

UNITED NATIONS CONCILIATION COMMISSION FOR PALESTINE

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Letter dated 9 July 1950
addressed to the Chairman of the Conciliation Commission
by the Foreign Minister of Israel

Sir,

I have the honour to refer to your letter of 8th June 1950, to which the Government of Israel has given its most careful consideration.

It is true that on a number of occasions, in meetings and conversations with members of the Conciliation Commission for Palestine, representatives of Israel have touched upon some of the principles which in their view should govern the payment of compensation for lands abandoned by former Arab residents of the present territory of Israel. They have also referred on those occasions to claims arising from losses suffered by the population of Israel as a result of Arab aggression and the war of defence into which Israel had been forced.

While certain lines of approach to the compensation problem were thus tentatively adumbrated, the Israel representatives have throughout their discussions with the Conciliation Commission consistently upheld the attitude that no useful purpose would be served by the subject of compensation, or, for that matter, any other single aspect of the problem before the Conciliation Commission, being torn out of the general context and treated in isolation from the rest.

The only context in which the Government of Israel would be in a position to determine with due definitiveness and precision the terms under which it would be prepared to envisage the solution of the compensation problem would be that of comprehensive peace negotiations, in which all aspects of the final settlement between Israel and her neighbours could be treated in their interrelation as forming one coherent whole. Such a context would arise only if one or several Arab States declared themselves willing to negotiate a comprehensive settlement. In the absence of such readiness, all discussion would lack the basis of reality and therefore be futile.

The Government of Israel would recall that in its memorandum of March 29, 1950, the Conciliation Commission invited the Governments concerned to negotiate, under certain procedures, for the settlement of all outstanding questions. In its reply of May 6, 1950, the Government of Israel signified its acceptance of the substance of the Commission's proposal. A similar response on the part of the Arab Governments would open the way for such comprehensive negotiations aiming at a final and definitive settlement. In these negotiations the problem of Arab claims and Israel's counter-claims for compensation could be accorded their due prominence.

I have the honour to be,

Yours faithfully

(signed) Moshe SHARETT

Minister for Foreign Affairs