

October 11, 1973

**Letter from [Syrian President] Hafez al-Assad to
[Chairman of the State Council of the GDR] Willi
Stoph**

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Summary:

Hafez al-Assad tells Stoph about the escalation of the war and about Israeli bombardment of civilian facilities and houses.

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Translation - English

Translation from Arabic

To the Chairman of the State Council
of the German Democratic Republic
His Excellency Mr. Willi Stoph

Since my first letter to you from 6 October, where I asked you, Excellency, and your people for the support of our just cause, the situation has been further aggravated by the escalation of Israel's aggression against the territory of the Syrian Arab Republic and the Arab Republic of Egypt. The stronger and braver our people and our armed forces are defending our territory, the more Israel is increasing its aggression against us in a dangerous way. In light of the defeats our forces have inflicted on Israel on the battlefield, the Israeli air force has attacked civilian objects in our country and bombarded residences of the defenseless civilian population and vital economic facilities.

This escalation of the Israel aggression has dangerous motives. What kind of sense should yesterday's bombardments of residences of civilians by Israeli aircraft otherwise make, including of many buildings of diplomatic representations and international organization in a city quarter of Damascus? What is the objective of the bombardment of educational institutions, of a hospital, and the power plant of Damascus? What sense is behind today's bombardment of the oil refinery and the power plant of Homs, as well as of the civilian port of Latakia? What is the purpose of dropping bombs on women, children, and workers, of which many have been murdered and injured?

The only reason behind this barbaric Israeli air attacks is the intention to murder and to destroy, in order to inflict losses on our country in terms of people and material values. All this does prove that the leaders of Israel are dominated by a spirit of inhumanity and the desire to destroy people by all means. You can certainly assess what consequences it would have, if we would respond in kind. We have not done so, because we adhere to morals, principles, and the international treaties. In light of the violence used in this war by the adversary, we are applying force only to the extent as it is unavoidable for our just struggle.

Please allow me to outline these facts to you, so that you can see how human values are scorned and international treaties and principles are violated by Israel. We are conducting an honorable struggle to defend our homeland. Thus we are exercising our legitimate right for the liberation of our territory, which the enemy has occupied through armed aggression. The crimes of Israel cannot shake our determination and touch the morale of our people, as the leaders of Israel are hoping for.

Damascus, 11 October 1973
Hafez al Assad
President of the Syrian Arab Republic