



UNITED NATIONS CONCILIATION COMMISSION FOR PALESTINE
REPORT DATED 6 JULY 1949
SUBMITTED BY THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE
TO THE CONCILIATION COMMISSION

A meeting was held in Tel Aviv on 5 July as a result of which the Israeli Government accept the immediate return of certain members of families separated by the Armistice line, i.e. wives with legal married status, male children up to the age of 14 years and female children to the age of 16. The return of male members of the family is not at present envisaged but the Israeli representatives do not exclude the possibility of re-examining the question at some later time.

Up to the present time such return of members of separated families as has taken place is not distinguishable in the statistics from repatriation authorized by local authorities which has taken place individually or in groups. The exact figures of members of separated families who have now returned cannot therefore be quoted. In order to facilitate the return of wives and children belonging to separated families, the Israeli Government has set up an interdepartmental body of four members, consisting of officials from the Ministry of Arab Affairs, the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry for National Defence and the Ministry of Immigration. This body will centralise applications for repatriation, will make decisions and will assure passages across the frontiers.

Extension publicity will be carried out throughout Israeli territory to encourage the persons concerned to apply to this new body, either directly or through the local authorities. Contact has been established through the Mixed Armistice Commission with the Governments of Egypt, the Hashemite Jordan Kingdom and Lebanon with a view to co-operating in this repatriation by issuing identity cards and by escorting people to agreed points for crossing the frontier where the examination of those returning will take place. The Israeli authorities are also trying to facilitate the exchange of postal correspondence between members of separated families through the Mixed Armistice Commission. In its individual consideration of each application the interdepartmental body reserves its right to authorise only the return of those persons whose needs can be adequately provided for by the head of the family. In the event of the application for return not being granted, the head of a family might be allowed to join his family in the Arab States provided he were not wanted by the authorities for offences under common law.

In its investigations on the state of the orange groves, the Technical Committee feels that it should be accompanied by experts and has therefore submitted to the Israeli Government two suggestions: in the first place, a group of three experts consisting of one Israeli, one Arab and a third member of another nationality, or secondly, a single neutral member. The Israeli Government has accepted either alternative in principle, with a preference however for the second, on grounds of security. The Technical Committee has accepted the second proposal in order not to delay the examination of the groves and expects to visit the groves as soon as the expert is available.

The Israeli Government refuses to establish a connection between the state of the orange groves and the return of owners or workers. The return of Arabs in general is held to be a political question within the competence of the Conciliation Commission and not of the Technical Committee.

The Israeli Government will confirm the above conversations in writing and a copy will be immediately sent to Lausanne by the Technical Committee.

Jerusalem,
6 July, 1949.