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UNITED NATIONS PALESTINE COMMISSION

Communication Received from United Kingdom  
Delegation Concerning Palestine Passports

The following communication, concerning the holding and use of Palestine Passports, has been received from Mr. Fletcher-Cooke of the United Kingdom Delegation.

UNITED KINGDOM DELEGATION TO THE UNITED NATIONS  
Empire State Building, New York 1, N.Y.

CONFIDENTIAL

14th May, 1948

My dear Bunche,

You will remember that Federspiel, on behalf of the Commission, recently put forward orally certain proposals as regards the future position of holders of Palestine Passports. These proposals were

- (a) That the Secretary-General should circularise all Member Nations suggesting that Palestine Passports, etc. should be regarded as valid travel documents between 15th May and 1st October, 1948, including such Palestine Passports, etc. as have already expired or will expire during that period;
- (b) that the Secretary-General in his circular should add that the holding and use of such Passports would not entitle the holder to any assistance abroad by His Majesty's representatives.

2. These proposals were discussed with representatives of the Passport Control Office and the Consulate-General here and were then forwarded to His Majesty's Government.

3. I have now received the views of His Majesty's Government on these proposals and the position is as follows: -

- (i) His Majesty's Government have no objection to the proposal that the Secretary-General should circularise all Member Nations in this matter but they suggest that the terms of the circular should be as follows: -

"Palestine Passports and travelling and identity documents issued in Jerusalem should, for the purposes of travel and identification, be treated as valid documents after the 15th May, 1948, until arrangements have been made by the competent authorities for the issue of new Passports."

Dr. Ralph J. Bunche,  
Principal Secretary to the United Nations  
Palestine Commission  
United Nations, Lake Success

(ii) His Majesty's Government do not consider that there should be any reference in this circular to Passports and travelling and identity documents which have already expired or will expire after the 15th May, 1948. They would prefer to leave this problem to be solved as circumstances permit and on the merits of each case.

(iii) As regards the suggestion that the Secretary-General in his circular should include a statement that the holding and use of these Passports and documents would not entitle the holder to any assistance abroad by His Majesty's representatives, His Majesty's Government consider that this statement, if made at all, should be made by His Majesty's Government. His Majesty's Government consider, however, that it is quite clear and should be emphasized that the legal responsibility of His Majesty's Government for Palestinians ended on 15th May, 1948.

4. I am sending copies of this letter to the Passport Control Officer and His Britannic Majesty's Consul General here.

Yours sincerely,

J. Fletcher-Cooke (signed)