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Report by the Chief of UNTSO  
to DH on incidents in the Negev and Gaza.

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REPORT DATED 20 AUGUST 1956 BY THE CHIEF OF STAFF OF THE UNITED NATIONS TRUCE SUPERVISION ORGANIZATION TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS ON THE INCIDENTS OF 16 AND 17 AUGUST 1956 IN THE NEGEV AND IN THE GAZA STRIP

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to submit, for the information of the Security Council, the attached report by the Chief of Staff of the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization, Major General E.L.M. Burns, on the incidents of 16 and 17 August 1956 in the Negev and in the Gaza Strip.

The body of the report contains the factual data established after investigation by the United Nations military observers. Annex I contains the text of the resolution adopted by the Hashemite Jordan Kingdom - Israel Mixed Armistice Commission on the 16 August attack on a passenger bus. Annex II contains the texts of two public statements made by the Secretary-General upon being informed of the incidents of 16 and 17 August.

The documents are submitted for reasons corresponding to those which led to the circulation of a report on certain incidents 24 and 25 July (S/3632). The Secretary-General does not, for the present, wish to add any observations to those contained in his two statements, 16 and 17 August. He hopes that continued efforts to bring about a resumption of the meetings of the Egypt-Israel Mixed Armistice Commission (see paragraph 10 of the report) will succeed, so that incidents like those of 17 August may again be treated in the way established by the Armistice Agreement.

REPORT BY THE CHIEF OF STAFF OF THE TRUCE SUPERVISION ORGANIZATION  
DATED 20 AUGUST 1956 ON INCIDENTS OCCURRING ON 16-17 AUGUST 1956

I have the honour to report on the very serious incidents which occurred on 16 August in the Negev and on 17 August in the Egyptian-controlled Gaza Strip:

1. On 16 August the Israel Delegation complained to the Israel-Egyptian Mixed Armistice Commission that on the same day at 0100 GMT a civilian transport vehicle had hit a mine laid by saboteurs from Egyptian-controlled territory on the road from Elath to Sde Boker and that five persons travelling in the vehicle had been wounded, one of them seriously.
2. A United Nations military observer, accompanied by an Israeli officer, carried out an investigation at the scene of the incident (MR 1267 0253). He saw in the middle of the road a hole about 150 centimetres in diameter and about 40 centimetres deep. There were in the hole some fragments which seemed to be from a mine. He also saw a lorry, the rear part of which had been badly damaged. Its driver stated that there were on the lorry about twenty children and students. When the explosion occurred, five were wounded. Three were seen by the observer in a hospital at Beersheba but could not be interrogated. The others had already left the hospital.
3. It should be noted in connexion with the above incident that some eighteen hours earlier, on the evening of 14 August, another lorry had been blown up by a mine at MR 1350 0350 in the same Sde Boker area. The driver had been slightly wounded. His only passenger was not hurt. In that case also the Israel Delegation had lodged a complaint with the Israel-Egyptian Mixed Armistice Commission alleging that the mine had been laid by saboteurs from Egyptian-controlled territory. A United Nations military observer saw the hole in the road, steel fragments of a mine and the badly damaged lorry. No tracks of the mine layer or mine layers were found by Israeli trackers.
4. On 16 August another grave incident occurred in the Negev, when at about 0900 GMT an Israeli passenger bus travelling from Tel Aviv to Elath and two military escort jeeps were fired upon from an ambush at approximately MR 1655 9847, about 20 kilometres north of Beer Menuha, that is, some 100 kilometres by road from Elath. United Nations military observers who carried out an investigation of the incident on 16 and 17 August have confirmed that four persons were killed and six wounded. The dead were a woman bus passenger and the three soldiers in the leading escort

jeep. Two of the soldiers in the rear escort jeep and the bus driver were among the wounded. The bodies seen bore wounds caused by rifle and light automatic fire. Approximately thirty-three empty cartridges were found in the area where the attack took place. Tracks leading from the scene of the incident were followed in a northeast direction to a point MR 1660 9848, where they crossed the Demarcation Line. There contact was established with two Jordanian representatives and a tracker. Both the Israeli and Jordanian trackers worked together and the Jordanian Delegation were shown and accepted three outgoing tracks (two barefooted, one sandal) as continuing on the Jordanian side of the Demarcation Line.

5. An emergency meeting of the Hashemite Jordan Kingdom - Israel Mixed Armistice Commission was held on 20 August to consider the Israeli complaints on the above incident. The Israel draft resolution was adopted (Annex).

6. On the night of 16/17 August two serious incidents resulting in the death of nine Egyptians took place in the Egyptian-controlled Gaza area.

7. In the first of these incidents a group of from twelve to twenty armed persons crossed the Demarcation Line from Israel into Egyptian-controlled territory, where they exchanged fire with a three-man Egyptian listening post situated at MR 0953 0947. Shortly thereafter an Egyptian patrol of a sergeant and three other ranks ran into the Israeli patrol still in Egyptian-controlled territory. In the action following the Egyptian sergeant and two other soldiers were killed. The bodies had extensive wounds caused by grenades and bullets.

8. The second incident of the night of 16/17 August occurred on the main Gaza-Rafah road at MR 0834 0762. An Egyptian jeep with six passengers, namely an Egyptian medical officer, a medical orderly and four soldiers, was ambushed and attacked by a group of five to seven men. The ambushing party had laid mines in the road and then attacked the jeep and its occupants with machine gun fire.

9. The evidence indicates that the victims were killed by small arms fire at close range. Tracks were followed from the scene of the incident all the way to the Demarcation Line, crossing the line at MR 0852 0739.

10. Neither the incident in the Sde Boker area on 16 August nor the incidents in the Gaza Strip on 17 August are likely to be considered by the Egyptian-Israeli Mixed Armistice Commission in the near future. Israel opposes any meeting of the Mixed Armistice Commission at its Headquarters at El Auja, situated in the Demilitarized Zone which is now occupied by Israeli troops. The Egyptian position is that every other meeting should be held at the Headquarters of the Mixed Armistice Commission.

ANNEX I

TEXT OF RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE HASHEMITE JORDAN KINGDOM -  
ISRAEL MIXED ARMISTICE COMMISSION 20 AUGUST 1956

The Hashemite Jordan Kingdom - Israel Mixed Armistice Commission,  
Having discussed Israel complaint No. C 110:

1. Finds that on 16 August 1956 in the hours of the morning a force of approximately fifteen aggressors who had crossed the Demarcation Line from Jordan-controlled territory into Israel in the Arava area, set up ambushes at the side of the main road and opened fire at the passenger bus to Elath and at two jeeps escorting it. This unprovoked attack resulted in the killing of one woman passenger and three soldiers from the escort. A number of people were wounded, of these three severely. The aggressors then returned to Jordan-controlled territory.

2. Decides that the above-mentioned hostile acts are most serious breaches of Article III, paragraph 3, of the General Armistice Agreement.

3. Notes with grave concern the third attack this year in the Arava area against Israel, especially in view of the Mixed Armistice Commission's repeated calls on the Jordanian authorities to prevent such attacks.

4. Considers that the above attack indicates that Jordan must take all the necessary measures to prevent recurrence of such acts of violence in order not to aggravate the existing tension along the Demarcation Line.

The voting was as follows:

Paragraph 1:	Israel for	Jordan against	Chairman for
Paragraph 2:	Israel for	Jordan against	Chairman for
Paragraph 3:	Israel for	Jordan against	Chairman for
Paragraph 4:	Israel for	Jordan against	Chairman for

The Chairman made the following statement:

"I wish to convey my condolences to the families of the persons who have died as a result of this incident and I also wish to convey my sympathies to the persons who were wounded as a result of this same incident."

265th Emergency Meeting  
20 August 1956