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UNITED NATIONS PALESTINE MISSION
Communication Received from the Local Council
Council of Bat-Yam, Palestine

The following communication, concerning alleged activities by Arab snipers in the district of the Bat-Yam settlement, south of Jaffa, has been addressed to the Chairmen of the Commission by the Local Council of Bat-Yam

LOCAL COUNCIL BAT-YAM

Bat-Yam, 23rd February 1948

Dr. Karl Lisicky,
Chairman of the United Nations Commission
for Palestine,
Lake Success,
New York, N.Y.
Your Excellency,

The settlement of Bat-Yam is situated South of Jaffa and the number of its inhabitants is 2000. We have always lived in peace with our Arab neighbours of the Jabalia quarter, Jaffa, and for years we have supplied this quarter with water.

On 29.11.1947, when the decision of U.N.O. to implement the partition of Palestine, was made public, Arab bands have entered the quarter of Jabalia and shooting and began shooting on the inhabitants of our settlement. The elders of the Jabalia quarter, with whom we were always on friendly terms, assured us that the shooting was the act of outside elements and promised that in future peace will continue between their quarter and our settlement. They could not keep their promise. The Arab bandits occupied, by force, the houses of their quarter overlooking our settlement and ever since are keeping sniping, day and night, on our inhabitants. Up to date 8 men and one child were killed and 12 men and a woman were wounded by the bullets of the snipers.

British Police in armoured cars increased the danger to life in our settlement by using their machine guns in indiscriminate shooting at the peaceful inhabitants.

The Arab personnel of the telephone exchange have virtually cut off the communication of our settlement with the authorities and the Jewish centres. For many days we were unable to call for help and even for medical aid to our wounded.

In pursuance of the repeated declarations by the Government of Palestine that they consider themselves responsible for law and order in the country, we have made the following demands to the local administrative authorities in a memorandum submitted through the proper channels:-

- a) to take away the armoured cars manned by the British Police, who have made every passer-by their shooting target.
- b) to destroy the posts used by Arab snipers, at the entry of the settlement, who have inflicted many casualties among the inhabitants.
- c) To erect a protective fence in vulnerable places at the entry to our settlement.

Our chairman has also met the District Superintendent of Police and demanded that the neighbouring houses be searched and the snipers arrested. His reply was that it was not their present policy to search and arrest snipers, unless the houses used by bandits for shooting were pointed to the police. A memorandum was sent forthwith reiterating our demands for a protective fence and asking that the snipers be removed from the houses dominating our settlement, which houses we were prepared to designate to the Police. So far no reply was given to any of our demands. We know, however, that the British Forces have disarmed and arrested many Jewish defenders and demolished many Jewish houses, including a synagogue, at the request of the Arabs.

We have, therefore, no alternative but to address an urgent appeal to the Palestine Commission to take up the security problem first and foremost and to make immediate arrangements to secure life and property in Palestine. The Palestine authorities seem to have left the Jewish population to its fate without allowing it to organise its own defence. This situation rendered the life and property of the Jews so precarious that the Arab Bands can carry on freely with their murderous and destructive attacks without being checked. On the other hand the British Government is trying to delay the arrival of the Palestine Commission the encouraging the Arab gunmen to cause faits accomplis until May, the 15th.

The bloodshed in Palestine can be stopped by the Palestine Commission showing greater interest in this vital problem. If the Commission cannot overcome the British opposition to the immediate departure to Palestine, let a Special Security Commission entrusted with the task of examining the present security arrangements in Palestine and allowed the means of improving them, come here in the meantime otherwise a situation may arise in which the position of the Palestine Commission will be prejudiced by the reign of terror and chaos.

Very respectfully Yours,
LOCAL COUNCIL BAT-YAM.
President.
(signed) E. LIVAY
(E. Livay)

