

UNITED NATIONS CONCILIATION COMMISSION FOR PALESTINE

RESTRICTED

IS/62

15 May 1951

ORIGINAL; ENGLISH

Letter dated 15 May 1951
addressed by the Conciliation Commission
to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Israel

I have the honour to inform Your Excellency that Mr. Holger Andersen, Head of the Refugee Office established by the Conciliation Commission pursuant to the General Assembly resolution of 14 December 1950, is expected to take up his post about 20 May 1951.

As Your Excellency is aware, the Office, under the direction of the Commission, is to make the necessary arrangements for the assessment and payment of compensation to the refugees. This Office has, moreover, the task of working out such arrangements as may be practicable for the implementation of the other objectives of paragraph 11 of the General Assembly resolution of 11 December 1948 and of continuing the consultations with the parties concerned regarding measures for the protection of the rights, property and interests of the refugees.

The Committee of Experts which will assist Mr. Andersen is composed of the Commission's legal adviser, Mr. Tevfik Erim, the Commission's economic adviser, Mr. René Serves, and the land specialist, Mr. J. M. Berncastle. The Commission would appreciate any steps on your part that may be necessary to ensure for Mr. Andersen and the Committee of Experts the fullest possible measure of assistance on the part of the Israel authorities concerned.

In connection with the work of the Office and the cooperation of the Office with the various departments of the Israel administration, the Commission wishes to recall the importance it attaches to certain aspects of the law setting up the Development Authority. The concern of the Commission that the application of this law should not prejudice or complicate the assessment and payment of compensation for Arab properties was emphasized in the meeting which the Commission had with your Excellency on 17 August last year. The Conciliation Commission is fully aware that the Israel authorities are anxious to take all necessary measures to ensure the development of the country. These measures must, however, take account of the legitimate interests of refugee property owners.

At the meeting of 17 August, Your Excellency assured the Commission of the Government of Israel's intention to fulfil its obligations with respect to compensation and added that the matter would be studied by the Government and its experts and that a more considered reply to the problem raised by the Commission would be presented in due course and without undue delay. The Commission hopes that the Government of Israel is now prepared to undertake further discussions in this connection and that the presence in Jerusalem of Mr. Andersen and the experts comprising the new office will be the occasion for such discussions.

The Commission would be happy to be assured by the Government of Israel that the Development Authority has not taken and will not take any steps which might be likely to impair the task with which the Office has been entrusted.

(Signed) Ely P. Palmer