

RESTRICTED
UK/43
25 February 1948

UNITED NATIONS PALESTINE COMMISSION

Communication Received from United Kingdom Delegation
Concerning Questions and Answers in Parliament on the
Recent Outrage in Jerusalem

The following communication, concerning Questions and Answers in
the House of Commons and House of Lords on the recent outrage in Jerusalem,
has been received from Mr. Fletcher-Cooke of the United Kingdom Delegation.

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UNITED KINGDOM DELEGATION TO THE UNITED NATIONS
Empire State Building
New York 1, N.Y.

25th February 1948

My Dear Bunche;

The Commission may be interested to have the text of Questions and Answers given recently in the House of Commons and House of Lords on the subject of the recent outrage in Jerusalem.

Yours sincerely

(Signed)

Trafford Smith

Dr. Ralph J. Bunche,
Principal Secretary to the United Nations
Commission on Palestine,
United Nations,
Lake Success.

Following is text of private notice question and answer Monday, 23rd February.

BEGINS.

Mr. Eden: to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies if he will make any statement on the incidents in Jerusalem yesterday. Mr. Rees Williams: A preliminary report received from the High Commissioner states that at 6.5 a.m. on Sunday the 22nd February, a convoy of three military-type trucks and one police-type armoured car were observed travelling towards the centre of Jerusalem. The occupants wore military and police uniforms. The three trucks parked in Ben Yehuda Street in the Jewish Commercial Centre of Jerusalem. At approximately 6.25 a.m. a heavy explosion occurred which completely demolished buildings on both sides of the street. Casualty figures so far available are 27 killed, 32 seriously injured, 48 slightly injured. Shortly after the explosion had taken place the armoured car was observed leaving Jerusalem along the Jaffa Road at great speed. This vehicle bore an identification number of which there is no trace in police records. Both military trucks and police armoured cars have been stolen in recent disturbances.

Investigations are being made into the responsibility for this incident and I will make a further statement to the house as soon as possible. Responsibility has not yet been established but I can say at once that the authorities have found nothing to confirm the allegation understood to have been broadcast in Palestine, that members of the British Security Forces were involved and the Zionist authorities have been challenged to produce any evidence in support of this charge which as the Palestine Government have said is unbelievable.

Following the incident feeling in Jerusalem has been very tense and 8 members of the British Security Forces have been killed in subsequent incidents. British Police have been withdrawn from outlying billets.

H.M.G. deplore this outrage and the loss of life involved and they deeply regret that reprisals should have been taken against members of His Majesty's Forces and of the Palestine Police. I am sure that the house would wish to extend their sympathy to the relatives of those who have lost their lives or sustained injury in these deplorable occurrences. Ends.

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Following is text of question and answer in House of Lords today, 24th February.

BEGINS.

"The Marquis of Salisbury to ask His Majesty's Government whether they have any statement to make regarding the recent deplorable events in Palestine and in particular in Jerusalem.

Lord Hall: On the morning of 22nd February a convoy of 3 military-type trucks and one police-type armoured car was observed travelling towards the centre of Jerusalem. The occupants wore military and police uniforms. The three trucks parked in Ben Yehuda Street in the Jewish commercial centre of the city. A few minutes afterwards a heavy explosion occurred which completely demolished buildings on both sides of the street. Casualties were heavy. Shortly after the explosion the armoured car was observed leaving Jerusalem along the Jaffa road at great speed. This vehicle bore an identification number of which there is no trace in police records but both military and police armoured cars have been stolen in recent disturbances. The armoured car in question has not yet been found. Investigations are not yet complete but it is clear that there is no ground for the suggestion understood to have been broadcast in Palestine that members of the British Security forces were responsible for the outrage. The Zionists although challenged to do so have produced no evidence in support of this charge. Statements have been made on behalf of the Arabs admitting the responsibility.

His Majesty's Government deeply regret the further heavy loss of life resulting from this incident. According to the latest report available 27 persons were killed by the explosion while in subsequent reprisals 9 members of the British Security forces were murdered.

Ends.