



General Assembly

A/5545
1 November 1963

Eighteenth session
Agenda item 32

REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONER-GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND WORKS AGENCY FOR PALESTINE REFUGEES IN THE NEAR EAST*

Twenty-first progress report of the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine

(8 December 1962-31 October 1963)

[Note by the Secretary-General: The twenty-first progress report of the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine has been transmitted by the Chairman of the Commission to the Members of the United Nations, in accordance with paragraph 6 of General Assembly resolution 512 (VI) of 26 January 1952.]

1. In the period since the submission of its twentieth progress report on 7 December 1962, 1/ the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine has given continuing and serious attention to how it might best fulfil the Assembly's mandate to achieve progress on the Palestine refugee problem, as expressed most recently in General Assembly resolution 1856 (XVII) of 20 December 1962.

2. The Commission early in 1963 held the first of several meetings to determine how it should proceed to carry out the request of the General Assembly. Taking into account the Commission's intensive efforts during the past year, the United States suggested that, as a member of the Commission, it might initiate a series of quiet talks with the parties concerned - Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and the United Arab Republic. It was proposed that the five Governments concerned should be approached at a high level and without pre-conditions as to the nature of the eventual solution of the problem. The Commission agreed to this approach, and has been kept generally informed of the progress of these talks with Arab and Israel leaders during the past spring and summer.

3. Recently the United States informed the Commission that, in its opinion, the talks had been useful. All sides had shown goodwill, a desire to achieve progress on the refugee problem, and a desire to continue the talks, which are not yet completed. The Commission noted these views, expressed appreciation for the efforts made in the conduct of these talks, and requested that it continue to be kept informed of their progress. The Commission, expressing confidence that every effort will be made in the continuation of such talks to advance the wishes of the General Assembly expressed in resolution 1856 (XVII), proposes to report to the General Assembly after the completion of such talks.

4. On 31 January 1963, the Commission accepted with deep regret the resignation of its Special Representative, Mr. Joseph E. Johnson. In submitting his letter of resignation because of "compelling personal commitments", Mr. Johnson expressed his appreciation for the opportunity to "attempt to contribute to a solution of the problem of the Arab refugees, whose tragedy has become increasingly apparent during these past fifteen years".

IDENTIFICATION AND VALUATION PROGRAMME

5. In its twentieth progress report the Commission, after explaining that the task of computing the value of each owner's holdings and the preparation of an index of owners' names was the most logical stage of work following completion of the valuation of individual parcels of immovable property, stated that in its

opinion any compensation operation would be facilitated by completion of this task which was begun in 1962.

6. At its 353rd meeting on 9 January 1963, the Commission decided to request the Secretary-General to provide the necessary staff and facilities to enable this task to be completed during 1963. The Secretary-General agreed to the Commission's request.

7. The land expert in charge of its Technical Office has reported to the Commission that the substantive work on this programme is largely completed and that statistical summaries will be completed by the end of the year, as was forecast in the Commission's twentieth progress report. Consequently, on 31 December 1963 the staff engaged in this project will be released.

8. However, additional technical arrangements will be required to make easier later use of the information developed in the course of the identification and evaluation programme. The land expert has been instructed to take the necessary steps to this end prior to 1 April 1964.

RELEASE OF ARAB REFUGEE BANK ACCOUNTS BLOCKED IN ISRAEL AND TRANSFER OF SAFE
DEPOSIT AND SAFE CUSTODY ITEMS

9. During the period since the submission of the Commission's last progress report, the processing of applications for the release of bank accounts of refugees and absentee owners has continued in accordance with established procedures. Full current figures on this operation and on the transfer of safe deposit and safe custody items, which has also proceeded during this period, were not available at the time of preparation of the present report and will be released when received.

DOCUMENT A/SPC/91

**Letter dated 12 November 1963 from the representatives of Jordan,
Lebanon, Syria and United Arab Republic to the
Chairman of the Special Political Committee**

[13 November 1963]

1. Further to the statements made earlier in this Committee by our respective delegations regarding the twenty-first progress report of the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine (A/5545), we have the honour, upon instructions from our respective Governments, to call your attention to the incorrect statements contained in that report, and in particular to the statements that a series of quiet talks have been conducted "at a high level and without preconditions as to the nature of the eventual solution of the problem". We hardly need to emphasize that the report, as it stands at present, is so detrimental to the rights of the Palestine Arab refugees that we deem it necessary to call the attention of the United Nations members to this serious situation which the Palestine Conciliation Commission has brought about.

2. In our considered opinion the general tenor of the report of the Palestine Conciliation Commission deviates seriously from the mandate of the Commission as specifically stipulated in paragraph 11 of General Assembly resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948; a mandate which has been reaffirmed by the relevant successive resolutions of the General Assembly.

3. We seize this opportunity to assert that the rights of the refugees as declared in paragraph 11 of resolution 194 (III) have been reaffirmed by the General Assembly in each and every session of the General Assembly of the United Nations, and our Governments are in no way to relinquish those rights or diminish them in any manner, regardless of the fact that those rights belong to the Palestine Arab refugees themselves.

4. In the light of the above considerations we are authorized to declare that our Governments are not prepared to undertake any talks of any nature with the Conciliation Commission, on the basis of the general outline set out in the report. In the same manner, we should like to reiterate that, as in the past, our Governments will be ready to hold discussions with the Conciliation Commission with a view, strictly and exclusively, to implementing paragraph 11 of resolution 194 (III).

5. We request that this letter be circulated to the Members as a United Nations document.

The Permanent Representatives of:

(Signed)

Abdul Monem RIFA'I, Jordan
Georges HAKIM, Lebanon
Salah El Dine TARAZI, Syria
Mahmoud RIAD, United Arab Republic

Notes

ccp.rec