

OFFICE OF UNITED NATIONS MEDIATOR ON PALESTINE
Hotel des Roses
Rhodes, Greece

9 September 1948

Mr. M. Shertok
Minister for Foreign Affairs
Provisional Government of Israel
Hakiryia

Central Truce Supervision
Board

Case No.10-
Villages of Ein Ghazal,
Ijzim and Jaba

Sir,

I have the honour to transmit herewith a copy of the findings of the Central Truce Supervision Board with respect to the above mentioned case which I have approved as indicated on page 2 of these findings.

In connection with the investigation and findings on the case the technical jurisdictional position taken by the Provisional Government of Israel has resulted in a failure to obtain any detailed account of what took place from Israeli sources. In my view on the basis of the available evidence the type of action undertaken by your military forces was unjustified in the circumstances especially in view of the offer of the Arab villagers to negotiate and the apparent Israeli failure fully to explore this offer and to exhaust every effort to resolve the difficulty by peaceful means. Moreover I am strongly of the opinion that the measures taken involving the systematic destruction of two of the villages were excessive and constituted a violation of both the spirit and letter of the terms of the truce.

The available information indicates that all three villages were damaged to some degree during the attack but that while Ein Ghazal and Jaba were subsequently systematically destroyed no further damage of a substantial nature appears to have been done to the village of Ijzim since the attack.

In the light of the findings of the Board it is my decision

(1) that the Arab inhabitants of the villages of Ein Ghazal, Ijzim and Jaba who were forced to evacuate these villages subsequent to the commencement of the second truce be allowed to return forthwith to these villages and to reside there in peace;

cc: M. Shertok

(2) that the Provisional Government of Israel shall do everything possible to rehabilitate the Arab inhabitants of these villages including restoring at its own expenses all houses damaged or destroyed during the attack of the Israeli forces as well as such houses as were destroyed or damaged subsequent to this attack, on the understanding that this ruling shall in no way be considered as a precedent in dealing with any other case by reason of the fact that such ruling is based on the very special set of circumstances existing here;

(3) that the procedure for carrying into effect the decisions contained in clauses (1) and (2) above shall be worked out without delay between my Chief of Staff and the authorized representatives of the authorities concerned.

In closing I would like to stress that my decisions are based on findings which were only reached by the Board after the conduct of a most exhaustive investigation into this matter.

At one time or another five investigating teams were sent out into the field. The statistics shown in paragraph 2 of the findings were obtained by compiling lists of actual names which required long periods of patient and exacting work. From these statistics it was possible to gauge accurately the merits of the allegation that 4000 refugees and tens of thousands of Arabs were either captured or massacred during the Israeli attack. These statistics made clear that the number killed could not have exceeded 130 and that no great number were captured which established conclusively that this claim could not be substantiated.

Yours faithfully,

Count Folke Bernadotte
United Nations Mediator on Palestine