

RESTRICTED

P/23

24 February 1948

UNITED NATIONS PALESTINE COMMISSION

DAILY NEWS SUMMARY - 20

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Jerusalem, Feb.23 -- The death toll from the Ben Yehuda Street bombing rose to 54, with possibly 12 persons still buried in the ruins. Jews continued to blame the British for the explosion and six British soldiers were wounded. [Jewish attacks by late Sunday night had accounted for nine British killed and at least nine wounded]

A Haganah broadcast in Arabic, apparently intended to pin responsibility on the British, claimed that the exiled Mufti had sent orders from Syria to attribute the bombing to the forces of Abdul Kadir el-Husseini. The latter was reported to have claimed responsibility in a communique issued to Arab newspapers.

Other Arab sources said that seven men took part, using stolen British uniforms and vehicles and 800 pounds of gelignite. (NY TIMES AND NY HERALD TRIBUNE)  
London, Feb.23 -- Under-Secretary of the Colonial Office, D. R. Rees Williams told the House of Commons that Palestine authorities had found nothing to confirm the allegation that British forces were involved in the Ben Yehuda Street explosion.

"Zionist authorities have been challenged to produce any evidence in support of this charge, which is unbelievable," he said. (NEW YORK TIMES)

Cairo, Feb.22 -- The Arab League has decided to create an "Arab Liberation Army", composed of units from Arab regular armies, in the event of Security Council approval of an international police force for Palestine. Plans would be decided at a military conference to be summoned by the Syrian President, Shukri al-Kuwathy. (NEW YORK TIMES)

Cairo, Feb.21 -- British Army intervention in the Hula and Beisan areas of Palestine apparently has checked Arab plans for an early general offensive.

An Arab officer said today that volunteers had temporarily halted their campaigns in the area. The Arabs had earlier described the Beisan operation

as an attempt to cut Palestine in two and aim a spearhead at Tel-Aviv. (NY TIMES)

Cairo, Feb. 22 -- Azzain Pasha, Secretary-General of the Arab League said that Arab League States that already have granted oil concessions to supporters of partition have promised "to reconsider these concessions when necessary".

Further oil concessions will be denied to all nations, including the United States, which supported partition. (NY TIMES, NY HERALD TRIBUNE)

London, Feb. 21 -- The British Government announced that Palestine had been dropped from the sterling currency area, and that its sterling balances of roughly \$400,000,000 would be temporarily blocked. (NY HERALD TRIBUNE)

London, Feb. 18 -- In an editorial entitled "Transition in Palestine", the TIMES says that there is "an unassailable case" for establishing an international force in Palestine to replace the forces of the Mandatory Power. In spite of the difficulties of organizing such a force, "the issue is plain", and the Security Council must face it unless the United Nations "is to admit bankruptcy in statesmanship and reputation". The British Government, though it has consistently and rightly refused to take part in the enforcement of partition, has nevertheless "a moral obligation to make the process of transition from British to United Nations authority as smooth as possible". The editorial concludes by saying that the Government's ban on allowing the Commission to arrive earlier than 14 days before the termination of the Mandate seems "unnecessarily restrictive", and that the members of the Commission should be permitted to arrive soon to study conditions on the spot. (LONDON TIMES, 18 February 1948)