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Dual DistributionREPORT FROM THE ACTING MEDIATOR DATED 6 NOVEMBER, 1948 ADDRESSED TO  
SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS ON OBSERVANCE OF THE TRUCE  
IN THE LEBANESE SECTOR

I have the honour to submit the following report for transmission to the President of the Security Council. This report is further to my preliminary report of 25 October (Document S/1055) which dealt in part with the recent fighting in the Lebanese sector.

1. The application of the truce on the Lebanese front has been complicated by the fact that this front was to a great extent held by forces of the "Army of National Liberation" commanded by Fawzi Kaukji. The Lebanese Government has accepted responsibility for the Kaukji elements.
2. Following intermittent tension due to Kaukji's attempts to prevent the Israeli forces from supplying and strengthening their position at Al Manara Kibbutz in territory within the Israeli truce lines, and Israeli incursions into the Houle area in Lebanese territory, the recent crisis developed as a result of action allegedly taken by Kaukji forces the night of 21 - 22 October. This allegation could not be investigated immediately by Observers on the Israeli side, since, according to the Israeli liaison officer, the situation at that time was unsafe for Observers.
3. The preliminary report, Document S/1045, gave a brief account of the situation in the Lebanese sector between 21 and 24 October. This covers the activities in the Al Manara area on the night of 21 - 22 October leading to the occupation by Kaukji's forces of hill positions two kilometers within the Israeli truce lines.
4. On the morning of 23 October the Senior United Nations Military Observer at Tiberias ordered a cease-fire under the following conditions: the cease-fire to be effective at 1300 GMT on that day and immediately following the cease-fire, Kaukji's forces to begin withdrawing to their previous positions. This movement was to be completed by daylight of 24 October. Kaukji accepted this order. The Israeli commander accepted the cease-fire order subject to the condition that if the Kaukji forces were not removed from the Jewish side of the truce lines in one hour they would be driven out. At 1250 GMT the Israelis opened heavy fire with artillery, mortars, machine guns and rifles, and continued firing until dark. Kaukji's forces ceased fire at 1300 hours GMT. At 1615 hours Kaukji warned

--that if the Israelis did not cease firing in 15 minutes he would resume fire, and did so. In the meantime the Israeli Liaison Officer had refused to permit the Senior United Nations Military Observer at Tiberias to go into the front lines to check observance of the cease fire. The Liaison Officer stated that the United Nations Observers had already interfered in the situation beyond their authority and that the Israelis would not permit further interference.

5. On 24 October, Kaukji reported that his forces had been withdrawn on the night of 23 to 24 October. None were observed by United Nations Observers on the Israeli side of the truce lines on 24 October. However, Kaukji's forces did return to the hill positions within Israeli truce lines on the night of 24 to 25 October, and advanced to within 600 yards of the Metullah-Tiberias road. They were still occupying the hill positions on 26, 27 and 28 October.

6. On 28 October Kaukji's Chief of Staff informed the Senior United Nations Military Observer that Kaukji's forces would not be withdrawn.

7. On 28 October, following urgent advice received from the United Nations Observer Headquarters at Tiberias, the Chief of Staff of the Truce Supervision addressed a warning to Israeli Headquarters against any retaliatory action in Galilee and against the denial of freedom of movement to United Nations Observers.

8. On the same day, the Lebanese charged that Israeli forces had launched an attack. Five twin-engined planes bombed Lebanese lines two kilometers north-west of Safad. The aerial bombing was followed by an artillery duel at Tarshisha. Previous to the aerial bombing the Israelis had reported to the Senior United Nations Military Observer at Tiberias that Kaukji had attacked in the Al Manara area and was in control of the road to Metulla.

9. This artillery fire and aerial bombing were preliminary to co-ordinated Israeli attacks against the entire Kaukji front, which developed during the night of 28 October. Leaflets were dropped stating that the Jewish action was for the purpose of liberating the whole of Palestine.

10. The Chief of Staff of the Truce Supervision sent a message early on 29 October to the Israeli and Lebanese Chiefs of Staff pointing out that military operations then being conducted along the Lebanese front were a grave and inexcusable violation of the truce. He requested that all forces involved must cease fire by 1000 hours GMT on that day and return to the position held on 21 October, the movement to be completed by 0900 hours GMT of 30 October.

11. On 29 October the Chief of Staff received a reply from the Israeli Military command in which it was stated that the Israeli areas in the north

were being extensively bombed by enemy planes, and that United Nations Observers from Beirut and Tiberias had been asked to leave the Nabi-Yusha area merely out of concern for their personal safety. It was also stated that there could be no question of retaliatory action by Israeli forces. It further pointed out that Kaukji forces had occupied Israeli territory in the Al Menara area on the night of 21 to 22 October and had ever since been exploiting these newly occupied positions for unprovoked attacks upon Israeli traffic on the main road to Metulla and to the Israeli settlements in the area. These forces, it was stated, remained in occupation of the hills which they had occupied in Israeli territory in "brazen violation of the truce", and the action taken by the Israeli forces against the Kaukji forces was defensive and could not possibly be characterized as retaliatory. It was finally pointed out that despite the Chief of Staff's orders to Kaukji's forces to withdraw from these positions on Israeli territory, not only had these forces remained in positions that they should have evacuated but they had extended their attacks in the last few days and captured another hill in Israeli territory.

12. In answer to the cease fire order of the Chief of Staff of the Truce Supervision mentioned in paragraph 10, both the Lebanese and Israeli Chiefs of Staff asked for assurances and guarantees, the Lebanese that Israeli troops would stop their present military operations, the Israelis that no further violations of the truce would occur. The Chief of Staff then informed the two parties that all forces involved must cease fire by 1300 hours GMT, 30 October and that immediately after the cease fire questions of guarantees which had been raised might be taken up with United Nations Observers. The Lebanese replied that they would comply with this cease fire order of the Chief of Staff on the understanding that the Israelis would also comply. The Israeli Chief of Staff replied that he must refer the matter to the Provisional Government of Israel in view of the United Nations Chief of Staff's position regarding guarantees. Later, the Chief of Staff of the Truce Supervision was informed that the Provisional Government had accepted the cease fire and that the army had issued a cease fire order effective on 31 October at 0600 hours GMT.

The Kaukji forces, which had complied with the cease fire order of 30 October reopened fire in response to continued fire from Israeli forces. On being informed of the Israeli issuance of a cease fire on 31 October at 0600 hours GMT the Lebanese Government agreed to issue a similar order.

13. This cease-fire was in general effective although some operations were reported in progress in Lebanese territory after 0800 hours GMT. The Kaukji forces had withdrawn from Galilee on the nights of 29 - 30 and

30 - 31 October. On 1 November United Nations Observers who visited Israeli front positions, found the Arab villages around Tarkiya deserted, having been evacuated by the inhabitants. Villages seen by United Nations Observers in the Galilee pocket formerly occupied by Kaukji's forces were deserted, with the exception of two reportedly inhabited by Druses. United Nations Observers reported extensive looting of villages and carrying away of goats, sheep and mules by Israeli forces. The looting appeared to the Observers to have been systematic, army trucks being used. This situation has created a new influx of refugees into the Lebanon.

14. As a result of these operations in northern Palestine there has been a significant change in the general military position in that sector. Israeli forces have occupied the area in the Galilee formerly controlled by Kaukji's forces and have crossed the Lebanese frontier. They now hold positions two to six miles inside the southeast corner of Lebanon involving some fifteen Lebanese villages occupied by small Israeli detachments.

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Ralph J. Bunche  
Acting Mediator

PARIS  
6 November 1948

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