

UNITED NATIONS CONCILIATION COMMISSION FOR PALESTINE

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MEMORANDUM  
ADDRESSED TO THE CONCILIATION COMMISSION  
BY THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE  
OF THE GENERAL PALESTINIAN REFUGEE CONGRESS IN LEBANON

Sirs,

The Executive Committee of the General Palestinian Refugee Congress in Lebanon has the honour to submit this memorandum on the occasion of your session in Beirut.

Our Committee had previously submitted several memoranda to the United Nations and to its various sub-committees, in which it presented to them the point of view of the refugees, and described their pitiful and fearful lot, and expressed the view that their displacement and expulsion was the result of a well-planned conspiracy.

During the last three years, the refugees have maintained an unflinching hope in their return to their homes, farms and properties, which they left by compulsion and because they were seeking their own temporary safety. The termination of the Palestine Mandate, and the neglect of making other arrangements for another power to replace it had created a vacuum in the country, which left it in a state of anarchy.

After the imposition of the Armistice, it did not occur to any of the refugees that the United Nations will allow the argument over political sovereignty in Palestine to shift to an argument over the civil rights of every palestinian non-Jewish citizen to his home and properties, and the enjoyment of this right regardless of the political settlement of the Palestine question. The right of every refugee to return to his home must be independent of political argument, and must not be made

the subject of bargaining for political ends. Such utter trampling on civil rights as has appeared hitherto can find its equal only in barbaric times, and even then it did not take long before the wrong was put right again.

At the outset of the last session of the United Nations, the refugees waited for the results with optimistic hopes. They had found now in the United Nations a new resolute and unhesitating stand towards the enemies of mankind, and they were hoping that this new spirit and initiative would be the beginning of an executive arm of the United Nations to create a better and more peaceful world. But unfortunately, the refugees were greatly disappointed as the session ended with only the publication of more fresh resolutions. The refugees had been optimistic not for hopes of a political gain; experience has taught them the opposite of that. They were not also eager to achieve new resolutions, however suitably worded they may be, for they already had achieved some resolutions which they have accepted and requested. What the refugees were hoping to see out of that session was a will for executing the old resolutions of the United Nations. For what is the value of resolutions, and what is the object of taking decisions if these are not destined to be enforced? The refugees demand frankness and clarity from you and from the United Nations, and it is not asking much to demand frankness and clarity after those ravaging three years.

In respect of the future of the refugees, the United Nations stands in either one of two positions. It is either incompetent to enforce its own resolutions, or it is disinclined to enforce them. In each case, the refugees have become puzzled or even doubtful of the intentions of the United Nations towards them and their future.

Is the failure of the United Nations the result of the influence which the Jews have in its various departments, or is

it a new chapter in the original plan which at first created Israel and then overwhelmed her with recognitions, financial help, loans, instruments of war, and now seems to want to strangle us all?

In spite of the lapse of a long time in which the refugees have had to live far away from their homes, the United Nations which was originally a primary cause in their disaster, has until now not done anything whatsoever to give them their natural rights. The refugees are well-aware of the impact of the Jewish influence which has so blighted the name of the United Nations, and they might well be excused for thinking that their return to their homes can only be achieved by a more devastating road.

Our Committee which is fully cognizant and appreciative of this fact is still hoping that your commission will do something quickly, which will have the effect of satisfying the supreme wish of the refugees of going back to their homes.

The Political Committee of the United Nations has lately produced a new resolution which was afterwards approved by the General Assembly on the 14th of December, 1950.

We should like to remark that this new resolution is not different in its spirit from an earlier resolution of the United Nations taken on the 11th of December, 1948. But already over two years have elapsed and the United Nations is still unable to enforce that resolution, and force the Jewish authorities, which were of its own making, to respect the word of the United Nations.

The refugees wish to place on record again here, that they are very apprehensive of their future, and observe that all the resolutions which have affirmed Arab rights and Justice, have been nothing but ink on paper. In these circumstances, the refugees have remained homeless and away from their own properties which have in the meantime been inhabited by foreigners; their monies are still frozen in British Banks although the balances of these monies are kept in England and not in Israel; their properties and the rents

thereof still remain under the mercy of Jewish custody. And all these things help to make the Middle East as indefinable as it is today.

The refugees are not enemies, but are according to the Jews themselves, absentees. Yet we have learned that the Jewish authorities have promulgated new oppressive laws concerning Arab properties that are contrary to the natural rights of the property owners, and which incidentally are opposed to the terms of the truce agreements in force.

We therefore request you to order the Jewish authorities to with-hold from enforcing these laws immediately, and to cancel the laws altogether before they will have done much harm. In its place, we request the setting up of a Committee especially established, and composed of appointed refugees together with some United Nations Officers, which will have as its duty the administration of the properties of the absentees under United Nation's suzerainship. We suggest that this be set up immediately and in the course of your deliberations in this session on the ways and means of enforcing the aims of Article Eleven of Resolution 194 taken on 11.12.1948.

We believe that your committee is not unaware that the refugees are palostinians and that many of them have had their origins in Palestine since thousands of years. The refugees are living today as foreigners where-ever they are, and are considered as such by the countries in which they reside. Not only officially, but also the nationals of these countries look to the refugees as foreigners and have no real feeling towards them. As a witness to this, it is sufficient to know that in the last moslem and christian Christmas holidays, the refugees were left as poor and as haggard as they have been since three years, and we have not seen one example where the nationals of these countries have shown any real sympathy towards them, or offered gifts to their children.

In such a situation it would be an unwarranted fancy to think that the United Nations new policy of Integration can be applied with success.

The refugees have tired of submitting memoranda to international bodies, for they have been demanding justice for three years, but in vain. Nevertheless, they have not given up hope in God's justice, which they believe will ultimately prevail.

The last resolution of the United Nations which you have come here to enforce, cannot be fully discussed by us in this memorandum, and we should be honoured if you will make it possible for a delegation from our committee to appear before you in person. Our delegation hopes to suggest to you the best ways which in our opinion would serve the high hopes of the refugees, and to present to you the following subjects:

- (1)- The present ravaging condition of the Palestinian refugees.
- (2)- The enforcement of the supreme desire of the refugees of returning to their homes.
- (3)- The rights and ways of the refugees for administering their own properties.
- (4)- That the idea of Integration is nothing but an impractical dream which cannot be enforced successfully.
- (5)- Suggesting the means of enforcing the three United Nations resolutions of 29th November, 1947, the 11th December, 1948, and the 14th December, 1950.

History has chosen you to solve this question, and the conclusions you arrive at will be recorded for or against you. This is a rare chance for you to affirm justice to this disaster which remains a black spot in the history of humanity itself. You are of course aware, that unjust and unpractical solutions cannot live long, and usually contain in themselves the seeds for revolution; for example, the unjust and unpractical solution imposed upon European Nations was itself the cause of the 1939 war,

and of the failure of the League of Nations.

Our Committee takes this occasion to offer you its compliments,  
and prays that you will succeed in your noble mission.

Yours sincerely,

Beirut,  
27.1.1951

(Signed) Michel Azar  
Secretary