

UNITED NATIONS CONCILIATION COMMISSION FOR PALESTINE

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LETTER DATED 7 MAY 1949 FROM DR. WALTER EYTAN,
HEAD OF THE ISRAELI DELEGATION, TO THE
CHAIRMAN OF THE CONCILIATION COMMISSION

In the course of my meeting with the Conciliation Commission on 3rd May, I stated that the Government of Israel would be prepared to consider sympathetically a plan for the reunion of families whose members found themselves separated as the result of the fighting and the consequent flight of many Arabs from the territory which now constitutes the State of Israel.

I pointed out that this sympathetic consideration would be subject to the clear understanding that the plan was on a bona fide basis - that is to say, that only the return of genuine relatives of a close degree of consanguinity was involved - and that the actual repatriation of such relatives could not be begun until a final settlement was reached between Israel and the Arab States.

When I met the Commission again on 5th May, I was asked whether the Government of Israel would consent, as a preliminary measure, to an enquiry being initiated or a census taken with a view to establishing what number of refugees fell into this category and would accordingly be repatriable under the conditions stated above.

I am now authorised to inform you that the Government of Israel would be prepared to take a census of this kind, that is, to invite Arabs resident in Israel to furnish details concerning relatives of theirs who are now refugees and who would wish and be eligible to apply for repatriation under the conditions stated.

Yours sincerely,
s/Walter Eytan