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LETTER DATED 21 JUNE 1960 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF ISRAEL
TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour, on instructions from the Government of Israel, to convey to you copies in the original Spanish of the following documents, in connexion with the letter dated 15 June 1960 from the Representative of Argentina (S/4336).

- (a) Note Verbale of the Embassy of Israel in Buenos Aires to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Religion of the Argentine Republic, dated 3 June 1960.
- (b) Letter from Prime Minister Ben-Gurion to President Frondizi, dated 7 June 1960.

It would be appreciated if this letter and the accompanying documents could be circulated to the members of the Security Council prior to the meeting of the Council, which has been scheduled for tomorrow morning, 22 June 1960.

Please accept, etc.

Michael Comay
Permanent Representative

6 June 1960

The Embassy of Israel presents its compliments to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and has the honour to inform it as follows:

The Government of Israel was unaware that Adolf Eichmann had come from Argentina, as the Israel security services had not informed it of that fact. It was not until the Government received the cable dated 2 June 1960 from the Ambassador of Israel in Buenos Aires that it took up the details of the case with the security services which had arrested Eichmann; and its investigations have revealed the following facts:

1. Jewish volunteers, including some Israelis, began the search for Eichmann, who was the person mainly responsible for the extermination of the Jews in Europe, after the end of the Second World War.
2. For fifteen years, these volunteer groups searched for Eichmann in various European countries, in the Arab countries and in Latin America, but without success.
3. A few months ago, one of these volunteer groups engaged in the search received information that Eichmann was hiding in Argentina under an assumed name, without the knowledge of the Argentine authorities but with the help of other Nazis living in Argentina. The investigators were unable to determine whether this information was authentic or not. They were, however, able to confirm that many Nazis were living in Argentina.
4. The search was intensified, and Eichmann, who was living under a false name, was traced to his home. The volunteer groups carrying out the search made contact with Eichmann and asked him whether he was prepared to go to Israel to stand trial. When Eichmann realized that he had been recognized, he admitted his true identity and stated that he had been living in Argentina under false documents and under an assumed name; when he was questioned whether he was prepared to stand trial in Israel, he asked to be given twenty-four hours to answer. That period was granted. The next day he said he was willing to go to Israel voluntarily for trial. At the same time, he handed the group which had traced him a letter written in his own hand indicating his readiness "to give a straightforward account of the facts of his last years of service in Germany, in order to pass on a true picture of those facts to future generations.

5. The volunteer group then removed Eichmann from Argentina with his full consent and handed him over to the Israel security services.

6. The security services informed the Israel Government on 23 May 1960 that Eichmann was in their hands, and the Government instructed the police and the Attorney-General to prepare the case. Not until later was the Government informed that Eichmann had come from Argentina. The text of Eichmann's letter is as follows:

"I the undersigned, Adolf Eichmann, declare of my own free will that, since my true identity has been discovered, I realize that it is futile for me to attempt to go on evading justice. I state that I am prepared to travel to Israel to stand trial in that country before a competent court. I understand that I shall receive legal aid, and I shall endeavour to give a straightforward account of the facts of my last years of service in Germany so that a true picture of the facts may be passed on to future generations. I make this declaration of my own free will. I have been promised nothing, nor have any threats been made against me. I wish at last to achieve inner peace. As I am unable to remember all the details and am confused about certain facts, I ask to be granted assistance in my endeavours to establish the truth by being given access to documents and evidence. Signed:
Adolf Eichmann, Buenos Aires, May 1960."

8. If the volunteer group violated Argentine law or interfered with matters within the sovereignty of Argentina, the Government of Israel wishes to express its regret. The Government of Israel requests that the special significance of bringing to trial the man responsible for the murder of millions of persons belonging to the Jewish people be taken into account, and asks that due weight be given to the fact that the volunteers, who were themselves survivors of that massacre, placed this historic mission above all other considerations. The Government of Israel is fully confident that the Argentine Government will show understanding of these historical and ethical factors.

The Embassy of Israel has the honour to be, etc.

Buenos Aires, 3 June 1960.

Jerusalem, 7 June 1960

Mr. President,

At this hour when, as a result of the capture and transfer to Israel of the Nazi war criminal Adolph Eichmann, misunderstandings are liable to arise between the Argentine Republic and Israel, I feel it my duty to send you this personal message. I take the liberty of doing so precisely because the relations between our Governments and our peoples are deeply rooted in my heart and because I would regret and feel deeply any deterioration which they might suffer as a result of the recent events in connexion with Adolph Eichmann.

I believe that you are giving your high personal consideration to the diplomatic note which our Ambassador in Buenos Aires handed the Minister for Foreign Affairs on Friday, 3 June. In this note you will find the elements of our position. However, there are some aspects of the matter which touch on the very essence of the problem and transcend the bounds of a diplomatic note. It is these aspects which I would like to deal with briefly, in the conviction that they will make it possible to form a moral judgement on the problem.

This man, Eichmann, was the person directly responsible during the years of the Second World War for the execution of Hitler's orders for the "final solution" of the Jewish problem in Europe, i.e., for the physical destruction of any Jew whom the Nazis were able to seize in the vast areas of Europe which they had conquered. Six millions of our people were massacred, and it was Eichmann who organized this mass extermination on a gigantic and unprecedented scale throughout the whole of Europe.

I am sure, Mr. President, that you need no explanation to understand what it means for any people to be the victim of such a satanic wave of murder; to understand that deep scars still remain in the soul of the people which suffered this experience. Even in the history of our age-old martyrdom, we had never experienced such frightful atrocities. Not only were millions killed, among them more than a million children, but the spiritual and cultural centre of our people, which had flourished in Europe until the Second World War, was destroyed. It is practically impossible to find anywhere a Jew whose family does not include its victims of the Nazis. Hundreds of thousands of the survivors are living among us, and there are hundreds of Jews in Israel and other countries

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who had known no peace since the end of the War until the moment when the man who had directed these horrible massacres was found. The aim of their lives was to bring the man responsible for these unparalleled crimes to trial before the Jewish people; and such a trial can take place only here in Israel.

I do not underestimate the seriousness of the formal violation of Argentine law committed by those who at last ended their long search with the capture of Eichmann; but I am confident that there can be very few people in the world who have failed to understand the profound motives and the supreme moral justification for this act. This incident cannot be judged solely from a purely formal angle. The obligation of all countries to respect scrupulously the laws of other countries is beyond all doubt; but one cannot, nevertheless, fail to appreciate the lofty motives underlying the imperative moral force by which those who found Eichmann and with his consent brought him to Israel were impelled, or the depth of the feelings which moved them.

I am convinced, Mr. President, that you will understand the supreme moral force of these aspects of the problem. You yourself fought dictatorship untiringly, and have constantly displayed your profound respect for human values. I am sure that no one will understand better than yourself our true feelings; that you will accept the expression of our most sincere regret for any violation of the laws of the Argentine Republic which may have been committed at the bidding of an irresistible inner moral force; and that, together with all friends of justice throughout the world, who view the trial of Eichmann in Israel as an act of supreme historical justice, you will see to it that the friendly relations between the Argentine Republic and Israel suffer no harm.

I have the honour, etc.

(Signed) David BEN-GURION
Prime Minister of Israel

