

Dual Distribution

LETTER DATED 8 OCTOBER 1948 FROM THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PROVISIONAL
GOVERNMENT OF ISRAEL TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL
CONCERNING ALLEGED VIOLATIONS OF THE TRUCE BY ARAB FORCES

I am directed by the Provisional Government of Israel to bring to the urgent attention of the Security Council the following grave violations of the truce on the Arab side, which have seriously jeopardized the position and interests of Israel, and which the United Nations representatives charged with the supervision of the truce have so far failed to remedy.

1) Jerusalem water supply:

The position in this regard has been repeatedly brought to the attention of the Security Council. The Arab Government or Governments concerned have persistently refused to permit the resumption of a normal water supply, and at the end the Latrun pumping station was blown up by Arab forces. To this day, the normal Jerusalem water supply is inoperative, the plant at Latrun has not been repaired, and the population of Jerusalem has to subsist on extremely meagre water allowances which, inadequate as they are, have been made possible only by the efforts of the Government of Israel and the sacrifices of the Israeli Army.

That the denial of Jerusalem's water supply constitutes a breach of the truce has been repeatedly affirmed by the competent organs of the United Nations. On the 7th July, the Mediator informed the Prime Minister of Transjordan that the obstruction of Jerusalem's water supply was "a clear violation of the terms of the truce" (document S/869). Statements in a similar sense were made by the Mediator on the 12th July (S/P.V.331, page 106), and by the Truce Commission on August 2nd (S/938). The Security Council has twice without avail passed resolutions ordering all possible measures to be taken for the resumption of the Jerusalem water supply. The most recent of these resolutions was adopted on 13 August 1948 (S/P.V.349).

2) The Road to the Negeb:

In the first week of the second truce, which began on July 18th, the Egyptian forces violated it by occupying a position south of Karatiyeh along the Majdal-Faluja road. Their purpose was to cut off the Israeli Negeb, with its twenty-five Jewish settlements, from all contact with the north. The Israeli convoy route running due south through Karatiyeh, and the Egyptian line running due west, thus found themselves athwart each other. Israeli convoys were repeatedly fired upon by Egyptian forces and had to be suspended. Relying on effective intervention by the United Nations representatives, the Israeli Army took no retaliatory steps against the Egyptian convoys. After protracted negotiations, the United Nations Mediator's Chief of Staff, General Lundström, gave his decision on August 18th, which provided for the free and unmolested use of the cross-roads at Karatiyeh by each side for a period of six hours in alternation. The Egyptians refused to comply, and the matter was referred to the Central Truce Supervision Board, which, on September 14th, confirmed General Lundström's decision. The Mediator himself approved that decision on September 15th. Nevertheless, to this day the Egyptians have maintained their refusal, with the result that the Mediator's decision has remained inoperative, and Israel, through refraining from prompt retaliation, finds itself penalized by having to acquiesce in an intolerable severance of a large part of Israeli territory from its normal bases of supply.

3) Bir Asluj in the Negeb:

This position was occupied by Egyptian forces on August 5th, under the very eyes of United Nations observers, who prevailed upon the local Israeli Command to refrain from any counter-action by undertaking to secure the evacuation of Bir Asluj by the Egyptians. This evacuation has never taken place, and the United Nations representatives have been unable to make their will prevail.

4) Mishmar Hayarden in Galilee:

The respective lines of the Syrian and Israeli Armies in this part of the country having been definitely fixed by the United Nations observers, an undertaking to respect them was signed by the Commanders on both sides on August 3rd. A few days later, the Syrians encroached on Israeli lines, and occupied a vital height in violation of the truce. They were called upon to withdraw by the United Nations observers, but managed to procrastinate for several weeks. Finally, on September 24th, they asked for four days' grace in which to evacuate. This period expired at midnight on September 28th, but no evacuation took place. Here again the United Nations representatives have been unable to enforce their decision.

5) Violations in Jerusalem:

An agreement concluded towards the end of July, similar to that mentioned in the preceding paragraph, was effected under United Nations auspices between Jewish and Arab Commanders in Jerusalem, fixing the respective lines of the two Armies. This agreement included a written undertaking by the local Commanders of the Arab Legion to evacuate certain fortified positions within no-man's land at Deir Abu Tor and on Mount Zion, which had been occupied by the Arabs in violation of the truce.

On August 10th, on being admonished to honour his signature, the Arab Legion Commander promised the Mediator to evacuate these positions, but he failed to keep his promise. On August 27th, a formal decision was adopted by the Central Truce Supervision Board demanding evacuation. This too was disregarded.

On September 11th, at a meeting of both parties under United Nations auspices, the Arabs again promised to evacuate the Deir Abu Tor position within twenty-four hours, and again failed to do so. With regard to Mount Zion, the Arabs finally made the evacuation of a position occupied by them during the truce contingent upon the evacuation by the Jews of positions held by them before the truce. At the time of writing, both positions are held by Arab forces, and nothing that the United Nations representatives can do appears likely to make the Arab military commander obey a United Nations ruling and honour his own pledged word.

6) Position on Mount Scopus:

In accordance with the agreement signed by both parties in mid-July, with regard to the demilitarization of the Hebrew University and the Hadassah Hospital area on Mount Scopus in Jerusalem, Jewish convoys under United Nations auspices were to be let through to effect replacements of personnel and bring in supplies. Only one convoy actually went through, a fortnight after the conclusion of the agreement. All attempts to send further convoys across have since then met with stubborn Arab opposition. Thus, for ten weeks the small group marooned in the Mount Scopus area has been without replacements or fresh supplies. All the efforts of the United Nations authorities to persuade the Arabs to honour the agreement have so far failed.

No attempt has here been made to summarize the innumerable cases of violation of truce committed by Arab forces on the various fronts by opening fire on Jewish positions and causing loss of life and destruction of property. Reference has been limited only to major instances of truce violation which

have had a lasting detrimental effect on the position of Israel. In all these cases the United Nations' representatives have not been able to give effect to their rulings, which the Arabs have systematically disregarded.

(Signed) Aubrey S. Eban
Representative of the Provisional
Government of Israel at the United
Nations

