

UNITED NATIONS

SECURITY  
COUNCIL



GENERAL

S/2360

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LETTER DATED 25 SEPTEMBER 1951 FROM THE CHIEF OF STAFF OF THE TRUCE SUPERVISION ORGANIZATION IN PALESTINE ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL TRANSMITTING THE TEXT OF A LETTER FROM THE SYRIAN MINISTER OF NATIONAL DEFENCE

I have the honour to communicate to you a copy of a letter from the Syrian Minister of National Defence which I received on 23 September, after I had forwarded to you my report on the participation of Syrian army personnel in the fighting in the Tel el Mutilla area at the beginning of May 1951 (S/2359).

The Syrian Minister of National Defence has requested me to transmit his letter to you in order that it should be communicated to the Security Council.

(Signed) W.E. Riley

Lieut. General, USMC (Retd.)  
Chief of Staff

51-56583

Letter dated 22 September 1951 from the Syrian Minister of National Defence to  
the Chief of Staff of the Truce Supervision Organization

Damascus, 22 September 1951

In reply to your letter of 10 September 1951, I have the honour to communicate to you my views on the Israel complaint to the Security Council of 25 August 1951, concerning the incidents at Tel el Mutilla.

In accordance with orders and instructions given and frequently reiterated since the signing of the Armistice Agreement, the Syrian Army observed absolute neutrality and non-belligerence during the incidents which recently occurred in the demilitarized zone. The Syrian outposts, which were exposed on many occasions to fire from the automatic weapons and mortars of the Israel Army and to bombing and machine gun fire from Israel aircraft, showed remarkable discipline in the circumstances by obeying to the letter the orders of the Syrian High Command; not a single shot from an individual or collective weapon was fired in retaliation against the flagrant aggression launched by the Israelis against the Syrian defence lines and the demilitarized zone.

The same sober, patient and courageous attitude was maintained during the Jewish attacks against Tel el Mutilla and Syrian territory.

The reports of the United Nations observers should be the only official documents taken into account in any disputes which have arisen or which may arise in future between the two parties. Their testimony, dictated by their impartiality and conscience, is the only valid evidence. All the reports of observers who were on the spot at the time of the Tel el Mutilla incidents testify to the non-belligerence of the Syrian Army and prove that the integrity of the demilitarized zone and of Syrian territory was violated by the Israel troops.

Neither the Official Gazette nor any other official or semi-official Syrian document can in any way constitute evidence against Syria, for the following reasons:

/As a sovereign

As a sovereign State, Syria has complete freedom of action in its internal affairs and can print or broadcast anything that it may deem necessary and expedient in the prevailing circumstances;

The names of certain military sectors mentioned in the Official Gazette do not constitute any evidence against Syria, since military security calls for the use of every means to deceive the enemy, and giving certain sectors the same names as enemy sectors is an elementary method which was often used for this purpose during the Second World War;

We therefore reaffirm that the Syrian Army has never entered the demilitarized zone, a fact which has been proved on several occasions by United Nations observers.

(Signed) Selo

