

Armistice Commission to file 324 unheard complaints without further deliberation and that thenceforth no further complaints would be brought before the Commission. The parties would maintain direct and frequent contacts between their representatives instead and would resume joint patrolling of the demarcation line, discontinued earlier. This agreement had a good effect but was of short duration. Incidents soon continued as before to be brought to the Commission for its attention. There have been a number of appeals to the Special Committee under Article X: 4 of the armistice agreement, but when one of the parties has not wished the appeal to be considered means have been found to delay the meeting of the committee indefinitely—a situation to which the Chief of Staff of the Truce Supervision Organization has drawn the attention of the Security Council on more than one occasion.

Although the decisions of the Special Committee are final, there were several occasions, as will be seen below, on which either Israel or Egypt considered it necessary to appeal to the Security Council. From 1955 onward the Security Council was confronted by a situation in which increased tension and higher casualty rates went hand in hand. For the protection of its citizens Israel adopted a policy of military retaliation for attacks within its own territory by Egyptian-trained saboteurs. Although, as the reports submitted to the Security Council showed, these retaliatory raids resulted in several times as many casualties among the inhabitants of the Gaza strip as the casualties suffered by the inhabitants of Israel, the problem of sabotage in Israel by so-called "fedayeen" was not eliminated. Eventually, as will be seen below, the Secretary-General himself was sent to the area to see what could be done to reverse the trend toward a complete breakdown of the armistice agreement.

The failure of the parties to move forward to an early peace settlement prevented the fulfilment of one of the main purposes of the armistice agreement. Israel was anxious to secure a permanent settlement with Egypt as soon as possible, but wanted the position prevailing under the armistice agreement rather than earlier resolutions of the General Assembly to be used as the point of departure for the peace negotiations. Egypt and Israel's other Arab neighbours, on the contrary, declined to be drawn into negotiations on that basis since this would have involved recognition of the sovereignty of Israel in three quarters of Palestine. From November 1952 until October 1956 they continued to assert publicly that they were willing to negotiate a settlement with Israel as soon as the latter accepted the General Assembly's recommendations for (a) an approximately equal division of the territory of Palestine between Israel and the Arabs, (b) the internationalization of Jerusalem, (c) the repatriation of "refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbours" and (d) compensation for the property of those choosing not to return and for loss of or damage to property in defined categories. To these suggestions Israel objected that it could not be expected to give up territory which it had won during a military conflict that had been forced upon its citizens by the Arabs themselves in 1948. It insisted that the negotiations should be "free and untrammelled" and declined to participate in negotiations if compliance with past Assembly resolutions was to be required as a "pre-condition". The Arabs, meanwhile, would negotiate on no other basis.

A Conciliation Commission appointed in accordance with a resolution adopted by the General Assembly on December 11, 1948, made repeated but unsuccessful efforts to compose these differences. After the conclusion of the armistice agreements the General Assembly twice adopted resolutions which were designed to encourage the parties themselves to reach a settlement. On December 14, 1950, "recognizing that, in the interests of the peace and stability of the Near East, the refugee question should be dealt with as a matter of