia, including Lebanon?

The verbatim records of the Council and the hundreds of complaints contained in the archives - complaints lodged against Israel by various Arab parties - furnish conclusive evidence of the Israeli policy of aggression, terrorism and the forcible acquisition of territory.

It is difficult - nay, impossible - for anyone to defend Israel or to justify its acts of terrorism and aggression against Tunisia and the violation of its territorial integrity.

It is impossible also for the representative of Israel to divert the attention of the Council from the act of terrorism perpetrated by his State against a State Member of the United Nations. Israel has never complied with the Charter, international law and international agreements. It has never respected the

(Mr. Fakhoury, Lebanon)

civilized norms of conduct and ethics among civilized nations. Rather, it has always violated them, cynically disregarding international resolutions and fabricated pretexts to persist in the implementation of its criminal designs and policies.

The gravest threat facing the Arab world today on its eastern and western flanks is this Israeli defiance which makes free with the sovereignty of States, their territorial integrity, air space and territorial waters.

This challenge becomes all the more serious as a result of Israel's arrogant belief in its ability to implement successfully the policy of violence and terrorism, which makes a repetition of Israeli acts such as these not only possible but probable, anywhere and at any time.

Indeed, as the Council was about to convene this morning's meeting, the Israeli Air Force was bombing the Lebanese towns of Damour and Naïma, situated less than 20 kilometres from the capitol, Beirut, on the coastal highway between Beirut and Sidon. The losses in human life and material damage have not yet been assessed.

This new Israeli act of aggression is a blatant violation of Lebanese sovereignty. I leave it to members to assess Israel's defiance of the Council, which has not yet completed its consideration of Tunisia's complaint against Israel.

The Tunisian complaint before the Council, with its clear-cut facts, admits no doubt. Israel is mistaken if it believes that by equipping its terrorists with forged passports it confused the investigators and removed suspicion from the real murderers. All the evidence indicates that this was a premeditated Israeli terrorist act. The only missing evidence is an outright admission.

Israel, which has been wont to acknowledge its acts in official statements - and which has always arrogantly believed in its ability and superiority - has maintained silence this time as it did in 1973, when it assassinated three

(Mr. Fakhoury, Lebanon)

Palestinian leaders in Beirut. It has deliberately remained silent on both occasions so as not to admit to the practice of terrorism.

The Council is responsible for implementing the articles of the Charter and strengthening confidence in its policy of maintaining international peace and security. This can only be achieved by a full and positive response to Tunisia's just demand that the aggressor be condemned and that it be deterred from pursuing its policy of violence and State terrorism - the most serious kind of all.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Lebanon for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Saudi Arabia. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. SHIHABI (Saudi Arabia) (interpretation from Arabic): It is a great pleasure to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for this month. I congratulate you as a friend, a statesman, a General, and as an eminent Ambassador proven in diplomacy. You will undoubtedly guide our work in the Council for the realization of the aims and principles of the United Nations.

It gives me pleasure also to express thanks and appreciation to last month's Council President, Ambassador Pejic, the Permanent Representative of Yugoslavia, for the effective manner in which he conducted the work of the Council during his presidency, and for the great ability and wisdom he showed at a time of international crisis.

The Council is convened today to look into the international piracy and terrorism committed by a Member of the United Nations. It has been convened to look into the violation of the sovereignty of an active State Member of the international Organization, at the hands of the Member which is committing these acts of piracy.

(Mr. Shihabi, Saudi Arabia)

We are not discussing only the ethical aspects as measured on the scales of the Israeli authorities. Also, we are not discussing only the temerity of the Israeli régime in confronting, beyond all limits, all the values which the United Nations has been established to protect, and to protect, if necessary, even by force. But the question now is: what should the United Nations itself, as an international organization, and the States Members do at a time when we call for the maintenance of world security and the preservation of specific standards in international relations, in case of a violation with respect to which the United Nations should take measures to stop the perpetrator and to curb the aggressor from committing his aggression?

The Israeli authorities fear, rather cannot face, the international penalties concerning such actions referred to in the Charter. Then why do they undertake such actions? Do they believe that, apart from the remaining States of the world, they are immune from punishment and can therefore do whatever they please whenever they or one of their leaders or organs finds it convenient?

This crime was committed in broad daylight, before of the eyes of the world. The Israeli authorities have perpetrated aggression against the sovereignty of the Tunisian Republic, a fully sovereign State, in which a high official of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, a national organization which has its place in the United Nations, was killed along with other Tunisian and Palestinian citizens. Will Israel and the terrorist authorities now enjoy immunity from punishment at a time when all the voices in the halls of the United Nations have tirelessly been calling for combating terrorism and terrorists and for eliminating crimes and criminals?

(Mr. Shihabi, Saudi Arabia)

The world expects us to apply the United Nations Charter and to abide by the international obligations we all uphold in the General Assembly, the Sixth Committee and other organs dealing with the problems and acts of terrorism.

The killing of Mr. Khalil al-Wazir, Deputy Chief of the Palestine Liberation Organization Command, on the soil of the Republic of Tunisia by Israeli commandos specialized in international terrorism is a terrorist and political crime of extremely serious dimensions. A crime has been committed against a high official of the Palestine Liberation Organization, Permanent Observer in the United Nations, while the sovereignty of Tunisia and the security of its territory have been violated. We hope that this crime will not pass without Israel knowing that it will have to pay the price in full.

We in Saudi Arabia and we in the Arab nation from the ocean to the Gulf, support Tunisia and stand by it in protecting its sovereignty and safeguarding its security. We support the Palestine Liberation Organization in repulsing aggression and terrorism against its officials. We support the Palestinian people in their great uprising and in their glorious struggle, while they hail the caravans of martyrs and do not weep over them, finding it cheap to pay the price of struggle and giving the most glorious example of self-sacrifice, no matter how dear it may be to recover their full rights in their country, which, God willing, will be victorious in the end.

We hope that the Security Council will arrive at a resolution that will be fully in keeping with international commitments and deter terrorism and curb terrorists, whether authorities or individuals.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Saudi Arabia for his kind words addressed to me.

(The President)

In view of the lateness of the hour, I intend to adjourn the meeting now. The next meeting of the Security Council to continue the consideration of the item its agenda will take place this afternoon at 3 o'clock.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.