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LETTER DATED 16 MAY 1966 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF ISRAEL
ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to refer to the letter addressed to you by the Permanent Representative of Syria on 11 May 1966 (document S/7288).

In spreading false and malicious rumours about an alleged Israel threat to Syrian security, that letter has one purpose only - to mask Syria's primary responsibility for violence on the border.

Syria is the source, training ground, principal supplier and main support of a vicious terrorist organization, variously known as El-Fatah (conquest) and El-Asefa (storm). This group has been organized to penetrate into Israel territory and carry out acts of terrorism and sabotage. Since January 1965, hired terrorists belonging to the organization have perpetrated forty-seven individual acts of violence in Israel, and caused death, injury and destruction among the hard-working farming communities in Israel border areas. The activities of El-Fatah have received the unreserved public backing of the Government of Syria, as is shown by the following sample quotation from the official organ of the government party, "El-Baath" of Damascus:

"The fedayean forces have embarked upon the only possible revolutionary path for liberation by transferring the battle to Israel. The refugees, behind whom stand the masses of the Arabs, must themselves put an end to routine, delay, speeches and decisions. They must set out along the road of El-Asefa, of self-sacrifice and of liberation."
("El-Baath", 29 November 1965)

The President of Syria added his voice to the chorus of warlike incitement against Israel in a speech at Homs on 17 April of this year:

"Our people have become convinced that the all-out people's war of liberation is the only road to the liberation of Palestine..."

Further evidence of the complete identification of the Syrian Government with El-Fatah - El-Asefa is to be found in the fact that the so-called "war communiques"

of the organization are regularly broadcast over the government-owned and -operated Damascus radio station, and are published in the government-controlled Press. Moreover, the official organ of El-Asefa, "Saut-el-Asefa" ("the Voice of the Storm") has been openly published in Damascus since 17 May 1965.

The latest instance of murder of innocent civilians on Israel's borders took place only this morning, 16 May, in the fields of the village of Almagor close to the northern shore of the Sea of Galilee and about 1,000 metres away from Syrian territory on the farther side of the River Jordan. Two young farmers lost their lives when the vehicle in which they were travelling to work was blown up on a road-mine laid there the previous night.

This is not the first time that Syrian assaults on peaceful farming activities in Almagor have come to the attention of the Security Council. It will be recalled that in August 1963 two nineteen-year old farmers were brutally murdered by a Syrian military ambush not 200 metres away from the scene of today's mining incident. That act was condemned by a majority of the members of the Council.

The latest crime at Almagor follows on a long and bloody record of armed Syrian violence on the 79-km. armistice demarcation line between Syria and Israel. Hardly a day passes without an incident of shooting or road-mining directed against Israel farmers working in the valley below the chain of Syrian fortified military positions on the ridge of hills overlooking the border.

During the past month alone two such incidents resulted in severe injury to civilians going about their daily task:

On April, a farmer lost his leg when his tractor was blown up by a mine near his home at Ma'ayan Baruch in northern Galilee.

On 29 April, four agricultural workers were injured by gunfire while engaged in watering young trees near Ashmora a few kilometres to the south.

This situation is a gross and standing breach of the General Armistice Agreement between Israel and Syria and of the unconditional cease-fire imposed alike by the Agreement and the Security Council. Syrian conduct represents a constant and ever-present threat to the interests of regional peace, to which Israel whole-heartedly subscribes.

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

Please accept, etc.

(Signed) Michael COMAY
Permanent Representative
