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LETTER DATED 8 JANUARY 1967 FROM THE ACTING PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
OF ISRAEL ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour, on instructions from my Government, to draw the attention of the members of the Security Council to a serious intensification of Syrian acts of aggression along the border of Israel.

These outrages against peaceful citizens consist of armed attacks and include shelling by tanks, laying of landmines, shooting from military positions, and provocative encroachments by Syrians across the border. The very grave nature of these recent attacks is emphasized by the fact that they are taking place along the entire length of the border, including the demilitarized zone and the defensive area in populated districts under continuous agricultural cultivation.

The acts of aggression culminated this morning in the shelling by tanks of the village of Notera, which resulted in the wounding of two farmers and in heavy damage to property. The shelling of Notera was officially announced by the Syrian military spokesman on Damascus Radio today at 1430 hours. Fire was returned by Israeli forces in order to save the lives of the people under attack. A cease-fire proposed by UNTSO, to take effect at 1345 hours, was strictly observed by Israel, while the Syrians continued shooting.

The following list of incidents clearly shows the grave character of the situation since 30 December 1966, the date of the last Note sent by the Permanent Representative of Israel to the President of the Security Council (document S/7656).

On 30 December 1966, heavy machine-gun fire was directed from Syrian territory at an Israeli tractor cultivating the fields of Kibbutz Ha'on in the southern sector of the demilitarized zone. The tractor driver was extricated under Syrian fire.

On 1 January 1967, at 0730 hours and again at 1023 hours, tractors working in the Kibbutz Ha'on fields in the southern sector of the demilitarized zone were subjected to repeated heavy machine-gun fire from the Syrian military position at Aamaret Aaz ed Dine. The work had to be interrupted and when it was resumed, Syrian fire, this time including shelling by tanks, was renewed.

On 2 January, Syrian tanks in positions north of Lake Kinneret near Kh. ad Dikka, shelled Israeli fields in the area of the village of Almagor. The shelling continued intermittently from morning to noon, and a total of twenty-two tank shells were fired by the Syrians.

On 3 January, Syrians wearing khaki were observed repeatedly crossing the border. These intrusions from Syria had commenced on previous days and were the cause of considerable tension in the area.

On the same day, at 1542 hours, fire was directed from a Syrian military position near Darbashiya at an Israel patrol moving on foot inside Israel territory. Fire was returned in order to enable the patrol to be extricated without casualties.

In the same area a routine Israel patrol discovered stone road-blocks erected by Syrians who had encroached into Israel territory for this purpose.

On 4 January, two farmers of Kibbutz Ein-Gev in the southern sector of the demilitarized zone, were fired upon by Syrians who had infiltrated into the demilitarized zone.

6 January saw a considerable increase in Syrian aggression.

At 1010 hours, tanks in position at Tawafiq fired six shells at an Israeli tractor cultivating the vegetable fields of the village of Tel Katzir (southern sector of the demilitarized zone) at a distance of 800 metres southeast of the village. This tank fire was supported by heavy machine-gun fire. The tractor driver, who ran for cover, was fired upon by the Syrians.

At 1045 hours, heavy machine-gun fire was directed from Syrian military positions in the area of Kh. ad Dikka, in the direction of Almagor, north of Lake Kinneret.

At 1130 hours, two shells were fired from a Syrian tank in position near Hill 62, north of Lake Kinneret.

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From 1205 hours to 1215 hours, three Syrian tanks in positions near Hill 62, fired sixteen shells towards Israel positions in the vicinity of Almagor. One Israeli was wounded.

At 1250 hours, a Syrian intruder was observed moving in the Almagor fields. He was covered by Syrian fire (three tank shells) directed at Israeli positions in the area.

At 1304 hours, four tank shells were directed again from Syrian positions towards Israel in the area of Almagor. Six more tank shells were fired at 1340 hours in the same area.

Thus, on 6 January, a total of thirty-seven tank shells were fired from Syrian tanks towards Israel territory.

Today, 8 January, at 1055 hours, fire was opened from Syrian military positions in the vicinity of Darbashiya towards a tractor in Israel territory. The tractor driver was not hit and took cover. At 1125 hours, while an attempt was made to extricate him, fire was directed from the same positions at the rescue party.

At 1145 hours a Syrian position at Tel Hillal, about three kilometres to the south, opened automatic fire against the Ashmora farm.

At 1225 hours Syrian tank fire from Darbashiya was opened towards the village of Notera. Eight tank shells were fired and a shed and a hut were hit and burned down. Fire was returned. At 1250 hours two more tank shells were fired from the Darbashiya position towards Notera. The Syrian tank fire continued intermittently for about an hour until 1325 hours. About twenty tank shells were fired, and at the same time heavy machine-gun fire was directed to the same area.

A cease-fire was proposed by UNRISD for 1345 hours. Israel accepted the proposal and observed the cease-fire scrupulously, but Syrian shooting continued after the cease-fire had to take effect. Syrian positions at Darbashiya and Urefiya went on firing at civilian targets inside Israel territory. A vehicle carrying civilians on their way to the investigation of the incident which was being conducted by the United Nations Military Observers, was hit about 1445 hours. Two of its occupants were injured.

These Syrian attacks, which are in flagrant violation of the General Armistice Agreement between Israel and Syria and in defiance of the commitment for an unconditional cease-fire pledged by the Syrian Government on 9 June 1966, have created a grave situation along Israel's northern border. My Government feels duty bound to bring this situation to the urgent attention of the Security Council.

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

Please accept, etc.

(Signed) Joel BARROMI
Acting Permanent Representative
