

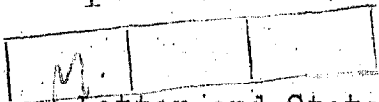
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Letter and Statement Submitted to the Secretary-General of the United Nations by the Delegation of the Arab Higher Committee for Palestine and Transmitted for the Information of the Conciliation Commission.

The Delegation of the Arab Higher Committee for Palestine desires to submit the following to Your Excellency.

The Arabs of Palestine are the true owners of the country, and constitute the great majority of its legal inhabitants. Hence they are the party most interested and concerned in the problem of Palestine, and as such should enjoy the right of having the first say in all discussions concerning their future and that of their country.

The Arab Higher Committee for Palestine is the institution that represents the Arabs. It has been so recognized by the Arabs of Palestine, the Arab States, the defunct Palestine (Mandatory) Government, and the British Government in London. This Committee was always invited to represent Palestine in all the conferences and discussions relative to the Palestine problem.

The United Nations themselves, upholding this right of the Arabs, recognized the representative character of the Arab Higher Committee, and accepted its delegations to speak in the name of the Palestine Arabs before the First Committee of the General Assembly and the Security Council, in all the sessions discussing the Palestine problem, including the session in which the Palestine Conciliation Commission was formed.

As soon as the Palestine Conciliation Commission commenced to function, the Arab Higher Committee requested that it be invited by the said Commission to participate in all discussions of the Palestine problem, and particularly in those discussions with the Arab States, drawing the attention of the Conciliation Commission to its character and special position.

It is to be regretted, however, that the Palestine Conciliation Commission, in spite of the repeated requests of the Arab Higher Committee, disregarded that demand, ignored the character and position of the Arab Higher Committee, and invited

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it to appear before **the** Commission on the same basis on which non-official bodies were invited.

The invitation of the Arab Higher Committee in this manner, places the Arabs of Palestine in an ordinary secondary position in the discussion of their country's problem; obliterates the official Palestinian Arab point of view; deprives the owners of the country of their natural right to be regarded as the main interested party in the Palestinian problem, and presents the Palestine Arabs as a disunited people with divided opinions.

In view of the above, the Delegation of the Arab Higher Committee feels unable to accept the invitation of the Palestine Conciliation Commission in the manner it was extended, or enter into any discussions with the Palestine Conciliation Commission on that basis. The Delegation, thus considers the investigations and discussions of the Palestine Conciliation Commission to be incomplete, and to some extent biased, and reserves to the Arab Higher Committee whom the delegation represents, the right to present fully the Palestinian Arab real and official point of view, free of all elements of pressure, direction, and influence, to the United Nations themselves in their forthcoming meeting, and to question and discuss before them the reports and the recommendations of the Palestine Conciliation Commission.

We beg to attach hereto a statement prepared by the Arab Higher Committee covering the Palestinian Arab point of view regarding the affairs of their country and its problem.

Yours respectfully,

FOR THE DELEGATION OF THE ARAB HIGHER
COMMITTEE FOR PALESTINE

THE PALESTINE PROBLEM

A STATEMENT SUBMITTED BY

THE ARAB HIGHER COMMITTEE FOR PALESTINE TO HIS
EXCELLENCY THE UNITED NATIONS SECRETARY-GENERAL

When the Palestine Case was brought before the United Nations in the Spring of 1947, the Arabs were greatly pleased, for they hoped that this World Organization would give them a fair hearing and realize the justice of their case. The hopes of the Arabs were based on what they knew of the aims of the United Nations, and the basic principles embodied in their charter, aiming at the support of truth, and the respect of peoples' wishes.

On the 29th of November 1947, the General Assembly of the United Nations passed a resolution recommending the partitioning of Palestine, and the establishment of a Jewish State therein. That resolution disappointed the Arabs, and destroyed the hope and faith which they had put in the United Nations. They saw that the recommendations to partition Palestine was contrary to the aims, principles, and spirit of the United Nations charter, and their reaction was one of deep concern and anxiety. They therefore rejected the resolution, and declared their refusal to be bound by it, or by anything deriving therefrom. The said resolution not only failed to respect Arab demands, but was in complete violation of the spirit of the charter, contrary to the principle of self-determination, and embodied the elements of aggression and injustice. For the Arabs of Palestine are the real owners of the country, and they compose by far the greatest majority of its lawful inhabitants. They had time and again repeatedly proclaimed their unanimous desire to have their country remain united and undivided, and to enjoy their right to freedom and independence. And there lies the natural right of the Arabs, a right which has been recognized in all international charters, including the principle of self-determination, and which has also been guaranteed in the United Nations Charter.

The Arabs had a firm and positive belief that the partition of Palestine would strongly endanger their national, political, social, and economic life, and that the establishment of a

Jewish State in Palestine could only be realized by the destruction of the existence of the Arabs. The events that followed on the heels of the announcement of the partition scheme, proved that Arab fears were well founded. For no sooner had the Jews become confident of the support and aid of the Western Great Powers, than they resorted to terrorism in order to realize the partition scheme. They attacked the Arab people with the force of arms, occupied many parts of Palestine, uprooted their Arab inhabitants, and threw them out of their lands and homes, after killing many of them and robbing their wealth. They confiscated Arab property; they blew up completely several Arab villages; they trampled on Moslem and Christian religious places, and robbed them of their ornaments and valuables. They reverted places of worship into places of dancing, drinking and vulgarity. They destroyed a few mosques and churches; and even their aggressive hands reached the Holy Aqsa Mosque and the Sacred Church of the Holy Sepulchre, and the religious and historical sites in the city of Jerusalem, and deliberately made them targets of their mortar fire and flying mines, thus causing in them great damage and killing some of their custodians and venerated servants. In general the Jews committed against the peaceful inhabitants crimes which have no equal in history, as is well manifested in the barbarianism shown in the incidents of the peaceful villages of Deir Yasin, Naser-ed-dine, Aylout, Tireh, Dawaymieh, and others.

No doubt the Jews would not have ventured to do all what they had done, were it not for the moral and actual support extended to them by some of the Western Powers, who are members in the United Nations and the Security Council. Everyone recalls how some of those powers hastened to recognize the Government of Israel, and the status quo resulting from the use of force and violence. Those states permitted the pouring from their countries of money, men, and arms to the Jews of Palestine, and some of these states sent aeroplanes and various kinds of arms and ammunitions to the Jewish military force in Palestine. In a sense the United Nations itself helped the Jews immensely, by standing impotently in the face of repeated Jewish contraventions to the orders of the Security Council. And we sincerely believe that had the Arabs taken a course similar to that taken by the

Jews, with respect to the orders of the Security Council, the Jews would not have been able to make the gains which they were able to make.

Ever since the resolution to partition Palestine was taken, the Arabs have been appealing to world conscience to the United Nations asking for justice and fair deal. And thus when the General Assembly decided to set up the Palestine Conciliation Commission, the Arabs saw in that decision a new opportunity in which they may be able to defend their rights. They are therefore eager that the said conciliation Commission would realize the urgency of finding and recommending a just plan which would remove the injustice befalling the Arabs. Such a plan cannot, in our belief, be based but on the nullification of the Partition Scheme, the reversion of Palestine into its unity, and guaranteeing its freedom and independence, in accordance with the principles of true democracy, and the principles of the United Nations. Only such a plan could be compatible with justice, and would be one of the main safeguards against possibilities of extreme gravity affecting the peace of Palestine and the countries of the Middle East, at present and in future.

II

The foremost catastrophe resulting from the partition scheme and from Jewish terrorism, has been the problem of refugees. This problem has become so acute that its solution should not be allowed to be delayed any further. Any delay would be a sad reflection on human conscience and the principles of honour and human brotherhood.

It is of benefit to refer here to the fact that the United Nations Mediator did not fail to see the acuteness of the refugee problem. Although his recommendations were, in whole, unfavourable to the Arabs, yet he dealt with the refugee problem in a special section (A/648), of his report. In this section the Mediator described the pitiful state of poverty, ill-health, and malnutrition which is prevalent among the refugees. He warned the world that it must choose for those refugees either "existence or extinctness". Even since this warning which came on September 18th, 1948, the problem of the refugees has been growing more pitiful and serious all the time. And what multiplies the suffering of the refugees is for them to see and hear of their towns, and villages, and their homes, being occupied by Jewish immigrants.

It is a most simple and just right for the refugees to be permitted to return immediately to their homes and their country; and nothing should stand in their way. The whole world has been unanimous in its support for the return of the refugees to their homes, and even those countries which have frankly pro-Jewish tendencies, have been unable to deny to the refugees their natural right of going back home.

The Arabs believe that the United Nations Organization which is the author of the partition plan, is responsible for the catastrophe that has befallen the Palestinian refugees. As such it is the duty of the United Nations to remove the injustice done to the Arabs. We submit that by removing the cause of the problem of the refugees, the United Nations will have substantially solved their serious problem, and the only and sure way to solve the problem, and remove its causes, is to permit the return of the refugees to their homes where they should be guaranteed to live freely in peace and in prosperity. On their return, they must immediately be given back all their properties, whether movable or immovable, and for such damage or loss as may have resulted from Jewish terrorism and violence adequate indemnity must be paid to them.

III

As for the Jerusalem District, it must remain Arab, as it always was in the past. The great majority of its lawful inhabitants have always been Arab, and its lands are almost totally owned by Arabs. Jerusalem town itself, has always been the capital of Palestine, and a symbol of its unity and history. In it are to be found the holiest of all Churches, Mosques and sites. It is a historical fact that these holy places have never found better guardian than the Arab who prides himself as their custodian for centuries. Therefore the opinion favouring the internationalization of Jerusalem is groundless, and can mean nothing but the realization of new political and imperialistic aims and factors in an area which should be farthest away from them. Furthermore, Arab experience of Jewish disrespect and neglect of United Nations orders, and in the failure of the United Nations and Security Council to force the Jews to abide by those orders, proves that the internationalization of the Jerusalem district cannot be a safe guarantee for the protection of the Holy places.

And it is another historical fact that religions under the Arab reign enjoyed a great degree of freedom and tolerance, and even the Jews themselves felt free in their religious practices only in the Arab and Moslem Countries because of Moslem tolerance. Furthermore the guardians of all the Holy places of Jerusalem, whether Moslem or Christian, reject the internationalization of Jerusalem, and desire that the Holy places remain in the hands of the Arabs as they have been for centuries.

It must be stated further that the internationalization of Jerusalem is contrary to Arab National sovereignty, and they cannot but reject most strongly any scheme that would divide and tear up the unity of their country and wrest Jerusalem from Arab sovereignty, thereby causing a new and grave injustice to the Arabs.

IV

Finally, the Arab Higher Committee for Palestine, hopes that the Palestine Conciliation Commission would deal with the Palestine problem in its entirety and bare fundamentals, in accordance with the principles of justice and the United Nations Charter. It wishes to state that any solution for the Palestine problem which does not nullify partition, guarantee to the Arabs their full right to enjoy the unity and independence of Palestine, with Jerusalem as its capital, and provide for the immediate return of the refugees to their homes, would only help to arouse hatreds and would destroy the peace and stability in Palestine and the Middle East. Further, the Arabs of Palestine, who have been subjected to all forms of despotism, torture, calamities, and miseries as a result of the partition scheme, will never willingly acquiesce in the status quo forced upon Palestine. But they will continue the struggle for the freedom of their country, by all means at their disposal. The Arab and Moslem peoples everywhere are determined to free Palestine, regardless of the cost or length of time required.