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UNITED NATIONS CONCILIATION
COMMISSION FOR PALESTINE

Letter dated 29 July 1953 addressed by the
Chairman of the Conciliation Commission for
Palestine to Ambassador Abba Eban of Israel

Sir,

I have the honour to acknowledge receipt of your letter of 7 July 1953 setting forth for the Commission's consideration certain observations of your Government with regard to the question of Arab property in Israel raised in a letter addressed to your delegation by the Commission on 14 May 1953. Meanwhile the Commission has received a further communication from the interested Arab Governments, a copy of which is attached hereto.*

In your letter you state that the declared policy of your Government on the question of compensation is not affected by any internal arrangements which might be made for dealing with the property according to the laws of Israel. It was, however, on this very question of the manner in which Arab property was being dealt with in Israel, and not on the question of compensation, that the Commission had sought information from your delegation.

It will be recalled that in the resolutions of 11 December 1948 and 14 December 1950 the General Assembly gave the Commission a responsibility in connexion with the protection of the property rights of the refugees.

For these reasons the Commission is seeking information from your Government on the following points:

- (a) Has the disposal of property belonging to Arab refugees now residing outside the borders of Israel been authorized by your Government?
- (b) If so, under what conditions is this disposal to be carried out and to what extent, if any, has it already been put into effect?
- (c) If such property has been disposed of, is the money realized being held in the name of the original owner to be paid to him at some future date as compensation for the loss of his property, if he chooses not to return?
- (d) Have the necessary measures been taken to ensure the restitution of their property to such refugees as might be repatriated?

* See A/AC.25/AR.77.

Concerning the question of compensation, you state in your letter of 1 July that: "The Government of Israel has on repeated occasions affirmed its policy in regard to payment of compensation for abandoned Arab lands in Israel, and is prepared, as indicated on those occasions, to discuss the question in practical terms".

You will no doubt recall that as a result of your delegation's suggestion made during the Paris conference, that concrete discussions on the question of evaluation should be held immediately with the Commission or with any other United Nations body designated for the purpose, the Conciliation Commission dispatched its land specialist to Jerusalem in May 1952 and instructed him to meet with the competent Israeli authorities with a view to reaching agreement on the form and substance of the proposed discussions. Unfortunately it proved impossible at that time to initiate the full discussions suggested by your delegation in Paris. However, in view of the statement in your recent letter, the Commission would be pleased to receive in greater detail your Government's present views regarding the initiation at this time of such discussions in practical terms.

Please accept, Sir, the renewed assurances of my high consideration.

Pierre Ordonneau
Chairman
Conciliation Commission for Palestine