
CABLEGRAM DATED 1 JULY 1948 FROM THE UNITED NATIONS MEDIATOR
ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL CONCERNING THE
LST "ALTALENA" INCIDENT

For President of Security Council:

"Supplementing my report of Thirtieth June concerning the Altalena Incident (S/861) I may now report that the following letter has been addressed by Mr. Shertok to Colonel Bonde in response to the questions raised:

'Hakirva Thirtieth June 1948.

To the Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Kaete Dan Hotel, Tel Aviv.

Sir,

I have the honour to reply to the questions transmitted to us by Colonel Bonde.

Question 1: Number of persons who landed from the Altalena and their whereabouts.

Answer: The circumstances attending the possible landing of immigrants who were reported to have arrived on the Altalena have already been described in my letter to the special representative of the Secretary-General, Number 445-48 dated Twenty-Sixth June. According to published boasts of those at the head of the Irgun Zvai Leumi, about 800 persons had landed. We are not in a position to ascertain the accuracy of this or of any other figure. Nor do we have any knowledge as to the whereabouts of such persons with the exception of some who are in hospital.

Question 2: The number of wounded and their whereabouts.

Answer: At the time of writing there are 19 wounded from among the members of the crew of the Altalena in the Municipal Hospital of Tel Aviv and two in the Beilinson Hospital of Kupat Holim. Thirty-seven men treated in the former hospital, and eleven in the latter, have been released, their names being on record. Fourteen dead were brought to the Tel Aviv Municipal Hospital from among those who came on the Altalena after the sea and shore battle of Tuesday Twenty-Second June.

/Question 3.

Question 3: The quantity of war materials unloaded from the Altalena and their whereabouts;

Answer: As already stated in my above-mentioned letter, we were satisfied that no war materials had been unloaded at Kfar Vitkin and that the whole cargo which was on the boat when it came to Tel Aviv was consumed by fire.

Question 4: Do we still refuse to let UN observers take care of the war materials and the men landed.

Answer: In the light of the foregoing the question does not arise.

With a view to avoiding any unnecessary difficulty or misunderstanding as regards the access of the observers to military positions or scenes of military action, I would reiterate the suggestion repeatedly made in the past that a conference be held between the mediator's chief of staff and our representatives with a view to determining as precisely as possible the rules of procedure to be followed in this regard. I am, Sir, Yours Faithfully
Moshe Shertok, Minister of Foreign Affairs'

(Signed) Count Bernadotte"
