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United Nations Relief and Works Agency for
Palestine Refugees in the Near East

Palestine refugees' properties and their revenues

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

On 30 April 2009, the Secretary-General sent notes verbales to Israel and all other Member States, drawing their attention to the relevant provisions of General Assembly resolutions 63/91 to 63/94 and requesting information by 10 July 2009 concerning any action taken or envisaged in relation to the implementation of those resolutions. A reply dated 5 August 2009 was received from Israel responding to the request contained in paragraph 4 of resolution 63/94. The full text of the reply is reproduced in the present report. No information has been received from any other Member State regarding the implementation of resolution 63/94.

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to paragraph 6 of General Assembly resolution 63/94, on Palestine refugees' properties and their revenues.
2. In a note verbale dated 30 April 2009, the Secretary-General drew the attention of the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations to General Assembly resolutions 63/91 to 63/94, all of 5 December 2008, with the request that the Permanent Representative inform him by 10 July 2009 of any steps her Government had taken or envisaged taking in implementation of the relevant provisions of the resolutions.
3. Also on 30 April 2009, the Secretary-General sent a note verbale to all other Member States, drawing their attention to the relevant provisions of resolutions 63/91 to 63/94 and requesting information by 10 July 2009 on any actions taken or envisaged in relation to their implementation.
4. A reply dated 5 August 2009 was received from Israel responding to the request contained in paragraph 4 of General Assembly resolution 63/94. The text read as follows:

While Israel voted against these resolutions, as it has done on similar resolutions adopted in the past by the General Assembly, Israel wishes to reiterate its support for the humanitarian activities of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). In this respect, Israel reaffirms its intention to continue facilitating UNRWA's extension of vital humanitarian services to its beneficiaries in the field.

Over recent weeks and months, Israel has substantially eased the security-related restrictions in the West Bank, dismantling two thirds (27 of 41) of the formerly existing checkpoints and some 140 dirt roadblocks during the past year. These positive developments, noted with approval by the Quartet Envoy, have resulted in a marked improvement in economic indicators in the West Bank. Also, Israel continues to facilitate the entry of large quantities of humanitarian supplies into Gaza. Between the June 2007 Hamas takeover of Gaza and September 2008, 35,542 trucks bearing 813,870 tons of humanitarian supplies entered Gaza through the crossings from Israel. Similarly large quantities of supplies continue to enter Gaza through the crossings on an ongoing basis, with over 408,014 tons of aid and 55,034 million litres of fuel delivered to Gaza between January and July 2009.

Despite Israel's ongoing commitment to the bilateral negotiations with the Palestinian Authority during 2008, Palestinian terrorism has continued unabated and remains an alarming reality. Since 2001, over 8,900 rockets and mortars have been fired at Israel from Gaza, over 3,100 of which were fired during 2008. This campaign of violence has not been limited to rocket fire from Gaza. In five separate incidents during 2008, Palestinian terrorists based in the West Bank carried out terror attacks, killing 12 and wounding dozens of Israeli civilians. Troublingly, none of the above is mentioned in any of the aforementioned resolutions.

Notwithstanding its support for UNRWA's humanitarian activities, Israel remains concerned by the political motivation of the aforesaid resolutions, and is disturbed by the fact that they present a one-sided view which fails to reflect the reality on the ground. Moreover, Israel's concern in this respect extends to many of the public statements of UNRWA officials which are clearly political and one-sided in tone. As a professional, humanitarian body, UNRWA must be vigilant in avoiding references to controversial matters of a political nature.

Israel favours a consolidation of UNRWA resolutions and a removal of all extraneous political language. Moreover, Israel urges the Secretary-General and UNRWA to consider, together with the concerned parties, ways in which the United Nations can enhance the manner in which it advances the welfare of the Palestinian People.

In this respect, Israel favours an application in the Palestinian context of the standard principles guiding the United Nations with respect to treatment of refugees. Specifically, UNRWA's mandate should be such that entitlement to its services will be defined in a manner consistent with the standard United Nations policy on this matter. Furthermore, UNRWA's mandate should include the active promotion in the Palestinian context of the broadly applied United Nations goals of resettlement and local integration of refugees.

The annual General Assembly resolutions on UNRWA represent a politically motivated departure from the standard United Nations policy on refugee matters. This politicization of a strictly humanitarian issue has exacerbated the situation of the Palestinian refugees by preventing practical solutions to their needs, such as have

been successfully implemented with respect to numerous groups of refugees around the world. Israel urges the Secretary-General to use his good offices to promote such changes in these resolutions as will ensure that the mandate of UNRWA is consistent with the general principles guiding United Nations policy on refugees.

5. No information has been received from any other Member State with regard to the request contained in paragraph 4 of General Assembly resolution 63/94.

*A/64/150.