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UNITED NATIONS CONCILIATION COMMISSION FOR PALESTINE

Letter dated 16 July 1953 addressed by the Secretary-General of the United Nations to the Chairman of the Conciliation Commission for Palestine, transmitting the text of identical letters presented to him by the Permanent Representatives of Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Syria and Yemen.

Sir,

In accordance with a wish expressed by the Permanent Representatives of Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Syria and Yemen, I have the honour to transmit herewith, for any action that the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine may find appropriate, the text of the identical letters, dated 15 July 1953, presented to me today.

Accept, Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Dag Hammarskjöld
Secretary-General

Chairman
United Nations Conciliation Commission
for Palestine

July 15, 1953

Sir,

I am instructed by my government to lodge with the United Nations the strongest protest against an act by the government of Israel that is sure to have the gravest repercussions.

The Government of Israel has now decided to transfer its Ministry of Foreign Affairs to Jerusalem, and is making every effort to draw the foreign diplomatic missions accredited to it to that city. You are no doubt aware that the Israeli government has acted in a similar manner in the past by transferring to Jerusalem several of its government departments, but the process was left incomplete due to the hostility which their act had aroused in world public opinion. A fresh attempt is now being made to compel foreign diplomatic missions to establish their headquarters in a city which Israel is bent upon making its capital, contrary to all precepts of right and logic, justice and United Nations decisions.

This act on the part of Israel can under no circumstances be justified. All recommendations and decisions of the United Nations, as indeed all the debates and trends therein, have conformed to the general wish of making Jerusalem an international city not subject to the sovereignty of any particular state. It will be recalled that since 1947, when the United Nations was first seized with the problem of Palestine, the internationalization of Jerusalem has always figured prominently, not only as one of the prerequisites for the settlement of this problem, but also as the expression world opinion. A city of historical significance revered equally by the three great religions and held in sanctity by the whole world was deemed by the United Nations to belong to all mankind, rather than to one country. This desire of the United Nations has not undergone any fundamental change. On the contrary, it continues to be alive in many quarters which stand ready to do their utmost to make the internationalization of Jerusalem a reality.

This wish of world public opinion was flagrantly frustrated by the adamant opposition of the government of Israel which made it impossible for the appropriate organs of the United Nations to carry out their task. The decisions of the General Assembly since 1947, as well as the commendable efforts of the Trusteeship Council, were brought to cruel disappointment by the machinations of the Israeli government. The Trusteeship Council, meeting in Geneva in 1950, drew up a comprehensive and adequate statute for the international city of Jerusalem and did its best to implement it. But the government of Israel stubbornly resisted this implementation. Again the struggle was taken to the General Assembly, and again the will of the United Nations was flouted by the continued refusal of Israel to uphold its decisions.

Today, the Israeli government is making every effort to complete an irresponsible and unlawful act which from the beginning constituted an act of bad faith and which was calculated to be a breach of United Nations decisions. Having moved some organs of its government to Jerusalem in 1950, but failing to obtain international recognition of this transfer, Israel is now bent on compelling such recognition by devious means. It is not possible to see how the Israeli government could justify this action either on the basis of United Nations recommendations, or on the basis of equity in international relations.

It is my duty to point out that my government considers this action to be a potent cause of Middle East unrest. The peace of this region already badly shaken by past acts of Israeli aggression, has now received yet another blow from it in utter disregard of world public opinion. This act constitutes one more proof, if need be of the determination of Israel to pursue its policy of aggression against its neighbours and to disregard the standing decisions of the United Nations. Furthermore, this act of bad faith on the part of Israel proves to the whole world that it can have no confidence in Israel and that it should expect little co-operation from it.

I would request you, Sir, to circulate this memorandum to all members of the United Nations.

I beg you to accept, Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration and esteem.

His Excellency, The Secretary-General
United Nations
New York, N.Y.
