Arabs Attack To Split Palestine

Powerful Offensive Launched

JERUSALEM —(AP)— A Damascus dispatch Friday said 1,500 Arab warriors have launched a powerful offensive in northern Palestine in an effort to cut the Holy Land in two.

An Arab army source in the Syrian capital gave this account of the fighting:

The assault was launched by Arab volunteer fighters some 50 miles north of Jerusalem in the Beisan area, scene of an attack earlier this week. Reinforcements are being rushed into the engagement which was described as the "most ferocious" to date.

The Arabs are seeking to reopen a corridor from the Trans-Jordan frontier to the Nablus-Jenin-Tulkarm triangle where Arab volunteers have been reported concentrating their strength.

Military observers in Syria said if such a drive is successful it will "pose a strong Arab spearhead" at the Jewish coastal city of Tel Aviv. The Arabs are reported setting up a Jewish prison camp in the Nablus area.

DEATH TOLL 1,297

The Palestine government announced 31 Arabs and one Jew were killed in an attack Monday in northern Palestine. Sunday the Jews blew up a bridge leading across the Jordan from Trans-Jordan and another across the headwaters of the same river from Lebanon near Metulla. Haganah, the Jewish militia, said the bridges were blasted because Arabs were entering Palestine across them to join the volunteer Arab army fighting partition.

There were no casualty reports on the Trans-Jordan fighting. Elsewhere in Palestine 16 persons were killed in a series of bitter clashes. Since the United Nations voted for partition Nov. 29, communal fighting has claimed 1,297 lives in the Holy Land, an unofficial tabulation showed.

The Palestine government said three Arabs were killed and 36 others injured during a two-hour battle between the Jewish and Arab districts of Haifa. No Jewish casualties were listed.

Fighting broke out in the port, police said, when Jews opened mortar fire in the Hadar Hacarmel area. The shells fell in a wide area including the eastern railway station and the city's police headquarters.