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UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND WORKS AGENCY FOR PALESTINE REFUGEES IN THE NEAR EAST

Protection of Palestine refugees

Report of the Secretary-General

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 41/69 I of 3 December 1986, entitled "Protection of Palestine Refugees", the operative paragraphs of which read as follows:

"The General Assembly,

"...

- "1. Urges the Secretary-General, in consultation with the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, to undertake effective measures to guarantee the safety and security and the legal and human rights of the Palestine refugees in all the territories under Israeli occupation in 1967 and thereafter;
- "2. Holds Israel responsible for the security of the Palestine refugees in the Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, and calls upon it to fulfil its obligations as the occupying Power in this regard, in accordance with the pertinent provisions of the Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949;
- "3. Calls once again upon Israel, the occupying Power, to release forthwith all detained Palestine refugees, including the employees of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East;
- "4. Urges the Commissioner-General, in consultation with the Government of Lebanon, to provide housing to the Palestine refugees whose houses were demolished or razed by the Israeli forces;
- "5. Calls once again upon Israel to compensate the Agency for the damage to its property and facilities resulting from the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, without prejudice to Israel's responsibility for all damages resulting from that invasion;
- "6. Requests the Secretary-General, in consultation with the Commissioner-General, to report to the General Assembly, before the opening of its forty-second session, on the implementation of the present resolution."

2. On 21 January 1987, the Secretary-General addressed a note verbale to the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations, in which he drew attention to his reporting responsibility under the resolution and requested the Permanent Representative to inform him of any steps his Government had taken or envisaged taking in implementation of the relevant provisions of the resolution.

3. In a note verbale dated 8 July 1987, the Acting Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations replied as follows:

"Israel's position on this resolution was fully set out in statements by Israel's representative to the Special Political Committee on 15 November 1985 (A/SPC/41/SR.14), and in the Report of the Secretary-General (A/41/567) dated 3 September 1986.

The adoption of resolution 41/69 I entitled 'Protection of Palestinian refugees' clearly demonstrates the hypocrisy of its sponsors. Despite Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon in 1985, this resolution still blames Israel for the 'continuous suffering of Palestinians' in Lebanon. Not

surprisingly, the sponsors of this resolution continue to blame Israel for Arab persecution of Palestinian refugees.

In the past two years, Syrian and Lebanese forces have killed roughly 5,000 Palestinians and wounded over 10,000 in Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon. Likewise, Palestinian refugee camps in Syria and Jordan are the scenes of untold death, destruction and misery. The authors of resolution 41/69 I, however, chose to omit these facts from the resolution.

All this death and destruction takes place in Arab countries. No such attacks (or anything remotely resembling them) have ever taken place among any of the refugee camps in Israel's administered territories. Yet the sponsors of resolution 41/69 I choose to single out Israel for imaginary maltreatment of Palestinian Arab refugees and the 'lack of security' it provides them. Like the resolution itself, this is indeed preposterous."

4. In previous reports on this subject, the Secretary-General referred to the constraints he had faced in undertaking the measures requested of him by the General Assembly. Nevertheless, the Commissioner-General of UNRWA, as the senior United Nations official responsible for providing services to the Palestine refugees, continued his efforts, in consultation with the Secretary-General, to do all that was feasible to contribute to the safety and security of the refugees in all the territories under occupation. His efforts in regard to Palestine refugees in the West Bank and Gaza Strip in the reporting period are described in his annual report to the General Assembly. ^{1/}

5. Following the withdrawal of the Israeli forces from the Saida and Tyre areas in February and April 1985 respectively (see A/40/756, para. 5), there is nothing further to state regarding the Palestine refugees in Lebanon in the context of the present report.

6. There has been no progress on the claim by UNRWA against the Government of Israel regarding damage to its property and facilities resulting from the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982.

Notes

^{1/} Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-second Session, Supplement No. 13 (A/42/13). See, in particular, the Introduction and sect. II D.
