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LETTER DATED 5 JULY 1976 FROM THE CHARGE D'AFFAIRES, A.I., OF THE PERMANENT
MISSION OF UGANDA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE
SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to transmit to you the enclosed message from the President of the Republic of Uganda, His Excellency Al-Hajji Field-Marshal Dr. Idi Amin Dada, V.C., D.S.O., M.C., bringing to your attention the most serious incident that occurred at Entebbe International Airport on the night of 3-4 July 1976.

I should appreciate it if you would circulate the text as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) L. K. MWANGAGUHUNGA
Chargé d'Affaires, a.i.

Annex

Message dated 4 July 1976 from the President
of the Republic of Uganda

The Prime Minister of Mauritius, Current Chairman
of the Organization of African Unity,
Port Louis,
MAURITIUS.

The President of the United Nations Security Council,
NEW YORK

The Secretary-General,
United Nations,
NEW YORK.

I wish to bring to your urgent attention the most serious incident which occurred at Entebbe International Airport on the night of 3-4 July 1976.

At 2120 GMT, three Zionist Israel transport planes landed by surprise and without any authority from the Uganda Government at Entebbe International Airport. Soon after landing they proceeded straight to the old airport building, where the hostages and the crew of the French airbus which had been hijacked in flight between Tel Aviv and Paris were being held by Palestinian commandos. Two military jeeps drove out of the aircraft and the invaders, using machine-guns and bazookas, started shooting indiscriminately at the airport building and at Ugandan soldiers who had surrounded the building at a distance of 200 metres and who, in accordance with the conditions laid down by the hijackers of the French plane, were armed only with light arms.

The Israeli invaders quickly mounted an attack on the hijackers, killing seven of them and some hostages, as well as a number of Ugandan soldiers, and injuring many others. The Israeli invaders also blasted the old airport building, causing considerable damage and destroying a number of Ugandan aircraft, which were parked nearby, and other equipment.

You may wish to recall the circumstances and the situation of the aircraft that existed since the hijacking drama came to Uganda at 4.15 a.m. on 28 June, most notable of which was that the aircraft had fuel for only fifteen more minutes. On being contacted, I allowed the aircraft to land at Entebbe on humanitarian considerations. After the landing, I took the initiative, as President of the Republic of Uganda and then Chairman of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), to negotiate the release of the hostages. My main interest all along was to save the lives of some 275 people of different nationalities which were at stake. To that end, I directed that the plane be guarded properly while I negotiated with the members of the PFLP who were the hijackers of the plane.

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My first success was to have the hostages removed from the aircraft into the airport building, a process which was achieved after the hijackers had insisted first of all on placing explosives round the building before bringing the aeroplane nearby so as to enable their hostages to be securely transported from the aircraft to the building. As we have clearly stated in various communiqués on the hijacking, the Uganda Armed Forces were not allowed by the hijackers to go near the airport building. This was part of the bargain. However, once they were in the airport building, under my directives, many facilities, such as medical and food supplies and other welfare treatment were made available to the hostages, while negotiations with the hijackers continued.

On 30 June 1976, the PFLP accepted my request to release 47 hostages, including old and sick people and some children. On 1 July 1976, which was the first deadline set by the hijackers, I was not only able to convince them to extend the deadline to 4 July, that is, today, but I was also able to make them agree to the release of another 100 hostages who were nationals of States other than Israel. In all these difficult negotiations I kept the French Ambassador to Uganda fully informed and also the Somali Ambassador to Uganda who, in his capacity as Dean of the Arab League Ambassadors in Uganda, had been appointed by the hijackers to be their spokesman. On that same date (1 July), the hijackers gave their demands, which were widely publicized and transmitted to all the Governments concerned as the demands were entirely for the release of a number of Palestinian freedom fighters who had been imprisoned in West Germany, Switzerland, France and Kenya, as well as Israel, in all totalling 53. On 2 July 1976, I had to go to Port Louis, Mauritius, to hand over the Chairmanship of the OAU at the Thirteenth Summit of OAU Heads of State and Government. I took the opportunity of addressing my colleagues of the OAU on the subject of the delicate negotiations that I was making to have the hostages and the French airliner released. I had to return to Uganda in time for the new deadline of 4 July, made by the hijackers.

Upon my return, I quickly re-established contacts with all persons concerned. I spoke to the hostages and assured them of my efforts to do everything possible to save their lives. The Israeli hostages themselves were very happy with what I was doing, which is partly why, on 3 July, they issued a statement of appreciation for my efforts. They also made an appeal to their Government to meet the demands of the hijackers so that their lives would be saved. After the brief meeting with the hostages, I got in touch with the French Ambassador through my Foreign Office to check on whether there had been any response from his Government and the other Governments concerned on the subject of the hijackers' demands. As the extended deadline was only some 12 hours away, while waiting for the information, I continued my negotiations with the PFLP commandos. That is the time when Israeli invading forces arrived at Entebbe.

I should like to bring to your attention some aspects of the Israeli invasion showing that it had been well planned and rehearsed with the full collaboration of some other countries. According to the information available to us, which has been repeatedly confirmed by the international press, the Zionist Israeli plan to invade Entebbe was decided upon on Thursday, 1 July. This decision was communicated to the Kenya authorities, whose consent and assistance in the operation was immediately obtained.

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This collaboration has been confirmed by the fact that the Israeli planes on their way to and from Uganda stopped at Nairobi where, for example, a mobile operating theatre was set up to take care of the invaders' casualties. It is most disturbing and disheartening to us in Uganda that such a blatant and open invasion of our country should have been mounted by the Zionists with the close collaboration of Kenya, a neighbouring sister State which is a member of both the OAU and the United Nations. Further aspects of this plot to invade Uganda have been revealed by the international press, notably the Voice of America - which announced the invasion barely two hours after it had been mounted - and by the leading British Sunday newspapers, which are carrying on their front pages the details of the operation. It is further reported that the Foreign Minister of Israel is today, 4 July, making direct reports on the invasion to the American Secretary of State and to the Foreign Ministers of France and West Germany. These are reports clearly revealing well planned international collaboration in a plot to violate and abuse the territorial integrity of Uganda. The hijacking incident, in which Uganda was accidentally involved and on which I personally spent many sleepless days, has thus ended by innocent Ugandans losing their lives and property, aside from the thousands of shillings spent on looking after the hostages on humanitarian grounds.

On the basis of the foregoing, I wish to impress upon the international community that:

1. Uganda has been aggressed by Israel with the close collaboration of some States, including Kenya, a sister neighbouring State;
2. The aggressors have killed a number of Ugandans, injured many others, and damaged a lot of property, the total cost of which is being assessed;
3. It is the intention of my Government to claim compensation arising from this aggression.

I request that the international organizations for which you are the respective spokesmen, be fully briefed on this incident and that Israel be condemned in the strongest possible terms for the aggression. In the meantime, Uganda reserves her right to retaliate in whatever way she can to redress the aggression against her.

Highest considerations,

(Signed) Al-Hajji Field-Marshal Dr. Idi AMIN DADA,
V.C., D.S.O., M.C.,
President of the Republic of Uganda
