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TO PRIORITY BEIRUT

TELEGRAM NUMBER 428 OF 11 OCTOBER

AND TO PRIORITY TEL AVIV

INFO PRIORITY UKMIS NEW YORK, KUWAIT, UKMIS GENEVA, WASHINGTON,  
DAMASCUS, AMMAN,

S LEBANON: PALESTINIAN REFUGEES

1. MR STRINGER, DEPUTY DIRECTOR GENERAL OF OXFAM, ACCOMPANIED  
BY MR MCDOWALL, AN OXFAM REPRESENTATIVE UNTIL RECENTLY BASED  
IN LEBANON, CALLED AT THEIR REQUEST TO SEE MR HURD ON  
11 OCTOBER.

2. OXFAM'S CONCERN OVER THE CONTINUED  
DEPRIVATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IS SET OUT IN TWO OXFAM REPORTS,  
ONE BY SHEARS DATED 5 SEPTEMBER AND THE OTHER BY MCDOWALL DATED  
22 SEPTEMBER, (COPIES OF WHICH WERE SENT TO UKMIS NEW YORK BY  
BAG ON 8 OCTOBER). STRINGER SAID THAT THE GREATEST DANGER  
FOR THE PALESTINIANS WOULD BE IF THE ISRAELIS LEFT SOUTHERN  
LEBANON AND HANDED OVER TO THE MILITIAS. THERE WAS THE  
POSSIBILITY OF A FURTHER MASSACRE. MURDERS OF PALESTINIANS  
IN THE AREA WERE CONTINUING AS THE MILITIAS WANTED TO FRIGHTEN  
ALL PALESTINIANS INTO LEAVING FOR THE BEQAA, FROM WHERE THEY  
WOULD BE FORCED INTO SYRIA. MCDOWALL COMPLAINED THAT THE  
ISRAELIS WERE NOT PROTECTING THE CIVILIAN POPULATION AS  
REQUIRED UNDER THE 4TH GENEVA CONVENTION. HE ALLEGED THAT THE  
BURNING OF THE MIEH MIEH CAMP WAS ENCOURAGED BY THE ISRAELIS.  
VOLUNTARY AGENCY STAFF WERE NOW AT RISK AS THEY WERE  
UNINTENTIONALLY BECOMING INVOLVED IN HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES IN THE  
AREA AND WERE THEREFORE BEING WATCHED BY THE ISRAELIS AND  
MILITIA. THE DELEGATION ALSO COMPLAINED THAT TENTS WERE BEING  
ALLOWED (BELATEDLY) TO BE ERECTED ON THE CAMPS RATHER THAN MORE  
PERMANENT BUILDINGS. APART FROM THE HEALTH PROBLEMS THIS  
CAUSED, EG AN INCREASE IN THE DEATH RATE AMONG INFANTS AND THE AGED  
THEY WERE A SYMBOLIC INVITATION TO THE MILITIAS TO REGARD THE  
PALESTINIANS IN THE CAMPS AS BEING THERE ONLY ON A TEMPORARY BASIS.

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STRINGER ASKED THAT MORE OF THE INTERNATIONAL AND VOLUNTARY AGENCIES SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO SET UP TEMPORARY OFFICES IN THE CAMPS AT MOST RISK (AIN AL HELWUH AND ONE OTHER IN SIDON AND 3 IN TYRE) AND THAT UNIFIL'S MANDATE BE CHANGED TO ALLOW IT TO PLAY A USEFUL ROLE IN THE CAMPS AND IN SOUTHERN LEBANON. HE ALSO ASKED THAT THERE SHOULD BE A LARGER UNIFIL PRESENCE IN SOUTHERN LEBANON SO THAT THERE COULD BE PHYSICAL PROTECTION ON THE GROUND. IF THESE STEPS WERE NOT TAKEN THEN THERE WAS A DANGER OF ANOTHER MASSACRE FOR WHICH THE UN WOULD BE BLAMED.

3. MCDOWALL, WHO USED TO WORK FOR UNWRA, ALSO CRITICISED THEIR ROLE SINCE THE INVASION. ITS OUTDATED MANDATE MEANT THE ORGANISATION WAS TOO RIGID - IT WOULD NOT INVOLVE ITSELF IN HUMAN RIGHTS. THE APPOINTMENT OF UNWRA'S DIRECTOR FOR THE JERUSALEM AREA TO LOOK AFTER SOUTHERN LEBANON AFTER THE ISRAELI INVASION HAD MEANT THAT UNWRA TURNED TO THE ISRAELIS ON ALL POINTS. IT WAS THIS WHICH HAD LED TO THE FOUR MONTH DELAY IN TENTS BEING ERECTED IN THE OLD CAMPS, AS THE ISRAELIS TOLD THE DIRECTOR IT WAS THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT WHICH WAS OBJECTING TO THE ERECTION OF PERMANENT BUILDINGS AND THE UNWRA DIRECTOR DID NOT CHALLENGE THIS. MR HURD EXPLAINED THE ISRAELI OBJECTIONS TO UNIFIL AND SAID THAT WE HAD TAKEN UP THE TREATMENT OF CIVILIANS WITH THE ISRAELIS. ON THE QUESTION OF PERMANENT BUILDINGS FOR REFUGEES WE WERE AWAITING A REPLY FROM THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT. HE ALSO EXPLAINED THAT WE WERE PARTICIPATING IN PRELIMINARY UN DISCUSSIONS ABOUT A NEW MANDATE FOR UNIFIL, BUT THIS WOULD TAKE TIME. OXFAM CONFIRMED THAT THEY WOULD BE GIVING THESE QUESTIONS PUBLICITY BOTH THROUGH MPS AND THE MEDIA.

4. MR HURD PROMISED TO RAISE THE QUESTION WITH THE UN SECRETARY GENERAL WHEN HE MEETS HIM IN NEW YORK LATER THIS MONTH. ANY COMMENTS YOU OR UKMIS NEW YORK MAY HAVE ON THE ABOVE WOULD BE WELCOME DURING THE COURSE OF THIS WEEK. IT IS CLEARLY DESIRABLE THAT THERE SHOULD BE SOME U.N. PRESENCE AROUND THE MAIN REFUGEE CAMPS IN SOUTH LEBANON TO DETER HARASSMENT OR ATTACKS ON PALESTINIAN CIVILIANS. IN MR HURD'S VIEW THE OXTAM ASSESSMENT MUST BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY

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5. MCDOWALL IS DUE TO VISIT KUWAIT LATER THIS WEEK WHERE HE HOPES TO SEE THE KUWAIT FOREIGN MINISTER TO PRESS FOR THE GCC TO RAISE THESE ISSUES AT THE UN.

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