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REPORT BY THE CHIEF OF STAFF OF THE TRUCE SUPERVISION ORGANIZATION
TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL CONCERNING THE NAHHALIN INCIDENT

Note by the Secretary-General:

The Secretary-General has the honour to circulate for the information of the members of the Security Council the attached report by the Chief of Staff of the Truce Supervision Organization on the Nahhalin incident, transmitted on 19 June 1954.

54-18177

THE NAHHALIN INCIDENT

Report by the Chief of Staff of the United Nations
Truce Supervision Organization

I. The Jordanian Complaint

1. On 29 March 1954, at 0700 hours, local time, the Jordan Delegation presented to the Chairman of the Mixed Armistice Commission a verbal complaint dealing with an incident which had occurred at Nahhalin Village seven hours earlier and requested an immediate investigation as well as an emergency meeting of the Commission to consider the incident.
2. On the same day, at 1255 hours, local time, the following written complaint (X537) was submitted by the Jordan Delegation to the Chairman of the Mixed Armistice Commission:

"Date and Time of Complaint: 28-29/3/1954 at 24.00 hrs. J.T.

Place: MR 1613-1214, Nahhalin Village

Statement of Facts:

At the above date, time and place, an Israeli armed force, well equipped, surrounded the village from its three directions and penetrated inside the village and opened fire from different automatic weapons, hand grenades and placed mines at some houses including the Mosque of the village. As a result of this brutal attack, nine persons, eight men and one woman, were killed and fourteen others were injured and taken to hospital. Fire lasted for about one hour and a half, and was returned by the village guards, then the aggressors withdrew. Mines, grenades and other warlike materials bearing Hebrew markings were found on the spot.

This bold attack and cold-blooded murder by Israelis against an innocent H.J.K. village constitutes a serious breach of article III, paragraph 2 of the General Armistice Agreement.

It is requested that this grave incident be immediately investigated and an emergency meeting be held to condemn this case."

A copy of the complaint was sent to the Israeli Delegation which refused to receive it.

II. Investigation of the Complaint

3. Three hours after the receipt of the verbal complaint, United Nations Military Observers were on the scene of the incident. They completed their investigation the same day. The Observers inspected the damaged buildings, visited the spot where an Arab Legion lorry had been blown up, interviewed the wounded and other witnesses and searched for tracks in order to ascertain whether such tracks came from and led to the Demarcation Line.
4. Nahhalin village is distant three and a half kilometres from the Demarcation Line. According to the Observer who led the tracking team, incoming and outgoing footprints of men were found from the north-west outskirts of the village to the Demarcation Line. One of the Observers followed the same tracks into Israeli territory for about 100 metres. Incoming tracks were noted in many spots along the tracks leading to the border. These tracks compared in size and type to the outgoing tracks. Similar tracks leading towards the Demarcation Line were noted on the Israeli side of the Demarcation Line.
5. National Guards, Arab Legion soldiers and villagers told the Observers that about 200 men participated in the attack. They stated that most of the assailants had stayed outside the village and that the attack on the village itself had been carried out by several small patrols. The witnesses questioned were unable to say how the attackers were dressed, owing to darkness, except that they had something round on their heads. Several witnesses, however, heard the attackers using words which were not Arab, such as "Khadima" (the Hebrew word for "forward").
6. In Nahhalin village, the Observers visited the seven damaged houses where explosive charges had been used to blow the doors open. Some of the doors had bullet holes in them. Empty cartridge shells were found lying in the vicinity of the door. The Mosque of the village had its double doors blown up by a large charge of explosives; all window panes were broken. In the eight above-mentioned buildings were several impacts of bullets and hand grenade fragments. In the vicinity of the houses, many safety pins and pulling rings of the type used with fragmentation grenades and pull igniters were found. A fluid incendiary bomb in working condition and ready for use was found on the main road of the village. On the western side of the village, near a wall a prepared charge of

one block of T.N.T. covered by stones was found; it was marked with Hebrew letters. At about 50 metres from the Mosque, a fragmentation grenade in working condition and partly dug in a pile of stones was also found.

7. At a spot about three kilometres outside Nahhalin, on the road to Bethlehem, the Observers saw the Arab Legion lorry which was blown up by a mine whilst on its way to reinforce Nahhalin. Among the evidence collected were empty cartridge shells lying about near the crater caused by the explosion, the neck of a fluid incendiary bomb as well as two twisted metal spikes of a type used for trip wires, on each side of the road.

III. Decision of the Mixed Armistice Commission

8. An emergency meeting of the Mixed Armistice Commission was convened for the early morning of 30 March to discuss the Jordan complaint on the Nahhalin incident.

9. On the preceding evening, efforts were made to inform the Israel delegation of the time of the meeting and to transmit to them a request to attend. A message sent on behalf of the Chairman of the Mixed Armistice Commission was not accepted. To a message sent in the name of the United Nations Chief of Staff, the General Staff Officer in charge of Israel's delegations to the Mixed Armistice Commissions replied that under present circumstances Israel was not participating in the Israel-Jordan Mixed Armistice Commission.

10. The opening of the emergency meeting was delayed for nearly an hour in the expectation that the Israeli delegation might attend it. When finally the Chairman declared the meeting open, he expressed his regret at the absence of the Israeli delegation.

11. The delegation of Jordan moved the following resolution:

"1. The crossing of the Demarcation Line by a large group of militarily trained Israelis who planned and carried out an attack on Nahhalin Village on the 28/29 March 1954, firing from automatic weapons, detonating explosives, throwing hand grenades and incendiary bombs, which resulted in:

(a) the killing of five National Guards and one woman, and the wounding of fourteen villagers, men and women;

(b) the killing of three Legionnaires by the blowing up of a truck which was proceeding to Nahhalin Village as reinforcement, and the wounding of the officer in charge of the reinforcement and of four other Legionnaires,

constitutes a most flagrant breach of article III, paragraph 2 of the General Armistice Agreement.

2. The Mixed Armistice Commission condemns Israel in the strongest terms for this latest aggression and calls on the Israeli authorities to take most effective measures to prevent such and other aggressions against Jordan in the future, and to apprehend and punish those responsible.

3. The Mixed Armistice Commission deeply deplores the loss of innocent lives incurred as a result of the attack on Nahhalin Village."

The resolution was adopted, the delegation of Jordan and the Chairman voting in favour.

12. After the vote, the Chairman made the following statement:

"The Chairman deeply sympathizes with the Nahhalin villagers. The terror of such a night attack with its accompanying loss of life will not be easily forgotten, especially since this is not the first time Nahhalin Village has felt the sting of the night raiders. I must, however, call upon the injured party to refrain from actions that will aggravate instead of lessen the existing tension. If there is to be any reciprocal action along the Jordan-Israel border, let it be only for acts of tolerance, understanding and co-operation. The parties to this Mixed Armistice Commission should not, in the face of difficult problems, lose sight of the fact that the co-operation necessary to the establishment of a peaceful border can find its beginning here in the Mixed Armistice Commission. In this case the evidence found establishes guilt without question. There seemed to be little effort on the part of the attackers to conceal their identity. I do not believe the Israeli officials will encounter much difficulty in apprehending the perpetrators of this crime and bringing them to justice."

[REDACTED]