



General Assembly

A/1288
17 July 1950

UNITED NATIONS CONCILIATION COMMISSION FOR PALESTINE

SEVENTH PROGRESS REPORT*

(For the period from 8 May - 12 July 1950)

Note by the Secretary-General : The Secretary-General has the honour to communicate to the Members of the United Nations, in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 13 of [General Assembly resolution 194 \(III\)](#) of 11 December 1948, the seventh progress report of the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine.

1. As indicated in its [sixth progress report](#) to the Secretary-General, the Conciliation Commission for Palestine, on 29 March 1950, submitted [concrete proposals](#) to the parties for the establishment of a new procedure, combining direct negotiations in mixed committees with mediation by the Commission itself.

The Arab Governments [replied](#), through the Egyptian Foreign Minister in Cairo, on 14 April, that they would be prepared to sit with Israeli representatives on a mixed committee to study the implementation of paragraph 11 of the [General Assembly resolution of 11 December 1948](#), provided that the Government of Israel declared that it accepted the principle embodied in this paragraph and agreed to its implementation.

As regards the other outstanding questions, the Arab Governments expressed themselves in favour of maintaining the procedure followed heretofore, but they asked the Commission to complete with mediation its task of conciliation. Whenever an agreement in principle was reached concerning a specific question, the representatives of both parties could sit together in the presence of representatives of the Commission in order to discuss its implementation.

The Government of Israel, without requesting concessions or undertakings in advance, declared itself ready to negotiate a peace settlement directly with any Arab State wishing to do so. It asked the Commission to inform it which Arab State or States were ready to negotiate with Israel a settlement of all outstanding issues, whereupon it would communicate to the Commission without delay the names of the members of the Israeli delegation fully empowered to negotiate and conclude such a settlement looking to the establishment of permanent peace.

* For the last report, see document [A/1255](#).

2. The Commission has considered the appropriateness of taking up with the Government of Israel the conditions which the Arab States placed upon the acceptance of its proposals. The Commission considered that in doing so it would not facilitate its task of conciliation. It therefore deemed it

preferable to inform the parties as to the principles which would guide it in the conduct of negotiations within the mixed committees in the hope that its proposals would thus prove acceptable to both the Arabs and the Israelis. In consequence, it decided to send a new letter to the [Arab Governments](#) and the [Government of Israel](#).

In this letter, dated 11 May, the Commission, taking into consideration the views expressed by both sides in response to its proposals, was careful to stress certain points:

It indicated that the objective aimed at was to achieve a final settlement of the Palestine problem as called for in the [General Assembly resolution of 11 December 1948](#);

It noted that the various problems raised by such a settlement were linked together;

It recognized, nevertheless, that some of them were of an urgent nature and might, by agreement between the parties, be examined before the others;

Finally, it emphasized that the principles laid down in the [General Assembly resolution of 11 December 1948](#) were to be respected (the text of the letter is attached as Annex I).

3. The common reply of the Governments of Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan and Syria to the Commission's note of 11 May was communicated in a [letter](#) from the representative of Egypt dated 19 May.* In this letter the four Arab States emphasized their desire to see, first of all, the problem of the refugees solved on a basis of justice, equity and humanity according to the [General Assembly's resolution of 11 December 1948](#). "So long as this problem remains without a solution based on these principles", the Arab Governments stated, "the peace, stability and welfare of the Middle East will be in danger". The Arab States reiterated that the acceptance of the Commission's proposals to establish mixed committees was subject to a double condition: first of all, the recognition and acceptance by the Government of Israel of the [resolution of 11 December](#) in which the United Nations General Assembly called for the return of refugees to their homes and the payment of compensation to those choosing not to return; secondly, the undertaking by Israel to implement this resolution.

* A few days later the Commission received a [separate reply](#) from the Government of Lebanon, contained in a [letter](#) from its representative to the Commission dated 17 May. The Lebanese reply did not differ in substance from that contained in the common [letter](#) sent by the Egyptian delegation.

As regards the other aspects of the Palestine problem, the Arab States confirmed the attitude communicated to the Commission in their name by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Egypt on [14 April*](#) in his oral statement to the Chairman of the Commission: the Arab Governments were ready to continue the study of these matters according to the procedure followed up to now, it being understood that whenever the study of a certain question led to an agreement on principle, the details of implementation would be discussed in the mixed committees.

In the letter from the representative of Egypt, containing the common reply of the four Arab States, the refugee problem is dealt with as the "basic problem", the other questions being considered as "related questions" only** (the text of the [letter from the Egyptian delegation dated 19 May](#) as well as the text of the [Lebanese delegation's letter of 17 May](#), are attached as annexes II and III respectively).

4. The Government of Israel [replied](#) to the [Commission's note of 11 May](#) in a letter from the Minister for Foreign Affairs dated 20 May. In this [letter](#), the Foreign Minister stated that it appeared from the [note of 11 May](#) that the Commission was not yet in a position to give a reply to the question contained in the letter from the Government of Israel dated 6 May,** as to the "Arab State or States which might be ready to negotiate with Israel with a view to a final peace settlement". In these circumstances, the Minister presumed that the Commission would deem it preferable "to await a clarification of the Arab attitude on the question of direct negotiations before considering the next step" (the text of the [letter](#) from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Israel is attached as annex IV).

* See [document A/1255](#), paragraph 23.

** This statement is not made in the letter from the Lebanese delegation dated 17 May.

*** [See document A/1255](#), paragraph 24.

5. The [reply from the Arab states](#) to the [Commission's note of 11 May](#) once again raised the question as to whether the Commission should take up with the Government of Israel the conditions of the Arab States for participation in the work of the mixed committee. The Commission found nothing in the [Arab reply](#) which warranted a departure from the position which it had already adopted in relation to the [first Arab reply of 14 April](#). It considered that to take up the Arab conditions with the Government of Israel would not facilitate the fulfilment of its task of conciliation or the acceptance by both parties of the proposals contained in the [memorandum of 29 March](#).^{*} In consequence, the Commission decided that it was desirable to clarify for the parties certain aspects of its [proposals of 29 March](#).

In a [note dated 30 May](#), the Commission recalled that the General Assembly of the United Nations in its [resolution of 11 December 1948](#), which constituted the charter of the Commission, had requested the Commission to establish "contact between the parties themselves and the Commission at the earliest possible date". In this [resolution](#) the Assembly had invited the Governments concerned "to seek agreement by negotiations conducted either with the Conciliation Commission or directly, with a view to the final settlement of all questions outstanding between them".

The Commission pointed out in its note that "it was in response to this request and in accordance with the instructions given in paragraph 6 of the [resolution](#) that the Commission, in view of the fact that the parties had failed to undertake direct negotiations, invited them to seek in mixed committees under the chairmanship of the Commission, the agreement aimed at by the Assembly".

The Commission emphasized the inappropriateness of laying down for the initiation of a procedure in a conformity with the [Assembly's resolution](#) conditions dealing with principles already laid down by that resolution. The [note of 30 May](#) stated that all these principles "must be respected and one of them cannot be singled out for special recognition without impairing the equilibrium of the [resolution of 11 December 1948](#) as a whole".

"The Commission feels sure" the [note](#) finally stated, "that these principles are recognized by the parties and that they mean to respect them; but their implementation gives rise to complex problems. It is with these problems that negotiations in the mixed committees would deal".

The Commission concluded its [note](#) by referring to the necessity of establishing as soon as possible conditions of peace and stability in the Middle East and of putting an end to the sufferings of the refugees. It expressed the hope that it would be possible to proceed without new delays to the establishment of the mixed committees (the text of the [note](#) is attached as annex V).

* [Ibid.](#), paragraph 14.

6. On [12 June](#), at the request of the delegation of Egypt, the Commission met with the Arab delegations to receive the [reply of the Egyptian Government](#) to the Commission's [latest note of 30 May 1950](#).

In this [reply](#), the Government of Egypt pointed out the lack of any mention in the [Commission's note of 30 May](#) of a formal and explicit statement by the Government of Israel that it would accept the recommendation of the [resolution of 11 December 1948](#) concerning the return of refugees to their homes and the payment of compensation to those who chose not to return. Under these circumstances the Government of Egypt declared that it maintained its attitude as regards the conditions under which it would be ready to cooperate in the work of mixed committees as proposed by the Commission.

The representative of Syria and Lebanon, having associated themselves with the views expressed by the Egyptian representative, stated that their respective Governments adhered to the position previously adopted by the Arab States.

7. The representatives of the Hashemite Jordan Kingdom, who had received no instruction from his Government at the time of the [meeting of 12 June](#), communicated his Government's [reply](#) to the Commission on

21 June 1950. In its [reply](#) the Government of the Hashemite Jordan Kingdom noted that the Government of Israel, far from showing itself ready to implement the [General Assembly's resolution](#) concerning the return of refugees, was driving certain Arab tribal populations out of territory under Israeli control in southern Palestine "in order to settle Jewish immigrants in their place". Under these circumstances the Government of Jordan considered that no useful purpose would be served by entering into negotiations with Israel at the present time. In a further letter, dated 26 June, the representative of the Hashemite Jordan Kingdom explained among other things that his Government's refusal to sit on mixed committees was due to its wish not to act against the common policy of the Arab States. As soon as the Government of Israel showed signs of good will Jordan would be ready to re-examine the situation, it being understood that the rights of the Arabs would be safeguarded and the wishes of the Arab States duly taken into consideration (the texts of these two letters are attached as annexes VI and VII).

8. It is clear from the replies of the Arab States that they have not considered sufficient the statement contained in the [Commission's note of 11 May](#), and reiterated in that of [30 May](#), that the new procedure would be based on the recognition and respect by the parties of [all](#) principles contained in the [resolution of 11 December 1948](#), since these principles form a homogeneous whole and could not be separated from one another.

In those circumstances, the Commission has concluded that it would not serve any useful purpose to continue the exchange of notes on its proposals and has decided to return to its official headquarters in Jerusalem in order to pursue its task of conciliation through first-hand contacts with all Governments concerned. The Commission will close its session in Geneva on 15 July and will reconvene in Jerusalem at the beginning of August.

ANNEX I

Note dated 11 May 1950 from the Conciliation Commission to the Governments of Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria

The Conciliation Commission for Palestine has the honour to acknowledge the [reply of the Arab Governments](#) to its [memorandum of 29 March 1950](#). The Commission has also received from the Government of Israel a reply, under date of 6 May, accepting the proposals contained in the memorandum. The Commission finds in these replies a spirit of cooperation which it appreciates.*

In making its proposals the Conciliation Commission was guided by the resolutions of the General Assembly on Palestine. The Commission also took into consideration the position of the Arab Governments and the Government of Israel on the implementation of those resolutions, having in mind these principles of law, justice and humanity referred to by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Egypt in Cairo on [14 April 1950](#) when he delivered the reply of the Arab Governments. The Commission believes that its [proposals of 29 March](#) represent the best method of reaching a settlement of the refugee problem as well as all other questions outstanding between the parties.

The Commission has not failed to note the various observations which have been formulated in response to its proposals. It considers that the problems thus raised could best be examined under the procedure proposed by the Commission in its [memorandum on 29 March](#).

The Commission wishes to take this opportunity to reaffirm that its objective in suggesting the creation of mixed committees was the attainment of the final settlement called for by the [General Assembly resolution of 11 December 1948](#). The past experience of the Commission has proved that the questions involved in such a settlement are linked to each other. Certain of these questions might be of a particularly urgent character and might be studied before others by common agreement of the parties.

The Commission considers that the work of the mixed committees could not lead to favourable results unless the discussions take place in a completely frank manner and the parties have the opportunity of expressing their points of view with unrestricted freedom. It goes without saying that the principles laid down by the [General Assembly resolution of 11 December 1948](#) would have to be respected.

The Conciliation Commission hopes that the Arab Governments and the Government of Israel will be represented in negotiations under the procedure envisaged in the Commission's [proposals of 29 March](#) by delegates fully empowered to act on their behalf. The Commission would appreciate notification of the names of the delegates so empowered.

The Conciliation Commission considers that negotiations under its auspices as proposed in its [memorandum](#) could begin in Geneva on 23 May 1950.

- * The opening paragraph of the [note of 11 May](#) addressed to the Government of Israel reads as follows:
- "The Conciliation Commission for Palestine has the honour to acknowledge the note of 6 May from the Government of Israel accepting the proposals contained in the Commission's [memorandum of 23 March 1950](#). The Commission has also received the [reply of the Arab Governments](#) to its [memorandum](#). The Commission finds in these replies a spirit of co-operation which it appreciated."

ANNEX II

Letter dated 19 May 1950 from the Chairman of the Egyptian delegation to the Chairman of the Commission

In a [letter dated 11 May 1950](#) you were good enough to send me a note of the same date also addressed by the Conciliation Commission to the representatives of Jordan, Lebanon and Syria for communication to their respective Governments, requesting me to communicate the note to my Government as soon as possible.

As I had the honour to inform you in my letter No. 10 of 12 May 1950, I duly transmitted the [Commission's note](#) to my Government.

In accordance with the instructions I have just received from my Government, I have the honour to inform you that the [Commission's note](#) has been studied by the four Governments to whom it was addressed.

The Foreign Ministers of these Governments met in Cairo as the Political Committee of the Arab League, and decided to send a joint reply to the note, which they have asked me to forward to the Commission.

I therefore hasten to communicate to the Conciliation Commission the following joint reply from the Governments of Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria to the [Commission's note of 11 May 1950](#):

1. Defining their attitude to the proposals set forth in the Conciliation [Commission's memorandum of 29 March 1950](#), the Governments of the Arab States, at their meeting in Cairo on 14 April 1950, issued a statement, the substance of which is as follows:

"The United Nations [General Assembly resolution of 11 December 1948](#), calling for the return of refugees to their homes and compensation for those choosing not to return stands out clearly for two reasons. On the one hand, because it is clear and categorical; and on the other, because the problem of the refugees is an urgent one, in view of their sufferings and of the baleful consequence the prolongation of their situation may have for peace in the Middle East. Accordingly, the Governments of the Arab States consider that the implementation of the United Nations [resolution](#) relating to the return of the refugees to their homes may furnish the solution to this particular question. The solution of the refugee problem as called for in this [resolution](#), should constitute the starting point of the new stage of the Commission's work.

"This being so, should the Commission receive the assurance that the other party, which has so far opposed the implementation of the [resolution](#), will respect it and undertake to implement it; and should the undertaking come to be regarded as a principle on which all the interested parties are in agreement, there will then be no doubt that the Governments of the Arab States collaborating with the Commission will be prepared to sit on the proposed mixed committees for the purpose of discussing in what manner that principle can be considered in detail with a view to the speedy attainment of a solution of the refugee problem on the basis of the United Nations [General Assembly resolution of 11 December 1948](#)."

2. In accepting the [Conciliation Commission's proposal](#) for the setting up of mixed committees, the Governments of the four Arab States collaborating with the Commission are guided by two considerations.

In the first place they would like to see a solution of the refugee problem on the basis of law, equity and humanity, and in conformity with the United Nations [General Assembly resolution](#). So long as this problem remains without a solution based on these principles, the peace, stability and welfare of the Middle East will be in danger. Secondly, the Arab Governments are anxious to give further evidence of their constant desire to facilitate the Commission's work. Their acceptance, however, is dependent on a twofold condition which must be adopted as a recognized principle:

(a) That the other party should recognize and accept the [resolution of 11 December 1948](#) in which the United Nations General Assembly calls for the return of refugees to their homes and compensation to those choosing not to return;

(b) That the other party should undertake to implement the [resolution](#).

3. The Arab Governments to whom the Conciliation [Commission's note of 11 May 1950](#) was addressed, beg to point out that the note makes no mention of this fundamental and basic twofold condition. The note does not even state whether the other party has accepted or rejected it.

They are therefore anxious to know what are the views of the Jewish authorities regarding this twofold condition.

4. With regard to the various cognate questions which may be closely linked with the fundamental problem of refugees, and which are referred to in the [Commission's note of 11 May 1950](#), it should be pointed out that the Arab Governments have not lost sight of the fact that these cognate issues constitute aspects of the same problem. In their anxiety to solve all aspects of the problem, the Arab Governments are prepared to proceed with the study of those various aspects by means of the procedure hitherto adopted. Whenever the examination of a given problem led to agreement in principle, the detail of its execution would be discussed in mixed committees.

(Signed) Abdel Monam MOSTAFA

Chairman of the Egyptian

delegation to the United Nations

Conciliation Commission for Palestine

ANNEX III

Letter dated 17 May 1950 from the Lebanese representative
to the Chairman of the Commission

I have the honour to acknowledge your [letter of 11 May 1950](#), together with the Conciliation Commission's note attached thereto.

I did not reply earlier because I was waiting to hear from my Government, whose reply reached me on 16 May.

The Lebanese Government has instructed me to draw the Conciliation Commission's attention to the following points:

1. Acceptance by the Arab States of the Conciliation Commission's proposals contained in its [memorandum of 29 March 1950](#) was conditional on recognition by the Jews of the principle of the return of the refugees, in accordance with the resolution of the United Nations [General Assembly of 11 December 1948](#), and an undertaking by the Jews to accept and implement that resolution.
2. The Conciliation Commission's [note of 11 May 1950](#) makes no mention of these two essential conditions.
3. The Conciliation Commission's [note of 11 May 1950](#) fails to inform the Arab Governments concerned of the attitude of the Jews as regards the two sine qua non conditions referred to in paragraph 1 of this [note](#).
4. In its desire to facilitate the work of the Conciliation Commission, the Lebanese Government, like the other Arab Governments concerned, is prepared, once the Jews have consented to the return of the refugees in accordance with the [resolution](#) of the United Nations General Assembly of 11 December 1948 and have formally undertaken to implement that [resolution](#), to discuss the details of implementation in a mixed committee under the auspices of the Conciliation Commission.

In informing the Conciliation Commission of the Lebanese Government's reply, which is completely in line with the decision adopted by the Political Commission of the Arab League, I should like to add that I shall be glad to furnish any additional explanations which the Commission may desire.

(Signed) J. MIKAOUI

Lebanese representative to the
Conciliation Commission for
Palestine

ANNEX IV

Letter addressed by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Israel to the
Chairman of the Commission, transmitted on 29 May 1950 by the
representative of Israel to the European Office of the
United Nations

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your communication of 11 May 1950.

I understand that when framing it you were not yet in a position to reply to the question contained in my letter of 6 May 1950 as to which Arab State or States are ready to negotiate with Israel on a final peace settlement. I also learn from your conversation with Mr. Reuven Chaleah in Geneva on ___ May ___, that the Commission itself realized the inadvisability of resuming its deliberation before the attitude of the Arab Governments on the vital issue was definitely cleared up.

In these circumstances, I presume the Conciliation Commission for Palestine will agree with the Government of Israel that it is preferable to await a clarification of the Arab attitude on the question of direct negotiations before considering the next step.

(Signed) Moshe SHARETT

Minister for Foreign Affairs

ANNEX V

Note dated 30 May from the Conciliation Commission to the
Arab delegations and the delegation of Israel

The Conciliation Commission for Palestine has examined the replies of the Arab Governments and the Government of Israel to the Commission's note of 11 May and finds it desirable to clarify the proposals put forward in its memorandum of 29 March 1950.

The General Assembly of the United Nations, in its resolution of 11 December 1948 which established the Conciliation Commission and constitutes its charter, requested the Commission "to establish contact between the parties themselves and the Commission at the earliest possible date". It also called upon the governments "to seek agreement by negotiations, conducted either with the Conciliation Commission or directly, with a view to the final settlement of all questions outstanding between them."

It was in response to this request and in accordance with the instructions given in paragraph 6 of that resolution that the Commission, in view of the fact that the parties had failed to undertake direct negotiations, invited them to seek in mixed committees under the chairmanship of the Commission, the agreement aimed at by the Assembly.

The Conciliation Commission believes that the parties will recognize the inappropriateness of laying down prerequisite conditions for the initiation of a procedure conforming to the Assembly resolution, especially where such conditions refer to principles laid down by that resolution. It should be emphasized that all these principles must be respected and that one of them cannot be singled out for special recognition without impairing the equilibrium of the resolution of 11 December 1948 as a whole.

The Commission feels sure that these principles are recognized by the parties, and that they

mean to respect them; but their implementation gives rise to complex problems. It is with these problems that negotiations in the mixed committee would deal.

The Commission is convinced that each Government will recognize the urgent need for the establishment of conditions of peace and stability in the Middle East and for bringing to an end the suffering of the refugees.

The Conciliation Commission trusts that in the light of the foregoing consideration it will be possible to proceed with the establishment of the mixed committees without further delays.

ANNEX VI

Letter dated 21 June 1950 from the representative of the
Hashemite Jordan Kingdom to the Chairman of the
Conciliation Commission

I have the honour to inform you, in reply to the [note of the Commission dated 30 May](#), that my Government notes that the Jews, far from showing any readiness to implement the [General Assembly's resolution](#) concerning the return of the refugees, are trying to drive certain Arab tribes out of the territory they occupy, in order to install Jewish immigrants in their place, with a view to obtaining military and political advantages, contrary to the terms of the Armistice Agreement.

For these reasons my Government does not deem it useful to begin negotiations before the condition set by the Arabs is fulfilled.

(Signed) Hafez ABDUL-HADI

ANNEX VII

Letter dated 26 June 1950 from the representative of the
Hashemite Jordan Kingdom to the Chairman of the
Conciliation Commission

Further to my [letter of 21 June 1950](#), I have the honour to inform you that the refusal by my Government to begin negotiations is dictated by reasons of solidarity with our brother Arab States, and by the want of evidence of goodwill on the part of Israel, which for well-known reasons is driving certain Arab tribes from southern Palestine out of the territory they occupy.

The Hashemite Jordan Kingdom is anxious for peace; and if evidence of good faith on the other side were forthcoming we should certainly be willing to reconsider the situation on the basis of safeguards for Arab rights, and bearing in mind the wishes of the Arab States.

(Signed) Hafez ABDUL-HADI

- - - - -

United Nations

**SECURITY
COUNCIL**

GENERAL
S/1606
19 July 1950
ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

LETTER DATED 18 JULY 1950 FROM THE SECRETARY-GENERAL
TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL TRANSMITTING
THE SEVENTH PROGRESS REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS
CONCILIATION COMMISSION FOR PALESTINE

I have the honour to transmit the attached seventh Progress Report* of the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine submitted in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 13 of

[resolution 194 \(III\)](#) of the General Assembly of 11 December 1948 for circulation to the Security Council and to the Members of the United Nations.

(Signed) Trygve LIE
Secretary-General

- - - - -

* Circulated as A/1288.