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UNITED NATIONS CONCILIATION COMMISSION FOR PALESTINE

Letter dated 1 February 1950
addressed to the Conciliation Commission
by the Secretary of the Palestine
Refugees Conference,
Beirut, Lebanon.

Dear Sirs,

The General Executive Committee for the Palestine Refugees in Lebanon, representing all Palestine Refugees in this country, have much pleasure to seize the opportunity of the resumption of your activities in Geneva to submit the following memorandum with the request that the same will have your careful consideration.

In this short memorandum, our Committee does not wish to go in detail into the Palestine Problem from the very beginning, but in view of the bad state of affairs involving the whole case, and the miserable circumstances under which the Palestine refugees now live, we request that the Palestine problem be promptly solved and the refugees immediately repatriated to their country in accordance with the Resolutions taken by the United Nations Organisation and the recommendations of its various Committees.

You are of course aware that the United Nations Organisation in its General Assembly of the 29th November, 1947, resolved the partitioning of Palestine and that the same Organisation resolved on the 11th December, 1948, inter alia, the return of the refugees to their homes, to compensate them for what they have lost, and to compensate those who do not wish to return for their properties and their losses. Unfortunately, these resolutions have not been executed with the result that the great majority of the Palestine Arabs are now abandoning their homes, deprived of their properties and undergoing the most miserable life of destitution in the neighbouring countries.

The failure in executing the Resolutions of the United Nations Organisation appertaining to Palestine, and the delay in the proceedings of the Committees emanating therefrom, to arrive at a final solution for the problem, increased considerably the proportion of damages sustained to the farms, orange groves, and all properties generally in Palestine. It also deteriorated the state of the refugees to an extent that we are unable to describe on paper.

The Technical Committee delegated by your Commission to investigate the refugees problem, has inquired and we understand that it came to the result that 85% of the Palestine refugees urge for the return to their country. This is a natural right already admitted by the United Nations Organisation. Unfortunately, no affirmative steps have yet been taken in this regard.

The previous relief rendered to the refugees by the various International Relief and Red Cross Organisations has partly lessened the sufferings and miseries of the Palestine refugees, but this insufficient relief does enable them to live a natural life with the result that a considerable number of the refugees has passed away, and thousands others are now threatened to meet the same fate.

The Palestine Refugees consider, and we are sure you also agree, that the schemes involved by the Report of the Economic Survey Board, headed by Mr. Gordon Clapp, if executed, do not solve the Problem of the Palestine Refugees. Moreover it is hard to believe that the Arab people of Palestine be compensated by a few economic schemes in the neighbouring countries in order to maintain a living as a cost for the loss of their country.

Such reconstruction schemes may serve the purpose better if carried out in the Arab Area in Palestine where major schemes can be executed on a large scale, especially after the heavy damages caused as a result of the recent hostilities.

We believe that the execution of the United Nations Organisation Resolutions of the 29th November, 1947 and 11th December, 1948, respectively, will solve this outstanding problem. On the understanding that the Palestine Arabs will not admit any Legislations made or to be made by the Israeli Authorities whereby Arab movable or immovable properties are prejudiced.

The Palestine Refugees consider, that the delay in solving their problem increases the damages sustained in Palestine and may help the spreading of the Anti-Democratic principles in the Near East. In the circumstances we appeal to you to consider the Palestine case with justice and to use your influence for the execution of the U.N. Resolutions without any further delay. In doing so you keep the Reputation of the U.N.O. which is the only International Organisation established to make peace prevail and to maintain justice in the whole world.

The Palestine Arabs cannot be held responsible for what had happened in Palestine. They are innocent and were only a victim for the partial Policy which did not enable them to construct their political being during the period of the Mandate on Palestine.

Consequently, we wish to sum up as follows:-

- a) The Palestine Arabs will never admit any Legislations made or that may be made by the Israeli Authorities that may touch their rights in their movable and immovable properties, and that such legislations, if enacted, may have a future bad results not only in Palestine, but in all countries of the Near-East.
- b) The Palestine Refugees ask that they be returned immediately to their homes within the provisions of the U.N.O. resolutions taken in this respect.
- c) The Palestine refugees ask that the Partition Scheme resolved by the U.N.O. in its General Assembly resolution dated the 29th November, 1947, be implemented forthwith.

With our respects and compliments,

(Sgd.) Michel Azar

Secretary, General Executive Committee for Palestine Refugees
in Lebanon.