



UNITED NATIONS PALESTINE COMMISSION
SECOND WORKING DRAFT OF FIRST MONTHLY PROGRESS REPORT
TO THE SECURITY COUNCIL

The United Nations Palestine Commission herewith renders to the Security Council its First Monthly Progress Report as provided for in paragraph 14, Section 3, Part I of the [resolution](#) of the General Assembly on the Future Government of Palestine ([document A/516](#)).

1. Establishment of the Commission

The [resolution](#) on the Future Government of Palestine, as adopted by the General Assembly at its one hundred twenty-eighth meeting on 29 November 1947, provided, in paragraph 1, Section B, Part I, that "A Commission shall be set up consisting of one representative of each of five Member States." This Commission was charged with direct responsibility for implementing the measures recommended by the General Assembly.

2. Members of the Commission

The General Assembly elected the following Member States to the Commission, and their representatives on the Commission were subsequently designated as indicated:

Bolivia	Mr. Raul Diez de Medina
Czechoslovakia	Dr. Karel Lisicky
Denmark	Mr. Per Federspiel
Panama	Dr. Eduardo Morgan
Philippines	Senator Vicente J. Francisco

3. Meetings and Officers and [Resolution](#) of the Commission

- a. The Commission assembled for its first meeting at the interim headquarters of the United Nations at Lake Success on Friday, 9 January 1948, at 11 a.m.
- b. At its first meeting the Commission elected the following officers:

Dr. Karel Lisicky (Czechoslovakia)	Chairman
Mr. Raul Diaz de Medina (Bolivia)	Vice Chairman

- c. The Commission in the course of its first meeting, also adopted the following [resolution](#):

"The United Nations Palestine Commission
"Resolves

"That the Secretary-General of the United Nations, on behalf of the Commission, promptly extend to the Mandatory Power in Palestine, an invitation to designate such representatives as it may determine, who shall be available to the Commission for such authoritative information and other assistance as the Commission may require in the discharge of its functions under the [Resolution](#) of the General Assembly on the Palestine Question. Similar invitations shall be extended for the same purpose to the Arab Higher Committee and the Jewish Agency."

- d. The text of this [resolution](#) was communicated by the Secretary-General on 9 January to the Government of the United Kingdom, as the Mandatory Power, to the Arab Higher Committee, and to the Jewish Agency for Palestine. The invitation extended by the [resolution](#) was promptly accepted by the Government of the United Kingdom by the Jewish Agency for Palestine, both of which designated representatives to assist the Commission. The representative designated by the Government of the United Kingdom was Sir Alexander Cadogan. The representative designated by the Jewish Agency for Palestine was Mr. Moshe Shertok. As regards the Arab Higher Committee, however, the following telegraphic response was received by the Secretary-General on 19 January:

"ARAB HIGHER COMMITTEE IS DETERMINED PERSIST IN REJECTION PARTITION AND IN REFUSAL RECOGNIZE UNO RESOLION THIS RESPECT AND ANYTHING DERIVING THEREFROM. FOR THESE REASONS IT IS UNABLE ACCEPT INVITATION"

No further communication has been addressed to or received from the Arab Higher Committee by the Commission. The Commission will, at the appropriate time, set forth in a separate document its views with regard to the implications of this refusal by the Arab Higher Committee.

e. The Commission has held meetings to date. In view of the fact that the Commission is essentially an executive rather than a deliberative body, and that it must undertake delicate negotiations with the interested parties, often involving information of the most confidential character, all of its meeting other than the first have been held in private. Press communiques and verbal briefings have been given after each private meeting, however, and the Commission itself has held one press conference.

4. Provisional Rules of Procedure

In the course of its [fifth](#) and [sixth](#) meetings on 14 January 1948 the Commission provisionally approved forty-one rules by which its procedure is governed. The Commission will revise its rules as and when necessary, in the light of experience.

5. Tasks Confronting Committee in the Implementation of the [Resolution](#) of the General Assembly

a. The Commission in this preliminary stage of its work has undertaken a thorough and detailed examination of the provisions of the General Assembly's [resolution](#), with particular reference to its implications and the tasks involved in implementing its recommendations. The Commission realizes the enormity of the responsibility entrusted to it and harbors no illusions concerning the formidable obstacles it must surmount (including anticipated Arab resistance).

b. Among the major tasks involved in giving effect to the Assembly's recommendations are the following:

(i) arranging for the progressive transfer of administrative authority from the Mandatory Power to the Commission and the establishment of Provisional Councils of Government;

(ii) supervision of the functioning of the Provisional Councils of Government, including the maintenance of public order in the transitional period following the termination of the Mandate;

(iii) delimitation of frontiers of the Arab and Jewish States and the City of Jerusalem;

(iv) exercise of political and military control over the armed militia in each of the projected States, including selection of the high command;

(v) the preparatory work in connection with the establishment of the Economic Union, including the creation of the Preparatory Economic Commission and the maintenance of essential economic services in the transitional period;

(vi) negotiations on the allocation and distribution of assets;

(vii) maintenance of administration and essential public services following the termination of the Mandate;

(viii) preparation for the application of the United Nations Statute to the City of Jerusalem; and

(ix) protection of Holy Places.

c. The Commission is devoting detailed attention to ways and means of coping with each of the major tasks set forth in the preceding paragraph and the myriad problems related, thereto. Toward this end, the Commission has established and is maintaining effective liaison with the Mandatory Power and with the Jewish Agency for Palestine. As previously indicated, the Commission's initial effort to establish liaison with the Arab Higher Committee as well has been rejected. In its preliminary approach to these tasks and problems the Commission with the assistance of the Secretariat, has thus far considered a wide range of matters, including:

questions of the termination of the Mandate;

withdrawal of British forces;

relations between the Mandatory Power and the Commission;

establishment of the frontiers of the Arab and Jewish States and the City of Jerusalem;

establishment of Arab and Jewish Councils of Government;

relations with the Provisional Councils and establishment by them of administrative organs of government;

control of immigration;

control of land regulations

recruitment by the Provisional Councils of Government of armed militias and their operations under the control of the Commission;

elections of the Constituent Assemblies to be held by the Provisional Councils of Government on the basis of election regulations approved by the Commission;

drafting of democratic constitutions; Declarations of the choice of Provisional Governments by the Constituent Assemblies;

relations of the Commission with the Security Council;

economic aspects of the Commission's work;

the arrangements for the City of Jerusalem;

precedents concerning the creation of an international force;

allocation and liquidation of assets,

6. Significant Dates in Connection with the Implementation of the Assembly's [Resolution](#)

In connection with the Assembly's [resolution](#) the following dates are particularly significant:

1 February 1948: The [resolution](#) (paragraph 2, Section A, Part J) recommends that the Mandatory Power "shall use its best endeavors" to ensure the evacuation not later than this date of an area situated in the territory of the Jewish State, including a seaport and hinterland, adequate to provide facilities for substantial immigration.

1 April 1948: By this date the Commission, following consultation with democratic parties and other public organizations, shall have selected and established in the Arab and Jewish States Provisional Councils of Government, or failing to have established them in either of the two States, or finding that they cannot carry out their functions, the Commission must communicate this fact to the Security Council. (Paragraph 4, Section B, Part I of the [resolution](#).) The text of the relevant provision of paragraph 4 reads as follows:

"If by 1 April 1948 a Provisional Council of Government cannot be selected for either of the States, or, if selected, cannot carry out its functions, the Commission shall communicate that fact to the Security Council for such action with respect to that State as the Security Council may deem proper, and to the Secretary-General for communication to the Members of the United Nations."

By this same date, if the Provisional Councils of Government have not entered into the Undertaking with respect to Economic Union and Transit, "the undertaking shall be put into force by the Commission". (Paragraph 1, Section D, Part I of the [resolution](#).)

29 April 1948: Ultimate date for approval by the Trusteeship Council of the detailed statute for the City of Jerusalem (Section C of Part III of the [resolution](#).)

1 August 1948: Ultimate date for termination of the Mandate and for the complete withdrawal from Palestine of the armed forces of the Mandatory Power. (Paragraphs 1 and 2, Section A, Part I of the [resolution](#).)

Note: The date of 15 May 1948 has been officially communicated to the Government as the ultimate date on which the Mandatory Power will terminate the Mandate and transfer administrative authority in Palestine to the Commission.

1 October 1948: Ultimate date for the establishment of independent Arab and Jewish States and the Special International Regime for the City of Jerusalem

(Paragraph 3, Section A, Part I of the [resolution](#).)

Prior to 1 October, therefore, the Commission is obligated to exert every possible effort to bring about the following:

- (1) elections to the Constituent Assembly in each State (paragraph 9, Section 3, Part I of the [resolution](#));
- (2) the required Declaration to the United Nations by the Provisional Government of each proposed State before independence (paragraph 1, Section C, Part I of the [resolution](#)).

7. Consultations with the Representative of the Mandatory Power.

(a) Sir Alexander Cadogan, the representative designated by the Mandatory Power, has appeared before the Commission at its [sixth](#) and [sixteenth](#) meetings on 14 and 21 January 1948, respectively.

(b) In his review of the present situation in Palestine on 14 January 1948, Sir Alexander stated that the Arabs had made it clear that “they proposed to resist with all the forces at their disposal the implementation of the partition plan”. Moreover, since the first week of December the situation in Palestine had deteriorated rapidly. Violent conflict between the two communities had been intensified; courts and essential government services had been either unable to operate or were seriously crippled; there was but one month’s supply of certain types of fuel oil in the country; there was general insecurity; communications were obstructed; the collection of public revenue was expected to drop sharply. Sir Alexander described the situation as one in which “generally speaking, there has been a very severe diminution in the functions and authority of Civil Government, and in view of recent developments, it would be optimistic to hope for any improvement in the future.”

c. The representative of the Mandatory Power warned the Commission at its [sixteenth meeting](#) on 21 January 1948, “in the present circumstances the Jewish story that the Arabs are the attackers and the Jews the attacked is not tenable. The Arabs are determined to show that they will not submit tamely to the United Nations [Plan of Partition](#); while the Jews are trying to consolidate the advantages gained at the General Assembly by a succession of drastic operations designed to intimidate and cure the Arabs of any desire for further conflict. Elements on each side are thus engaged in attacking or in taking reprisals indistinguishable free attacks.... The Government of Palestine fear that strife in Palestine will be greatly intensified when the Mandate is terminated and that the international status of the United Nations Commission will mean little or nothing to the Arabs in Palestine, to whom the killing of Jews now transcends all other considerations. Thus, the Commission will be faced with the problem of how to avert certain bloodshed on a very much wider scale than prevails at present.”

d. Mr. Fletcher-Cooke of the United Kingdom delegation elaborated on the above by further informing the Commission that:

“The view held by the Government of Palestine is that the arrival of the Commission will be the signal for widespread attacks by the Arabs both on the Jews and on the members of the Commission itself. In addition, some 62 per cent of the present Government staff in Palestine are Arabs, and there is reason to believe that none of these will be willing or able to serve the Commission. The Arabs have made it quite clear and have told the Palestine Government that they do not propose to cooperate or to assist the Commission, and that, far from it, they propose to attack and impede its work in every possible way. We have no reason to suppose that they do not mean what they say.”

8. Implications of Sir Alexander’s Statements With Regard to the Provisions of the Assembly’s [Resolution](#)

a. In the course of the two consultations on 14 and 21 January 1948, Sir Alexander gave the following information of especial significance to the implementation of the Assembly’s recommendations by the Commission:

(i) the withdrawal of British forces will have been completed by 1 August 1948.

(ii) The United Kingdom Government has decided “to lay down the Mandate and terminate the Mandatory Administration at the latest on 15 May 1948, or earlier, if the necessary arrangements can be completed in time”.

(iii) the United Kingdom Government regards it “as essential that, so long as the Mandatory regime is retained, they must retain undivided control over the whole of Palestine. On the appointed day – that is, 15 May – their responsibility for the Government of Palestine will be relinquished as a whole. They cannot agree to relinquish it piecemeal. They are, however, prepared to agree to the Commission’s arrival in Palestine shortly before the Mandate is terminated, in order that there may be an overlap of say, a fortnight, during which the Commission can take up its responsibilities”.

(iv) The United Kingdom Government “will endeavor to give the Commission the benefit of their experience and knowledge of the situation in Palestine, subject always to their decision that they are unable to take part in the implementation of the [United Nations plan](#). That is, of course, in accordance with the statement made originally to the General Assembly by the Colonial Secretary to the effect that we could not alone implement any plan not accepted by both sides; and that as regards joining in any implementation, that would depend on two conditions. The Commission will remember that one was the inherent justice of the plan, and the other was the degree of force requisite for its implementation”.

b. Point c(11) of the statements by Sir Alexander set forth above has vital implications with regard to the provisions of the Assembly’s [resolution](#) and the work of the Commission. The [resolution](#) (Paragraph 2, Section B, Part I) provides that the “administration of Palestine shall, as that Mandatory Power withdraw its armed forces, be progressively turned over to the Commission... The Mandatory Power shall to the fullest possible extent coordinate its plans for withdrawal with the plans of the Commission to take over and administer areas which have been evaluated.”

c. The position of the Mandatory Power, as notified to the Commission by Sir Alexander, to the effect that authority over Palestine as a whole, set piecemeal, will be transferred to the Commission on the date of termination of the Mandate, would obviously make impossible for the Commission to fulfil paragraphs 2, 12, and 13, Section B, Part I of the [resolution](#) as intended by the General Assembly. Under the announced policy of the Mandatory Government, there could be no progressive assumption of authority in Palestine by the Commission, irrespective of the time-table for the withdrawal of British armed forces. This matter will be the subject of further discussion with the Mandatory Power.

d. The Commission is actually conscious of the imminence of 1 April 1948, by which date the Provisional Councils of government should be selected, established and functioning. In this regard, the Commission recognizes the dilemma which will be created if the Mandatory Power maintain the position that the Commission should not come to Palestine until approximately a fortnight before the termination of the Mandate, that is, 1 May 1948, if the Mandate is to be terminated on 15 May as presently indicated. The Commission is now engaged in discussions with the Mandatory Power concerning the necessity for the Commission’s arrival in Palestine sufficiently in advance of the termination of the Mandate to permit it to perform its tasks.

9. Consultation with the Representative of the Jewish Agency for Palestine

Mr. Moshe Shertok, the representative designated by the Jewish Agency for Palestine appeared before the Commission at its [eighth meeting](#) on 15 January 1948. In consultation with the Assembly’s [resolution](#), Mr. Shertok advanced, among other the following points

a. Although from the Jewish viewpoint, the Assembly’s solution is a compromise solution, nevertheless the Jewish Agency for Palestine, on behalf of the Jewish people, will cooperate in the implementation of the Assembly’s recommendations.

b. In Mr. Shertok’s view, there is a “widespread readiness among the Arab population to acquiesce” in the Assembly’s decision.

c. He stressed that public security is the paramount issue to Palestine today; that Jews there receive inadequate protection from the British; that an international force for Palestine is highly essential; and that the Jewish should receive the necessary international assistance in the arming and equipment of its militia during the transitional period.

d. Jewish immigration, he emphasized, is the crux of the Palestine problem and the date of 1 February, as the first date in the Assembly’s [resolution](#), is of crucial importance.

10. Conclusions Concerning the current situation in Palestine

The Commission noted that both the representative of the Mandatory Power and the representative of the Jewish Agency for Palestine gave to the Commission similar reports as regards:

- (i) the general insecurity in Palestine;
- (ii) the steady deterioration in the security position;

(iii) the increasing deterioration in the civil administration. All information thus far available to the Commission leads to the conclusion that the situation in Palestine as regards both security and civil authority is more likely to worsen than to improve. The deduction seems warranted that the prospects are very great that the country will be on the verge of utter chaos as regards both security and administrative services at the time the Mandatory Power proposes to transfer authority to the Commission on the termination of the Mandate.

11. Questions Put to the Mandatory Power

a. As of 19 January 1948, the Commission had headed to Sir Alexander Cadogan a number of written questions to which answers were desired from the Mandatory Power. These questions dealt with three basic problems, viz.,:

- (i) security, with particular reference to British plans concerning the evacuation of armed forces, and the disposition of arms, military equipment, and stores;
- (ii) immigration, with special reference to paragraph 2, Section A, Part 2 of the [resolution](#), the quota policy, and Jewish immigrants detained at Cyprus; and
- (iii) the Commission's discharge of its administrative responsibilities, involving plans for the transfer of administrative authority to the Commission.

b. Responses to the questions on security and the discharge of the Commission's administrative responsibilities have not been received from the Mandatory Power as of this date.

12. Questions and Responses Concerning Immigration

a. At its [sixteenth meeting](#) on 21 January 1948, Sir Alexander Cadogan proposed to the Commission the following responses of his Government to the four questions on immigration:

(i) Question: What are the plans of the Mandatory Power regarding immigration prior to the termination of the Mandate and particularly with respect to the present rate of 1500 Jewish immigrants per month.

Response: "...it is my Government's intention to maintain its present policy in regard to Jewish immigration into Palestine, under which 1,500 Jews are admitted monthly, until the termination of the Mandatory administration."

(ii) Question: "What are the plans of the Mandatory Power with regard to the recommendation in paragraph 2, Section A of Part I of the Assembly's [resolution](#) which reads as follows:

'The Mandatory Power shall use its best endeavours to ensure that an area situated in the territory of the Jewish State, including a seaport and hinterland adequate to provide facilities for a substantial immigration, shall be evacuated at the earliest possible date and is any event no later than 1 February 1948.'"

Response: "His Majesty's Government have repeatedly made it clear that, so long as a mandatory regime is maintained, they must retain undivided control over the whole of Palestine. For this reason, it is not possible for my Government to comply with the recommendation concerning the evacuation of a Jewish port and hinterland, so long as the Mandate continues."

b. In addition to the above quoted formal response to this question, Sir Alexander Cadogan, in reply to further questioning by the Members of the Commission, affirmed that this interpretation to be given to this response is that the Government of the United Kingdom, after a thorough study of the questions in the light of the current security situation in Palestine, may be said to have used its best endeavours but is unable to comply with the recommendations, primarily for reasons of security. The date of 1 February, he added, although the first date mentioned in the [Resolution](#), is "on a rather different basis from the other dates", since this date is "only a recommendation" to the Mandatory Power, and is "rather outside the power of the United Nations".

(iii) Question: "Would ships carrying unauthorised Jewish immigrants be prevented from going to Tel-Aviv and loading there in the period between 1 February 1948 and the termination of the Mandate?"

Response: "...yes, in accordance with my Government's decision that the Jewish immigration policy is to be maintained until the termination of the Mandate."

(iv) Question: "Does the Mandatory Power intend to transfer all Jewish immigrants presently detained in Cyprus to Palestine? If so, when and under what conditions? (Within the existing quota or otherwise? If within the quota, in what proportion?)"

Response: "His Majesty's Government have already announced that they cannot permit Jewish illegal immigrants to remain on British territory after the withdrawal of their forces from Palestine. The arrangements for the removal of the illegal immigrants held in Cyprus are among the responsibilities which have hitherto fallen on the Government of Palestine and form one of the subjects on which my delegation is instructed to negotiate with the Commission. My Government will be willing to release from detention the ships [MISSED WORDS] which the Commission may wish to negotiate with the Jewish Agency that is to say in regard to the use of the ships."

c. In connection with question (ii) on immigration, the Commission observes that the provision of the Assembly's [resolution](#) regarding the evacuation by 1 February 1948, of an area for purpose of Jewish immigration (paragraph 2, Section A, Part I) is addressed, directly to the Mandatory Power. The Commission is aware that this date is the first date mentioned in the Assembly's [resolution](#) and that aside from the substance of the provision some special significance may be attached to it for the reason alone. On this account the Commission has put considerable emphasis on this matter in its discussions with the Mandatory Power. The Mandatory Power has assured the Commission that its best endeavours, in view of the security situation in Palestine, have not made possible its compliance with this particular provision of the [resolution](#).

13. Economic Matters

a. The Commission has made a preliminary study of the economic problems involved in the implementation of the Assembly's [resolution](#). It has taken steps toward the establishment of the Preparatory Economic Commission of three members envisaged in paragraph 11 Section B, Part I, of the [resolution](#). The Commission has also outlined a number of economic problems, including the setting up of the customs union, currency questions, and transport and communications, to be referred to the Preparatory Economic Commission which will draw up the necessary plans for action.

b. The problem at the allocation and liquidation of the assets of the Palestine Administration is under consideration and the Mandatory Power has been requested to furnish the Commission with the necessary inventories. The Mandatory Power has also been requested to make its proposals for consultation with the Commission on this question as required by paragraph 2, Section B, Part I of the [resolution](#).

c. With regard to those and other important economic questions the Commission is progressing towards a more complete definition on the basis of which extensive negotiations will be opened with the Mandatory Power. The most urgent of these problems concern the negotiation of contracts to ensure adequate food supplies after the termination of the Mandate, the problem of communications services in the period after the termination of the Mandate, and the maintenance of continuity of fiscal arrangements.

14. Security Considerations

Taking into account information thus far available to it, the Commission is devoting most serious attention to the various aspects of the security problem, with particular reference to the possible need for an international force in the implementation of the recommendations of the General Assembly. This matter has not been dealt with in this first Monthly Report, but will be the subject of special report to the Security Council.

15. Conclusion

a. This first Monthly Report to the Security Council covers what is in effect the preliminary and exploratory stage of the Commission's work. In this stage the Commission has gained a working knowledge of the problem and a clear conception of the nature of the difficult tasks confronting it. The remainder of the Commission's work will be devoted to negotiations with the Mandatory Power, and with representatives of the Jewish, and if at all possible, the Arab communities in Palestine over the detailed matters involved in the implementation of the Assembly's recommendations.

b. In view of the time-limits fixed in the [resolution](#), and the nature at the nature of the tasks to be performed, the time available to the Commission, even under the most favourable circumstances, is extremely short. There is much preparatory work which the Commission may undertake at the headquarters, but the full implementation of the Assembly's recommendations require the presence of the Commission in Palestine considerably in advance of the transfer of authority from the Mandatory Power to the Commission. The delimitation of boundaries, to undertake which the Commission envisaged the establishment of an expert boundaries commission; preparations to ensure continuity in the maintenance of essential public services; the selection of Provisional Council of Government and their activation; the creation of armed militias; and negotiations with regard to Economic Union, can be effectively undertaken only when the Commission is present in Palestine. In view of the complicated and often highly technical nature of the problem incident to the implementation of the [resolution](#), the limited time at the disposal of the Commission before the termination of the Mandate, the attitude of the Mandatory Power is of the most vital importance.

Signed.

Dr. Karel Lisicky (Czechoslovakia), CHAIRMAN
Mr. Raul Diez de Medina (Bolivia) VICE CHAIRMAN
Mr. Per Federspiel (Denmark)
Dr. Eduardo Morgan (Panama)
Senator Vicente J. Francisco (Philippines)

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