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LETTER DATED 22 FEBRUARY 1958 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
OF FRANCE TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

On the instructions of my Government, I have the honour to inform you that on 20 February the Tunisian Government went so far as to use force in order to secure the closure of the French consulates at Gabès, Gafsa, Souk-el-Arba and Medjez-el-Bab and the sub-consulate at Kef, and to expel the consular officers. In most cases these officers had only a few minutes to notify their families and to make arrangements to leave. Contrary to the most elementary diplomatic practice, the local authorities even refused to affix seals to the consular premises in their presence and went so far as to remove the keys of the premises at Medjez-el-Bab.

The French Government has lodged the strongest protest against these numerous and deliberate infringements of the Franco-Tunisian Agreement of 12 September 1956, of international law and of the law of nations, for which the Tunisian Government will have to assume the full consequences.

Without prejudice to such reparations or compensation as it may be entitled to claim in this connexion, the French Government requests that seals should be affixed forthwith to the consular buildings in the presence of officials of the French Embassy and that the keys which have been confiscated should be returned.

The measures of force taken by the Tunisian Government are contrary to the spirit of the offer of good offices which Tunisia has accepted. In the opinion of my Government, its attitude can only serve to aggravate an already serious situation, which France is seeking to alleviate by every means in its power.

I should be grateful if you would bring these facts to the notice of the President of the Security Council for the information of States Members of the Council.

I have the honour to be, etc.

(Signed) G. GEORGES-PICOT

Ambassador and Permanent Representative

