

RESTRICTED
UK/59
8 March 1948.

UNITED NATIONS PALESTINE COMMISSION

Communication Received from the United Kingdom Delegation Concerning Political Prisoners and Detainees.

The following communication, concerning the repatriation to Palestine of political prisoners and detainees at Gilgil, Kenya, 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, N.Y.

URGENT & CONFIDENTIAL

8th March, 1948.

My dear Bunche,

May I refer you to the last sentence of Section 3
(Prisoners and Detainees) of paragraph 2 of the note which was
submitted to the Commission by Sir Alexander Cadogan on 21st
January. Reference was there made to the existence in Kenya
of a number of Jewish detainees.

The present position is that there are 291 suspected Jewish
terrorists held in detention at Gilgil in Kenya where they have been
since March 1947. Previously they had been held in a camp near
Asmara after their removal from Palestine for security reasons in
1944.

In the light of recent incidents in Palestine, His Majesty's
Government do not propose to return these detainees before the
termination of the Mandate, since to do so would add an unjustifiable
burden to the High Commissioner's security preoccupations. It may
not, moreover, be possible for practical reasons to return them to
Palestine until some time after the termination of the Mandate, and
the present intention is that they should be shipped so as to arrive
not later than the middle of July.

It is presumed that the Commission will not raise any objection
to the acceptance of any or all of these persons in Palestine after
the date of the termination of the Mandate and I should be grateful
if you would confirm this as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely,

/s/ J. Fletcher-Cooke

(J. Fletcher-Cooke)

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