

states were now represented in the Security Council. The New Zealand draft resolution having been vetoed, no other draft resolution was put forward in its place.

On September 28, 1954 Israel complained to the Security Council that the "Bat Galim", a ship flying the flag of Israel, bound from Eritrea for Haifa, had been seized by Egyptian authorities at the southern approach to the Suez Canal and its crew of ten Israelis detained. The Security Council deferred action pending a report from the Chief of Staff of the Truce Supervision Organization. Both the Mixed Armistice Commission and the Special Committee, to which Egypt appealed, upheld Israel's view that no provision of the armistice agreement had been violated by Israel in connection with the "Bat Galim" case. Egypt withdrew its original charge that the crew had fired on Egyptian fishermen and on January 1, 1955 released the men. The Security Council adopted no resolution on this issue. The majority of its members supported, however, the principles set forth in the Council's resolution of September 1, 1951. The President of the Council suggested on January 13, 1955 that since Egypt had expressed willingness to release the ship and its cargo, the Chief of Staff of the Truce Supervision Organization might extend his good offices, if the parties so desired, to expedite a settlement. Israel reported to the Security Council on September 19, 1956 that the vessel and its cargo had later been confiscated. It also reported that on May 25, 1956 a Greek ship, the "Panagia", carrying cement from Haifa to Eilat, was detained at Port Said for four and a half months, its crew not being allowed to go ashore except the three members who were in the most extreme need of medical attention. On September 8 the vessel returned to Haifa without completing its trip.

4. It should be explained that at the southern outlet of the Gulf of Aqaba the shores of Saudi Arabia and the Egyptian-owned Sinai Peninsula are about eleven miles apart. The mouth of the Gulf is blocked by two islands and by shoals and reefs. There is only one navigable channel, which is about 550 yards wide. This is found in the three-mile-wide strait lying between the island of Tiran and a stretch of the Sinai Peninsula coast above Sharm al-Shaikh. One hundred and ten miles further north, at the head of the Gulf to which these straits give access, are two seaports. One is the long-established port of Aqaba, which is Jordan's only seaport. The other, less than ten miles from the Jordanian seaport, is the new Israeli port of Eilat, which is now being developed to serve as a centre for trade with East Africa, South Africa and Asia.

Before the end of 1949 Egypt occupied the uninhabited islands of Tiran and Sinafir at the mouth of the Gulf, which in the past have been claimed by Saudi Arabia. In a note of January 28, 1950 addressed to the government of the United States it stated that "This occupation being in no way conceived in a spirit of obstructing in any way innocent passage through the stretch of water separating these two islands from the Egyptian coast of Sinai, it follows that this passage, the only practicable one, will remain free as in the past, in conformity with international practice and recognized principles of the law of nations". Egypt later set up guns on the Sinai Peninsula coast commanding the navigable channel in the Straits of Tiran. Ships intending to pass through the straits, like ships intending to pass through the Suez Canal, were required to give advance notice of their intention, together with information as to the nature and destination of their respective cargoes. In a few cases the alleged right of visit and search was exercised, and certain ships which tried to proceed without complying with the regulations or without stopping were challenged.

On July 26, 1951, when the Security Council was considering Israel's second complaint about interference with shipping in the Suez Canal (see 3 (b) and (c) above), the representative of Israel said that there were "signs" of an Egyptian intention to extend these practices "to other waters" in which Israel "possesses and intends to use its full maritime rights". Not until January 1954, however, did Israel specifically ask the Security Council to consider the question of interference with shipping proceeding to the port of Eilat. The Security Council discussed this question in February and March 1954, along with Israel's third complaint of restrictions on shipping in the Suez Canal. The representative of Israel on February 5 cited in particular three cases of interference at the Straits of Tiran—that of a Danish vessel escorted by an armed corvette to an Egyptian command post and detained for 24 hours during a voyage from Eilat to Mombasa, that of a United States vessel carrying wheat to the Jordanian port of Aqaba, which was fired on at the entry to the Gulf, and that of an Italian vessel fired on at the straits on a voyage from Eritrea to Eilat. Israel's representative maintained that the effect of the restrictions had been to hamper the legitimate development of Israel's trade through the port of Eilat. He held that they violated the armistice agreement and Security Council resolutions of August 11, 1949, November 17, 1950 and September 1, 1951. Here, as in the case of the Suez Canal, the chief grievance was not the actual number of ships visited and searched