

Distr.
GENERALS/3296
29 September 1954

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

LETTER DATED 28 SEPTEMBER 1954 FROM THE REPRESENTATIVE OF ISRAEL
ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

On instructions from my Government I have the honour to convey to you the following information concerning an act of aggression perpetrated by the Government of Egypt against an Israeli merchant vessel in the Suez Canal:

On 28 September 1954 the SS *Est Galim*, a vessel of 500 tons flying the Israel flag, arrived at the southern entrance of the Suez Canal bound from Massawa in Eritrea to Haifa in Israel. The vessel was manned by a crew of ten, all Israelis, and carried a mixed cargo consisting of 93 tons of meat, 42 tons of plywood and 30 tons of hides.

No fire-arms of any description except the Captain's pistol were on the ship.

On reaching the Suez Canal without incident at 5.30 a.m. the SS *Bat Galim* identified herself to the authorities. At 6 a.m., in accordance with the usual procedure, she anchored at Green Island, Port Tewfikt, alongside the SS *Empire Clyde*, a British vessel under charter to the British Ministry of Transport, a Norwegian vessel and a tanker.

At 8 a.m. the SS *Bat Galim* was boarded by the Egyptian Port, Health and Immigration officials. The routine inspections were carried out in a friendly atmosphere, so much so that some of the officials concerned, this day being the first of the Jewish year, wished the crew a happy New Year.

At 9 a.m. an Egyptian patrol vessel approached the ship, and wireless communication which had been maintained up to then with the Company offices in Haifa came to an end. No contact with the ship or its crew has since been made.

These facts give the lie to the reckless fabrications broadcast by the Egyptian Minister for National Guidance and by other Egyptian officials in a patent attempt to create an alibi for a new violation of Egypt's international obligations. After an exhaustive examination of these obligations, which

include the Suez Canal Convention of 1888 and the Israel-Egypt General Armistice Agreement of 1949, the Security Council, in its resolution of 1 September 1951, expressed the view that:

"since the Armistice regime... is of a permanent character, neither party can reasonably assert that it is actively a belligerent or requires to exercise the right of visit, search and seizure for any legitimate purpose of self-defence"

and called upon

"Egypt to terminate the restrictions on the passage of international commercial shipping and goods through the Suez Canal wherever bound and to cease all interference with such shipping..."

The seizure of the SS Bat Galim is but the latest expression of the Egyptian Government's scorn for the Security Council and its resolutions. It must be viewed against the background of the mounting number of murderous Egyptian attacks against Israel territory in recent weeks.

This illegal interference with commercial shipping bound to or from Israel has proceeded unchecked for over six years. The Government of Israel wishes to express the strongest protest against this high-handed and aggressive conduct and demands that the ship, its crew and its cargo be released forthwith in order that they may proceed to Haifa without further delay.

The Government of Israel reserves its right to pursue this matter further in the Security Council in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and the resolutions of the Security Council.

I have the honour to request that this letter be circulated to all members of the Security Council.

Please accept, Sir, etc.

(Signed) Abba Eban

Permanent Representative of
Israel to the United Nations

