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LETTER DATED 11 MAY 1966 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF ISRAEL
ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour, on instructions from my Government, to draw your attention, and that of the members of the Security Council, to a gross violation of the Israel-Jordan General Armistice Agreement by the armed forces of Jordan.

Two days ago, on 9 May 1966, the Jordanian authorities were formally notified through the Mixed Armistice Commission of the intention of the Israel authorities to repair a sector of the border patrol track to the north of Beersheba, in the vicinity of the Arab village of Khirbet Beit Mirsim. The track in this area runs approximately two to three hundred metres on the Israel side of the armistice demarcation line. Such notification is a matter of accepted routine in these cases, and is meant to avoid misunderstandings which might give rise to incidents. No question was raised on the Jordan side about the proposed work.

Yesterday morning, 10 May, in broad daylight, a work party from the Israel Army Engineer Corps started working along the track with a bulldozer and a grader. At 1610 hours in the afternoon, when the work was in progress at a spot opposite the village of Khirbet Beit Mirsim and approximately 250 metres away from the border, heavy fire was suddenly and without warning opened on the work party by Jordanian forces, from the direction of the village and the area adjacent to it. The weapons used included machine-guns and 81 mm mortars. Shortly before this, two truck-loads of Jordanian soldiers (approximately platoon strength) had been seen to arrive and enter the village.

The work party was pinned down and several of its members were hit. Fire was returned by the Israel covering party located further to the rear, in an unsuccessful attempt to extricate the work party, and particularly the wounded. United Nations representatives were immediately contacted, and through them a cease-fire was arranged which took effect at 1715 hours. Ten minutes later, at 1725 hours, fire was renewed from the Jordanian positions. Three more attempts by

the United Nations representatives to procure a cease-fire, at 1815 hours, 1900 hours and 1930 hours respectively, were violated by the Jordanian troops. The efforts to rescue the party were frustrated by the Jordanian fire, and an Israel officer concerned with the attempt to retrieve the wounded was killed by Jordanian fire. Firing from the Jordanian side only ceased at 2135 hours, when the Israel party was at last evacuated under cover of darkness. By then, the wounded had been lying exposed and without aid for over five hours.

The Israel casualties were two killed and three wounded, two of them seriously.

A complaint has been lodged with the Mixed Armistice Commission, and an emergency meeting of the Commission requested.

I am instructed by my Government to put on record its strongest protest at this brutal attack by Jordanian armed forces upon persons peacefully engaged on work within Israel territory, after due advance notification to Jordan through the proper United Nations channels. The circumstances indicate that this was a deliberate and provocative attack, which gravely threatens peace and security on the Israel-Jordan border.

I have the honour to request that this letter be circulated as a Security Council document.

Please accept, etc.,

(Signed) Michael COMAY
Permanent Representative
