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LETTER DATED 14 DECEMBER 1954 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF SYRIA  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS, ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to request you to transmit this communication to the members of the Security Council.

On 12 December 1954, an aircraft of the Compagnie aérienne syrienne which had left Damascus for Cairo via Beirut was intercepted on the high seas by two Israel Meteor jet fighters. Under threat of attack, the pilot of the aircraft was forced to change course and land at Lydda, in territory controlled by the Israel authorities. The Syrian civil aircraft was carrying out a flight over a regular route. Apart from the crew, it had on board five passengers, including two women and a United States citizen. The incident took place at a great distance from the coast of Palestine.

The attention of all United Nations Members is drawn to the serious nature of the acts of the Israel authorities, which constitute a flagrant violation of the provisions of the Syrian-Israel Armistice Agreement. There is no rule of international public law that authorizes attacks on aircraft flying over the high seas. The principle of the freedom of sea and air navigation is universally recognized. A violation of that principle is tantamount to an act of banditry and piracy.

The Syrian complaint against the unjustifiable actions of the Israel authorities has been lodged with the Syrian-Israel Mixed Armistice Commission. The serious consequences which the incident is bound to have cannot be too strongly emphasized. In any event, an urgent investigation has been requested, together with the immediate release of the aircraft, its crew and passengers.

I have the honour to be, etc.

(signed) Rafik Asha  
Permanent Representative of  
Syria to the United Nations