



UNITED NATIONS CONCILIATION COMMISSION FOR PALESTINE

EXCHANGE OF CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN THE COMMISSION AND THE DELEGATION OF ISRAEL CONCERNING
THE FORMATION OF A JOINT COMMITTEE TO STUDY CERTAIN QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE GAZA REFUGEES1. Letter dated 23 February 1950 to Mr. Aubrey Eban from Mr. de Boisanger

Dear Mr. Eban,

In connection with our conversation this morning, I am sending you herewith the text of the terms of reference which the Commission envisages for the Joint Committee:

(a) The Joint Committee on problems relating to the Gaza area shall consider the three following proposals submitted to the Conciliation Commission by the Egyptian delegation on 24 October 1949:

(i) That inhabitants of areas falling within the no man's land in the north of the Gaza region be allowed to return as soon as possible to their lands to cultivate them. That refugees at present in the Gaza area under Egyptian control and possessing land in the hinterland of this zone be allowed to undertake as soon as possible the cultivation of these lands.

(iii) That refugees at present in the Gaza zone originating from the Beersheba area be allowed, provisionally and pending a final settlement, to establish themselves in that area.

Sincerely yours,
sgd./ BOISANGER

2. Letter dated 28 February 1950 to the Chairman of the Commission from Mr. Gideon Rafael.

Sir,

I have the honour to reply as follows to your letter of February 23, 1950. I apologise for the delay, which resulted from the need to consult my Government and to ascertain the situation with respect to the three questions suggested for discussions by the proposed Mixed Committee.

I wish to reaffirm my delegation's willingness to discuss with Egyptian representatives the conclusion of a peace settlement between our countries or any interim measure leading to such a settlement. The Israel Government will look with sympathy upon any procedure designed to lead effectively to such discussions.

With reference to the items suggested in your letter as the agenda for a mixed committee, I am informed that, these subjects have recently been discussed between the Israel and Egyptian delegations to the Mixed Armistice Commission. You will be gratified to learn that a settlement was reached on [February 22, 1950](#) and duly signed on behalf of both governments. The main points of the agreement are:

(1) The neutral zone is divided between Egypt and Israel.

(2) The original inhabitants of the Egyptian section of the neutral zone are entitled to resume residence and civilian occupation of that area.

(3) The inhabitants of the villages Abasan and Akhzah which were cut by the armistice demarcation line are now to be allowed to cultivate their lands in Israel territory, wherein a special zone is created for that purpose.

It appears that the modus vivendi described above represents the greatest degree of fulfilment that can be given to the Egyptian requests referred to in your letter. The Egyptian signature appears to us to confirm this view. In these circumstances it would appear that the propositions formulated by the Egyptian delegation in October 1949, have been satisfactorily discussed and resolved by mutual consent.

We should be grateful if the Commission would convey to the Egyptian delegation our readiness to discuss the settlement of all outstanding questions between our two countries with a view to the establishment of permanent peace.

Yours faithfully,
Sgd./ GIDEON RAFAEL

3. Letter dated 2 March 1950 to Mr. Gideon Rafael from the Chairman of the Commission.

Sir,

I have the honour to acknowledge receipt of your letter of 28 February 1950 on the creation of a Joint Committee to consider certain questions concerning the Gaza refugees.

The Conciliation Commission has been informed telegraphically by General Riley of the conclusion in the Mixed Armistice Commission of the Agreements to which you refer. Furthermore, General Riley has informed the Commission that he is transmitting by diplomatic pouch the text of the agreement, with the necessary maps.

Pending the study of this text, to which it will proceed without delay, the Commission considers that the agreement concluded in the Mixed Armistice Commission does not, according to the terms of your letter, bear upon any but the first point of the terms of reference which the Commission intended to give to a Joint Committee, and that the remaining points have not been the subject of any settlement.

In consequence, the Commission continues to believe that the creation of the above Joint Committee would be useful. It maintains its proposal to the parties on this question and would be grateful to you if you would inform your Government accordingly.

The Commission is prepared to examine any suggestion or proposal which the delegation of Israel might wish to make, either on the substance of the questions composing the proposed Joint Committees mandate or the procedure to be established for their consideration.

I have the honour to be,
Sir,
Your obedient servant,
Sgd./ CLAUDE DE BOISANGER

4. Letter dated 13 March 1950, to the Chairman of the Commission from Mr. Gideon Rafael.

Sir,

I have the honour to acknowledge receipt of your letter of March 2nd, contents of which I have transmitted to my Government.

Yours faithfully,
Sgd./ GIDEON RAFAEL

5. Letter dated 21 March 1952 to Mr. Gideon Rafael from the Chairman of the Commission

Sir,

Further to my letter of 2 March 1950, I have the honour to inform you that the Conciliation Commission has now received a copy of the "modus vivendi" to the Egyptian-Israeli General Armistice Agreement to which you refer in your letter of 28 February.

The above document and the attached maps showing the areas involved in the "modus vivendi" agreement confirm the view expressed by the Commission in its letter of 2 March that not all the proposals submitted by the Egyptian delegation have been the subject of settlement.

In view of the above, the Commission continues to believe that the creation of a Joint committee to study those of the Egyptian proposals not falling within the framework of the "modus vivendi" of 22 February would be useful. It maintains its proposal to the parties on this question and would be grateful to you if you would let it have your Government's reply to this letter as well as to the Commission's communication of 2 March.

The Commission is prepared to examine any suggestion or proposal which the delegation of Israel might wish to make either in the substance of the above questions or on the procedure to be established for their consideration.

A copy of your letter of 28 February is being transmitted to the Egyptian delegation.

I have the honour to be, Sir,
Your obedient Servant,
Sgd./ GLADE DE BOISANGER

6. Letter dated March 1950 to the Chairman of the Commission from Mr. Gideon Rafael

Sir,

I have the honour to acknowledge receipt of your letter dated March 21 1950 and to reply thereto as well, as to your letter of March 2, 1950.

In my letter of February 28th I conveyed the view of my Government that the modus vivendi reached on February 22nd 1950 "represents the greatest degree of fulfilment that can be given to the Egyptian requests" under discussion. The Egyptian representative signed the modus vivendi without the reservation contained in paragraph 2 of your letter to the effect that the settlement was incomplete or unsatisfactory or that any further changes in the armistice arrangements were desired. We understand that Egypt has not submitted any proposals of this nature since the signature of the modus vivendi.

Since certain matters raised by the Egyptian delegation affecting the armistice arrangements have been satisfactorily settled in the Mixed Armistice Commission it would appear that matters of a similarly local and specific character might best be treated through the same channels, if so required by either party. My delegation reiterates its desire to discuss with the Egyptian delegation or any other Arab delegation under the auspices of the Conciliation Commission the question of a final peace settlement or any substantive questions conducive thereto.

My Government appreciates the action of the Palestine Conciliation Commission in conveying my letter of February 28th to the Egyptian delegation. The Israel delegation would be glad to be notified of the Egyptian reply to the official proposal contained in the last paragraph,

Yours faithfully,
Sgd./ GIDEON RAFAEL

7. Letter dated 29 March 1950 to Mr. Gideon Rafael from the Chairman of the Commission.

I have the honour to acknowledge receipt of your letter of 23 March 1950, which the Commission has considered with great interest. In this connection the Commission has decided that it would be useful to communicate to you a letter from the delegate of Egypt dated 23 March and the Commission's reply thereto, dated 29 March, of which copies are attached.

It appears from the Egyptian delegate's letter that not only does the Egyptian Government consider that of the proposals submitted by it to the Conciliation Commission in October last not all have been completely and satisfactorily settled, but has declared itself ready to consider these questions in a Joint Committee to be established for this purpose under the conditions set forth in this letter.

From the Commission's reply you will note that the Commission considers that only after an exchange of views between the parties in a Joint Committee will it be possible to determine to what degree the Egyptian proposals could be put into effect.

It is requested that this communication be considered in connection with the proposal of a more general nature which has been submitted today to the delegations of the Arab States and of Israel.

The Conciliation Commission hopes that the Government of Israel, which has expressed its desire to discuss with the Egyptian delegation or any other Arab delegation under the auspices of the Conciliation Commission the question of a final settlement or any substantive questions conducive thereto, will give the most serious consideration to the proposals of the Commission whose purpose is to create favourable conditions for the establishment of peace in Palestine.

I have the honour to be,
Sir,
Your obedient servant,
Sgd./ CLAUDE DE BOISANGER