

On U. N. Resolution 242
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Due to serious deterrence of the security situation in the Middle East, Sierra Leone welcomes the convening of the 5th Emergency Special Session of the General Assembly. Our government is deeply concerned with the events that have taken place in recent days in the U.A.R. and in other Arab territories occupied by the Israeli armed forces. Sierra Leone condemns Israel's breach of sovereignty and territorial integrity of its neighbouring Arab states that has destabilized the region and provoked many human casualties. In recent years, Israel has been a constant threat to peace and security in the region, which has also been recognized in numerous resolutions made by the Security Council (resolutions 101, 106, 111, 171 and 228). We also welcome the efforts made by the Security Council, which has found such actions a "violation of the cease-fire provisions", outlined by the resolution 54, inconsistent with the obligations of the parties under the General Armistice Agreement between U.A.R. and Israel, and under the United Nations Charter. Sierra Leone categorically rejects acquisition of territory by war and therefore considers Israel's recent occupation of territories illegal and invalid. As a country that just a few years ago still lived under the colonial rule, Sierra Leone sympathizes with the occupied territories and regards the military response of Arab states an act of self defence in compliance with the 51st article of the United Nations Charter. We further note with regret that military operations, conducted by Israel, have also provoked hundreds of thousand of refugees, without doubt, a humanitarian catastrophe. This represents an additional burden for the existing problem of Palestinian refugees, towards which Israel has failed to meet its obligations, as recognised by the resolution 2154 of the General Assembly.

Sierra Leone is particularly concerned with the non-legality of the acquisition of territory by force and therefore calls for withdrawal of all foreign troops from the territories occupied since 5 June 1967. Any long-lasting and just solution to the issues involved can only be found in a peaceful way, with an agreement among all parties involved. Military operations and the occupation of Arab territories undertaken by Israel in recent days have been a breach of the Charter of the United Nations and are thus illegal. Special attention should be drawn to the question of refugees. Our government strongly believes that a just solution of this issue includes the right of the refugees to return and financial compensation for any possible material damage done during the military operations. Sierra Leone strongly appeals to the international community to take all necessary steps in order to alleviate the suffering of refugees and provide them with basic accommodation facilities and food supplies. We furthermore stress our conviction that mutual recognition and respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity of all states in the area is a precondition for any peace agreement. Any long-term changes in the status of the occupied territories could gravely jeopardize success of future negotiations; therefore we call upon Israel to desist from taking any actions that could alter the future status of any of the occupied territories. Sierra Leone strongly believes that any de facto situation on the ground cannot be used in future negotiation on the status of territories. Our government calls upon all parties of the conflict to act in accordance with these principles and appeals to the international community to assist in any possible way to reach a long-lasting and just solution to the Middle East crisis.