

UNITED NATIONS CONCILIATION COMMISSION FOR PALESTINE

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Letter dated 4 May 1949 addressed to the Chairman of  
the Conciliation Commission by Mr. Howard Wriggins,  
Geneva Representative, American Friends Service Com-  
mittee, Enclosing an Analysis of Palestine Population  
Statistics.

Enclosed please find an analysis of Palestine population statistics which I prepared in an effort to estimate the proportion of Arab refugees receiving UNRPR assistance, whose homes were in areas now under Israeli control. The guess work of course is considerable but I believe these are as firm figures as is possible to prepare from the information available in Geneva.

Yours sincerely,

S/ Howard Wriggins

Howard Wriggins  
Geneva Representative  
American Friends Service  
Committee

## Origin of UNRPR Refugees - Revised Analysis I.

### A. CONCLUSION.

(1) After helpful criticism by several persons here and in England, and a more detailed analysis of population statistics and trends, my conclusion is that no more than 660,000 - 700,000 refugees could have come from areas now controlled by Israel (with the statistics of the City of Jerusalem left out of account). The balance of over 200,000 UNRPR refugees have come therefore from areas outside of Israel.

(2) I do not think these figures necessarily suggest that there are over 200,000 "refugees" receiving aid from UNRPR who are not bona fide refugees. The bulk could have fled from areas close to the Israeli lines, areas threatened by the Israeli advance. Although sections of the Jewish press has apparently asserted that these persons fled before the pillage and burning of "Arab mercenaries" or were lured to flee by Abdullah's propaganda, the simple fact that 200,000 left areas not under control of Israeli's forces does not exclude fear of Israeli's extremists as the chief motivation for their flight.

(3) These figures do suggest, however, that future increases in numbers of refugees should be viewed with scepticism, since they are probably composed of destitute local inhabitants rather than of refugees from Israel.

(4) These figures suggest the following questions:-

- a) Why did these more than 200,000 flee their homes which were not in Israel?
- b) From which localities did they flee?
- c) What steps would be necessary/ possible in order to arrange prompt repatriation of this group, regardless of Israel's policy toward re-entry into Israel of the other 660,000 to 700,000 refugees?

(5) Relevance of "Arab Palestine".

Since perhaps as many as one third of UNRPR's refugees may come from so-called "Arab Palestine", the political future of this area is by no means irrelevant as far as the refugee problem is concerned.

### B. THESE CONCLUSIONS HAVE BEEN REACHED AS FOLLOWS:-

(1) The original figures used accounted for "Settled Moslems" in Palestine, up to 1944. It has been possible to correct these figures so as to include, in addition, an estimate of Arabs who are not Moslems and Arabs who are nomadic; and to bring the 1944 figures up to date; i.e., through 1947, the last war year.

(2) The annual rate of Arab natural increase for the years of 1944-1947 is estimated at 28 per 1,000 (c.f. B(5) below for derivation). The percentage of Arabs not included in the earlier figures, which were based solely on the numbers of "Settled Moslems", has been calculated at 18.5% (c.f. B(6) below for derivation).

(3) Below are figures for the relevant areas, with corrections:

a)	Settled Arabs in area attributed to Israel in U.N.'s partition plan	407,000	
	Nomadic Arabs	90,000	
		<hr/>	
		497,000	x
b)	<u>Arabs added to Israel as a result of war in Palestine:</u>		
	"Settled Moslems" normally in areas not assigned to Israel by Partition Plan but at present under Israel control	222,508	
	<u>Minus</u> "Settled Moslems" normally in areas assigned to Israel by Partition Plan, but not at present under Israel control: one-fifth rural population Tulkarm.	12,908	
	Total of "Settled Moslems" added to Israel as result of war in Palestine	209,600	
	<u>Plus</u> Total Arabs other than "Settled Moslems" added as a result of the war: (18.5% of 209,600)	38,776	
	Total Arabs normally in areas acquired by Israel.	248,376	248,376 xx
c)	Total Arabs with homes normally in areas now controlled by Israel.	745,376	
d)	Total Arabs at present in Israel	75,000	
e)	MAXIMUM REFUGEES WHO COULD HAVE COME FROM AREAS OCCUPIED BY ISRAEL.	670,376	

Footnote:

x c.f. U.N. Special Committee on Palestine A/364/September 1947, p. 54.

xx Estimate by H. Wriggins; c.f. para 7, below for derivation.

(4) ESTIMATED TOTAL OF ARABS NORMALLY LIVING IN PALESTINE 1947.

1,278,000

ESTIMATED TOTAL OF ARABS NORMALLY LIVING IN AREAS INCLUDED IN "ARAB PALESTINE"

533,000

(5) Natural Increase of Arab population: 28 per 1,000

Table 6, p. 144, Vol. I - 28 an estimate, on basis of constantly increasing Arab rate; slightly declining Christian rate of natural increase.

(6) Percentage of Arabs not included in "Settled Moslems" 18.5%

Table 5, p. 143, Vol. I. While all detailed figures are given in "A Survey of Palestine" in terms of religion of those with settled residence, we are really concerned with a racial problem. Comparing the total "Arabs" in 1944 (1,179,000) with the total "Settled Moslems" in 1944, (994,720) it is seen that 18.5% of the latter figure is needed to make up the total of Arab inhabitants. This total is estimated on an extrapolation of the 1931 census, and is taken directly from "A Survey of Palestine."

(7) Arabs normally in areas acquired by Israel as result of War.

248,376

(Source: Estimate by H. Wriggins. Areas acquired by Israel, based on comparison of Map No. 82 (U.N. Presentation 529, September, 1947, "Plan of Partition with Economic Union", Majority Proposal, delimiting area containing B (3) a) above, with Israeli War Map, January 1949, made available by Israeli representative Geneva. Estimates of population in areas acquired by Israel based on population estimates as of 1944, provided by the Government of Palestine to the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry, 1946. (Vol. I Pages 151, 152). The relevant areas and population figures are as follows:

a) "Settled Moslems" normally in areas acquired by Israel:

Name of Sub-district		1944	Three Times Annual Increase	Sum Total
ACRE	City and Sub-district	47,290	3,972	51,262
NAZARETH	Town and half rural pop. x	16,525	1,386	17,911
RAMLE	Lydda and Ramle towns and three fifths rural population	63,860	5,364	69,224
HEBRON	One fifth rural population	12,600	1,056	13,656

Footnote:

x Correction of error in earlier figures.

Name of Sub-district (continued)		1944	3 times Annual Increase	Sum Total
GAZA	Majdal and half rural population	48,995	4,116	53,111
xx JERUSALEM	One quarter rural population	16,000	1,344	17,344
TOTAL				222,508

Total carried forward 222,508

- b) "Settled Moslems" normally in areas assigned to Israel by Partition Plan, but not at present under Israel control. Tulkarm: one fifth rural population. 12,908
- c) Total "Settled Moslems" added to Israel as result of war in Palestine. 209,600
- d) Total Arabs other than "Settled Moslems" equal 18.5% of (c) 38,776
- e) TOTAL ARABS ADDED TO ISRAEL AS A RESULT OF WAR IN PALESTINE 248,376
- (8) Total Arabs at present in Israel. 75,000

From Israel Representative to the United Nations,  
based on census made prior to March Israel election.

C. ERRORS:

- (5) above - An error of 2 per 1,000 either way is not improbable.
- (6) above - While this is an accurate figure, based on official information available, there may be an error, since the figure 1,179,000 Arabs in 1944 is based on the assumption that the population of Arabs among Moslems, Christians and Others has remained constant since the 1931 census.
- (7) above - a), b), c) and d).
  - (i) Non-inclusion of part of Jerusalem city now occupied by Israel might make for an error of from 15/20,000 more expected Arab inhabitants of Israel.
  - (ii) Fractions of sub-districts acquired by Israel have been estimated very roughly.
  - (iii) Rural population may not be evenly scattered over a full sub-district, therefore dividing the sub-district's total rural population by the proportion of its area acquired by Israel may lead to errors, especially in the case of Nazareth, Tulkarm and Hebron.

Footnote:

xx Jerusalem Sub-district not previously considered.  
Jerusalem City still excluded.

- (8) above - This figure is believed to be high, since after the events which accompanied the evacuation of Faluja, some Arabs in Israel have been reported to have left.

SUMMARY OF PROBABLE ERRORS:

Taken together, these possible and probable errors suggest that the figure of 700,000 is more likely to be the correct conclusion than the 660,000 figure.