

UNITED NATIONS CONCILIATION COMMISSION FOR PALESTINE

RESTRICTED  
ORG/24  
30 June 1949  
ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

13 DEC 1950

Mr. LETTER DATED 30 JUNE 1949 ADDRESSED BY MR. NASSIB BULOS,  
DELEGATION SECRETARY, ARAB REFUGEE CONGRESS, TO THE  
PRINCIPAL SECRETARY OF THE CONCILIATION COMMISSION.

Sir,

My delegation has instructed me to thank the Commission for its letter of 28th June, 1949, and to make the following observations:

1. In regard to the proposal made for the repatriation and resettlement of certain refugees, my delegation takes the view that it were preferable that such a proposal, if acceptable in principle to the Commission, is implemented forthwith rather than as part of a future overall plan for resettlement within the terms of para 11 of the General Assembly's resolution of 11th December, 1948, since, in the first place, the plan aims at averting the imminent danger of a violent flare up in the refugee camps, resulting in the circumstances from an acute feeling of despair. The plan is therefore intended to start forthwith a constructive process in motion which would give the refugees a reason for hope.

In my letter to the Commission dated June 28th, I stated that Brigadier Parminter of the UNRPR had authorised me to say that the distribution of relief would be possible in those localities to which such refugees in question may return to. In my letter to the Director, UNRPR, copy to the Commission, I stated that the cooperation of the Arab Legion in providing transport could be obtained. Since that date I have had an opportunity of discussing the question with the Jordan Defence Minister who intimated that in the event of the plan being carried out, the Arab Legion would be ready to assist substantially in this matter. But transport and food, though essential are not in themselves sufficient. Funds, without which the plan cannot be successfully carried out in any appreciable manner, are required. It is precisely over the question of funds that the assistance of the Commission is sought.

My delegation takes the view that the powers of the Commission under paragraph 11 of the General Assembly'

resolution of December 11th, 1948, are sufficiently wide as to enable the Commission to canvas the views of interested nations and to examine the possibilities of raising funds, either through the agency of the United Nations, or directly with such powers as the United States and Great Britain. There is, in our view, nothing in paragraph 11 to show or indicate that the powers of the Commission, where refugees are concerned, are in any way limited or were intended to be limited by the other conciliatory functions of the Commission. In this connection my delegation would wish to urge upon the Commission the necessity for giving the widest possible interpretation to their terms of reference, and that where any doubt exists, that the benefit of it should certainly be held in favour of the refugees. Furthermore it is the view of my delegation that the terms "...to facilitate the repatriation, resettlement and economic and social rehabilitation of the refugees..." cannot, if a serious contradiction in terms is to be avoided, be made to mean repatriation, resettlement and social rehabilitation in the area defined as Israel by the General Assembly. If that were the case, it would, with all due respect, mean that the Commission can do nothing to facilitate the resettlement, repatriation, social and economic rehabilitation of refugees in such areas as Lydda and Ramleh or Western Galilee.

2. On the question of frozen assets, my delegation has taken note of the suggestion that Arab depositors in British banks might appropriately ascertain whether those banks would be willing to discuss the question of their blocked accounts with the British Government, and would wish to inform the Commission that the British banks have been approached on this question more than once in the past twelve months and that the banks in question regretted their inability to do anything in the matter despite the deep concern they felt for the fate of the refugees. Furthermore since British banks are ultimately owned and controlled by the British Government, it would seem more appropriate if the British Government is approached directly and not through the medium of the banks. Consequently my delegation would feel most grateful if the Commission were to request the views of the British Government on this question, as suggested in my letter of June 15th.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Yours faithfully,

(s.) Nassib Bulos, Delegation Secretary;  
Arab Refugee Congress.