

UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly



Distr.
RESTRICTED

A/AC.21/UK/72
18 March 1948



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UNITED NATION PALESTINE COMMISSION
Communication Received from United Kingdom
Delegation Concerning International Red
Cross Committee in Palestine

The following communication, concerning the activities of the International Red Cross Committee and the maintenance of health services in Palestine after 15 May has been received from Mr. Fletcher-Cooke of the United Kingdom Delegation.

UNITED KINGDOM DELEGATION TO THE UNITED NATIONS
Empire State Building
New York 1, N.Y.

18th March, 1948.

My dear Bunche,

May I refer you to paragraph 1 of your letter of the 3rd March and previous correspondence relating to the proposed activities of the International Red Cross Committee in Palestine after the 15th May.

I have now received further information from Jerusalem on the subject of the maintenance of health services in Palestine after the 15th May, which is as follows:-

- (1) The problem of maintaining existing hospitals in certain localities has been causing some anxiety to the Government of Palestine.
- (2) At the present time, the Department of Health maintains the following hospitals:-
 - (a) Hospitals for general cases (including infectious diseases) - Jerusalem, Haifa, Amman, Jaffa, Beersheba, Gaza, Tel Aviv and Safad.
 - (b) Hospitals for infectious diseases - Jerusalem (Bait Safafa), and Bnei Braq and Safad.
 - (c) Hospitals for mental diseases - Bethlehem

Nos. 1 and, 2, and Bat Yam, near Jaffa.

(3) Laboratories are attached to many of these hospitals.

(4) It is anticipated that the Commission will find a difficulty in operating some of the hospitals which primarily serve the Arabs.

(5) The following hospitals are gradually being transferred as it were in trust to the respective local authorities until the new central authority makes other arrangements: Amman, Jaffa, Beersheba & Gaza.

(6) The question of Haifa and Safad hospitals is under discussion.

(7) It has not been found possible by the Government of Palestine to maintain a hospital for infectious diseases at Jerusalem (Beit Safafa) owing to security reasons and its administration hail, therefore, been placed in the hands of the Arab Medical Association, who were at the time the only organisation capable of exercising the necessary authority.

(8) There will probably be no difficulty in turning over the Tel Aviv Bnei Braq hospital to the Vaad Leumi in due course the necessity for this does not arise at present.

(9) The hospital at Bat Yem near Jaffa presents certain special features but it is at present commissioned by the Jews, some of whom have been recruited by the Vaad Leumi.

Arrangements for the future of hospitals at Jerusalem and Bethlehem where it is not practical for local authorities to assume responsibility have presented some difficulties. It is considered that these institutions could probably be operated under cover of the International Red Cross Committee by the existing staffs if the financial maintenance of the staffs of these hospitals could be guaranteed after the 15th May. It is thought that the Arab staff would be prepared to continue under International Red Cross direction whereas they would refuse to serve under a successor authority established by the Commission.

In the opinion of the Government of Palestine the most practical solution would be to hand over these two hospitals in trust to the International Red Cross Committee until a successor authority could make other arrangements and for the Commission to guarantee the necessary financial provisions to the Committee. The costs of these proposals work out at £P8,000 per mensem, being £P4,000 per mensem for the hospital at Jerusalem and £P4,000 per mensem in respect of the two mental hospitals at Bethlehem.

I presume that the Commission will agree that the sum of £P8,000 per mensem should be made available to the International Red Cross in order to finance the continued operation of these hospitals and should be grateful if you would confirm this.

Yours sincerely,
(signed) J. FLETCHER-COOKE
(J. Fletcher-Cooke)

Dr. Ralph J. Bunche,
Principal Secretary to the United Nations
Commission on Palestine,
United Nations,
Lake Success.

