

202 (152)

LE PRESIDENT

Geneva, 24 February 1971

Madam,

Referring to the interview which Mr. Jean-Pierre Maunoir, Assistant-Director of the International Committee of the Red Cross, and Mr. Laurent Marti, head of our delegation in Israel, had last month with General Schlomo Gazit at the Ministry of Defence, I have the honour to submit to your kind attention a problem to which the International Committee of the Red Cross attaches particular importance.

The Government and National Red Crescent Society of Jordan have on a number of occasions drawn our attention to the serious consequences for persons on the West Bank of the Jordan and in the Gaza strip who, suspected of

Her Excellency
Mrs. Golda Meir
Prime Minister of
the State of Israel

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activities detrimental to State security, are evicted by the Israeli authorities. The information obtained on this subject by the ICRC delegates in Israel and Jordan confirms that there are indeed grounds for concern.

These expulsions of suspects, numbering several dozens each month since last year, have been tending to increase recently. Most of the people affected are of modest means with practically no chance of finding employment or land in Jordan, and therefore swell the ranks of the refugees.

The absence of any possibility of appeal against these sanctions increases considerably their scope, for these measures are likely to result in the loss for the person concerned of most of his belongings, particularly immovable property.

In addition, the conditions under^{which} these measures are carried out seem to be not without risk for the victims, who must cross on foot a dangerous desert frontier zone without any prior notice being sent to the military authorities of Jordan.

Consequently, you will understand that the explanations which have on several occasions been given to our delegates in Israel, according to which these measures are not really expulsions as the persons are affected are released and transferred to their own country, are not such as to allay the International Committee's anxiety.

Although in certain special circumstances there might be some humanitarian justification for these measures, such as when the suspect's family is already residing in Jordan

or his state of health would not enable him to withstand detention for any length of time, in the great majority of cases there is no such justification.

Therefore, knowing the Israeli authorities' constant concern to limit individual suffering caused by the present conflict whenever and as much as possible, I venture to hope that your Government will kindly examine this important question once again, bearing in mind the considerations mentioned above.

I avail myself of this opportunity to convey to you the International Committee's gratitude for the understanding which the Israeli Government and you in particular, Madam, have always shown towards our institution and its delegates in the Middle East.

Please accept, Madam, the assurance of my highest consideration and esteem.

Marcel A. Naville

ראש הממשלה
THE PRIME MINISTER

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Jerusalem, 20 April 1971

Dear Mr. President,

I write in response to your letter of February 24, 1971, with reference to the transfer to Jordanian territory of a number of persons who had been detained by the Israel authorities under Administrative Detention Orders pursuant to the Emergency (Defence) Regulations of 1945. My reply has been somewhat delayed as I wished to secure the views of the authorities directly concerned.

The position briefly is as follows:

Action under the Regulations is based exclusively on imperative reasons of public security. I do not need to stress the very special problems which confront us of sabotage and of indiscriminate murder by terrorists of innocent persons (of whom the vast majority are Arabs), and which these detention orders are intended, not without success, to minimize.

As to procedure, each case is carefully considered on the basis of available information, and in no instance is a detention order issued unless it is deemed to be in the vital public interest. Detainees are entitled to appeal their detention to an Appeal Board set up under the Regulations. In addition, the sentences are reviewed at regular six-month intervals by a Review Board.

I am keenly aware of the humanitarian problem involved in keeping certain of these people under prolonged detention. But it is precisely with this in mind, that since it is not possible in present

Mr. Marcel A. Naville,
President,
International Committee of the Red Cross,
Geneva.

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circumstances to free them inside Israel or the territories for whose security Israel is responsible, without renewed danger to the public weal, they are transferred to Jordan.

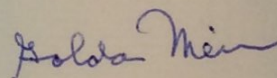
As for the conditions of transfer, I assure you that we are most anxious to avoid any unnecessary suffering. Of course, we would prefer that the Jordanian authorities permit the transfers in an orderly, organised manner over the bridges which are the recognised crossing points. Unfortunately, this has not proved to be possible.

I have sought to share with you in all frankness the difficult dilemma which so often besets the exercise of responsibility when faced with problems involving security. I can assure you that to the extent that there is a reduction in terrorist activities hostile to the security of Israel and to the inhabitants of the territories, there will be a reduction in the preventive action which we are bound to take.

In conclusion, Mr. President, I would like to thank you for your kind remarks about Israel's desire to limit suffering caused by the present tension between her neighbours and herself. Permit me, too, to add the expression of my sincere regard for the work of the International Committee of the Red Cross and your devoted staff, who have done so much to alleviate the plight of the prisoners of war and other victims of the conflict.

Please accept the assurances of my highest consideration and esteem,

Yours sincerely,



Golda Meir

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Genève, le 19 mai 1971.

RMC/NM

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Madame le Premier Ministre,

J'ai l'honneur d'accuser réception de votre lettre du 20 avril 1971 par laquelle vous avez bien voulu répondre à celle que je vous adressais le 24 février, relative aux expulsions de ressortissants arabes hors des territoires sous contrôle israélien.

Je vous remercie de cette communication. J'en ai fait part aux membres du Comité international de la Croix-Rouge qui en ont pris connaissance avec la plus grande attention.

Les renseignements contenus dans votre lettre n'apaisent malheureusement pas l'inquiétude du Comité international au sujet des expulsions. S'il comprend parfaitement que les autorités chargées du maintien de l'ordre soient amenées dans certains cas à procéder à

Son Excellence
Madame Golda Meir
Premier Ministre
de l'Etat d'Israël

JERUSALEM

cf. lettre de Mme Golda Meir du 20.4.71 transmise par Amb. Kidron
enr. 1562 du 3.5.71

l'internement, pendant une période plus ou moins longue, de personnes suspectées de s'être livrées à des activités contraires à la sécurité de l'Etat, le GICR par contre ne peut que déplorer toute mesure ayant pour effet de séparer des familles et de les priver définitivement de leur foyer. Aussi, persiste-t-il à espérer que le Gouvernement israélien voudra bien cesser de recourir aux mesures d'expulsions, qu'il juge contraires aux principes fondamentaux d'humanité.

Je vous prie d'agréer, Madame le Premier Ministre, mes respectueux hommages ainsi que les assurances de ma très haute considération.

Marcel A. Naville