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LETTER DATED 22 OCTOBER 1955 FROM THE REPRESENTATIVE OF ISRAEL
ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour, on instructions from the Government of Israel, to bring to the notice of the Security Council the grave situation which has arisen on the border between Syria and Israel due to persistent and purposeful violations by Syria of the General Armistice Agreement of 20 July 1949.

The most recent of these violations occurred on 18 October, when a young soldier who had left his quarters at Gonen in the early hours of that day on a hunting expedition in the vicinity failed to return at night fall. (Gonen is in north-eastern Galilee, just north of Lake Huleh.) On the following day a large fresh bloodstain together with personal possessions of the missing man were found some two and a half kilometres south-west of Gonen. Israeli police who followed the tracks of the victim and his attackers came under heavy fire from a Syrian military post when they arrived 100 metres west of the border. The same treatment was meted out on the morrow to the official Mixed Armistice Commission investigation team when they approached the border. The investigation has elicited that the young Israeli soldier appears to have fallen into an ambush some 450 metres inside Israel, was wounded by gunfire, and then forced into Syria. A total of five Syrians took part in the action. The Syrian authorities have refused to inform Israel through the Mixed Armistice Commission of the fate of the soldier, and on 21 October the attention of the Chief of Staff of the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization was drawn to the extremely serious view which the Israel Government takes of this outrage.

The ambush and abduction near Gonen is but the latest in the series of aggressive acts which have been committed by Syria against Israel during the past few months. Hardly a day passes without fire being opened from Syrian positions situated on the north-eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee upon Israel

police launches patrolling this wholly Israeli body of water, or upon Israeli fishermen and their craft. In all these cases formal complaints have been addressed to the Mixed Armistice Commission, the most recent concerning an attack on a police launch by automatic fire from two Syrian positions near the mouth of the River Jordan at the north end of the Sea. The attacks, however, have neither diminished in number nor intensity.

The village of Gonen was the objective of a previous wave of aggressive incidents during the early part of September. A particularly grave incident took place in the presence of a United Nations Observer on 5 September when Syrian troops penetrated into the Gonen Lands in the wake of a field fire which they had started on their side of the frontier. The Israeli farmers engaged in putting out the fire were sniped at for over five hours, with the result that one farmer was wounded and the fruits of much labour wantonly destroyed.

The centre of gravity has since shifted to south of Lake Huleh and in particular to the water works connected with the Lake Huleh drainage schemes. On 14 October, three villagers from Hagovrim were fired on at the water works north of the village; on the next day three armed Syrians in the demilitarized zone attempted to abduct another man from Hagovrim and opened fire on the police border patrol which came to his rescue; on 18 October a villager of Haon was wounded by a Syrian sniper, and on the same day a police patrol was attacked in the demilitarized zone. In these cases as well formal complaints have been addressed to the Mixed Armistice Commission, to no avail.

A particularly dangerous feature of this situation is the evidence which has recently come to light of Syrian complicity in the campaign of murder and sabotage which has been waged in northern Israel these past few weeks by Egyptian-controlled Fedayeen (Self-sacrificers) from bases in Syria, Lebanon and Jordan. The Government of Israel has for some time been aware of an Egyptian plan to continue the operations of these gangs from bases in other Arab countries in addition to those in Gaza, and it is known that Egypt has solicited, and received, both support and material assistance in this connexion from Syria. Units of Fedayeen trained in Egypt and Syria by Egyptian instructions have penetrated Galilee to wreak murder and destruction. On 7 September the water supply of Tirat Zvi was destroyed by dynamiting; on

13 September four houses in Alma were blown up; on 22 September a bus was attacked near Meron, two of the passengers being killed and nine wounded. Syrian involvement in these crimes is clear and unequivocal. As before, formal complaints have been submitted to the Mixed Armistice Commission in each case.

It is open to question, however, if any worthwhile object is attained by the adjudication of complaints by the Mixed Armistice Commission so long as Syria defies and evades its decisions. On 12 January 1955 the Israel-Syrian Mixed Armistice Commission, by a majority vote, called upon Syria to release the five members of an Israeli patrol which had been taken prisoner by the Syrian Army on 8 December 1954. Over ten months have passed since the adoption of this decision, and the men are still confined in a Syrian prison. One of them, in the meantime, committed suicide. The Syrian authorities have used every device of delay and evasion to avoid compliance with the decision of the Commission, with the result that all efforts to secure its implementation have proved unavailing. It is clear that conduct such as this combined with the clear evidence of Syrian aggression described above, must have an unfortunate effect upon the continued operation of the Mixed Armistice Commission and upon the integrity of the General Armistice Agreement from which it derives its authority.

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

Please accept, Sir, etc.

(Signed) Mordecai R. Kidron
for Permanent Representative
of Israel to the United Nations.

