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ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON PALESTINE

COMMUNICATION FROM THE ASIRAI ZION FUND

The following letter has been received from the Asirai Zion Fund, Inc., 140 West 42nd Street, New York 18, N.Y. June 9, 1947.

Judge Emil Sandstroem  
United Nations Committee of Inquiry  
on Palestine  
Lake Success  
New York

Dear Judge Sandstroem:

I endeavored to speak to you over the telephone a few days ago with reference to a letter which I had submitted to Mr. Trygve Lie under date 21 May, 1947, but I was informed by one of the secretaries of your Committee that I should submit my representations in writing as there was no possibility of my being granted an oral hearing before the Committee left for Palestine.

In case my letter to Mr. Trygve Lie has not been handed to you or to your Committee, I enclose herewith a copy thereof. Since writing that letter, I have received further cabled requests from Palestine to appeal again to your Committee for intervention with the Palestine authorities in view of the fact that a number of death sentences by the military courts are apprehended to be very imminent. It would appear that, despite the appeal made by the United Nations to all governments to refrain from any action which might inflame passions while your Committee is dealing with the Palestine issue, the military authorities in Palestine are determined to pursue their policy of oppression under a law which is in gross violation of the provisions of the Palestine mandate. There is grave fear that, if further sentences of death by the military courts are executed, there will be fresh outbreaks of violence consequent upon the resentment which must follow.

There can be no doubt that the Palestine authorities are in duty bound to respond to the appeal made by the United Nations in the same way as all other governments and bodies, and it is only just and reasonable that they should suspend the operation of laws which are a flagrant violation of the Constitution of the country, as well as a source of bitterness to the community. The suspension of those laws would not involve any hardship or any denial of law and justice as the civil courts are still functioning in the country and are competent to deal with all the cases now being dealt with by the military courts.

In these circumstances, it is respectfully submitted that the request which I have been asked to make to you is one which could and should find favor with your Committee, and I trust that you will see your way to approaching the Palestine Government forthwith with the request that the military courts, and the Emergency Regulations under which they are constituted, should be suspended at least until such time as the recommendations of your Committee will have been made and considered by the United Nations.

Yours respectfully,

Max Seligman

COPY

May 21, 1947

The Honorable Trygve Lie  
Secretary General to the United Nations  
Lake Success  
New York

Dear Sir:

I beg to refer you to the conference which I had on Monday last with Mr. Andrew Cordier.

I am the attorney in Palestine for the Asirai Zion Committee, which is an organization caring for the welfare of political prisoners and their families and dependents.

I have submitted a request on behalf of that Committee that you should be good enough to communicate with the Palestine Government with the view to the immediate suspension of the military courts in Palestine, and the abolition of military law in respect of the civilian population until such time as the United Nations will have reached a decision in regard to the future of Palestine.

As I pointed out to Mr. Cordier, the military courts and the regulations by virtue of which they function, are regarded by the entire Jewish community as illegal and a gross violation of the provisions of the Mandate in that they deprive the civilian inhabitants of their civil rights.

The appeal which was made by the United Nations for a truce in Palestine was addressed to all governments, as well as to other bodies and must, therefore, be made to apply to the Palestine Government and the military authorities in Palestine. It is inconceivable that those authorities should continue to impose a regime of oppression against which the entire Jewish community is opposed and, at the same time, expect the Resistance Movement to refrain from activity against that regime. Of course, I have no right to speak in the name of the Resistance Movement, but there can be no doubt that, so long as the military regime and the military courts function, there is very little likelihood of an effective truce.

I would, therefore, most respectfully urge that you communicate directly with the Palestine authorities with a view to a cessation of all military court activities pending the determination of the Palestine issue by the United Nations.

Very truly yours,

Max Seligman