

UNITED NATIONS CONCILIATION COMMISSION FOR PALESTINE

RESTRICTED  
ORG/23  
29 June 1949  
ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

19 Dec 1950

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MEMORANDUM DATED 28 JUNE 1949 ADDRESSED BY MR. NASSIB BULOS,  
DELEGATION SECRETARY ARAB REFUGEE CONGRESS,  
TO THE PRINCIPAL SECRETARY OF THE CONCILIATION COMMISSION  
ENCLOSING A COPY OF HIS LETTER OF THE SAME DATE TO THE  
DIRECTOR, UNITED NATIONS RELIEF FOR PALESTINE REFUGEES

Sir,

Subject: Return of certain refugees to their homes.

Reference: ORG/19 dated 15th June, 1949 and the Principal Secretary's letter in reply dated 23rd June, 1949.

I have discussed the question of the return of certain refugees to their homes on Saturday June 25th with Brigadier Parminter of the UNRPR. He gave me to understand that there would be no great obstacle in the way of distribution relief in such localities as those refugees in question may return to.

Consequently, the General Committee may now be in a better position to take such appropriate action as would give effect to the operative section of para 11 of the General Assembly's Resolution of December 11th, 1948.

I have no doubt that the Commission, General Committee and all other bodies which constitute the United Nations Palestine Conciliation Commission are seized with the urgency of the questions now before them, and in order best to coordinate the activities of my organisation with those of the Commission, in the interests of the refugees, I should be most grateful if I can be kept informed of the measures proposed or steps taken on the above question.

I attach under cover of this letter a formal proposal on the above question addressed to the Director of the UNRPR. I should be most grateful if it can be forwarded to him.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Yours faithfully,

(s.) Nassib Bulos  
Secretary  
Delegation  
Arab Refugee Congress

Mr. P. de Azcarate  
Principal Secretary  
United Nations Palestine Conciliation Commission.

Lausanne, June 28, 1949

Director,  
United Nations Relief for Palestine Refugees,  
Geneva,  
Through United Nations Palestine Conciliation Commission,  
Lausanne  
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Sir,

I put forward on 15th June, 1949, a proposal to the United Nations Palestine Conciliation Commission for the return of certain refugees to their homes in Palestine. Such a proposal can only be implemented if in the first place the UNRPR is prepared to continue to distribute relief to such refugees in the localities to which they may return. The proposal is made on behalf of those refugees from areas not under Jewish occupation, but whose villages and homes were either in areas of no man's land or too adjacent to military front lines or from areas at one time under Jewish occupation, but from which Jewish troops have since withdrawn. Now that armistice agreements have been concluded, there is nothing to prevent the inhabitants of such areas from returning except the fear that relief may as a result be discontinued.

I understand that the figure given for refugees from areas not under Jewish occupation is approximately two hundred thousand. In the present circumstances, the above proposal would affect a much smaller number of refugees, namely those refugees who belong to the Central area of Palestine, presently under Transjordan occupation. Some refugees, those who have not been completely destituted, have been returning on their own. Most of them, however, are not in a position to do so.

Should the UNRPR be willing to devise a system of distribution of relief in such localities to which these refugees can return, I am sure that the cooperation of the Arab Legion in providing transport can be obtained.

I need hardly stress the short term and the long term advantages of such a measure. Not only would it be a first major step towards settling the refugee question, but principally it would have a salutary effect on the rapidly dwindling morale of the refugees themselves.

I expect to return to the Middle East on July 4th, when I shall take the opportunity of discussing this proposal further with the UNRPR Field Officers, the Distributing Agencies and the Transjordan authorities.

In the meantime, I should be most grateful if a decision in principle can be taken on the matter.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Yours faithfully,

(s.) Nassib Bulos  
Secretary  
Delegation  
Arab Refugee Congress

Copy to: United Nations Palestine Conciliation Commission,  
Lausanne.

His Excellency Fawzi Pasha Mulqi,  
Jordan Defence Minister,  
Lausanne.