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### UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND WORKS AGENCY FOR PALESTINE REFUGEES IN THE NEAR EAST

#### Palestine refugees in the Gaza Strip

#### Report of the Secretary-General

1. The present report is submitted to the General Assembly in pursuance of its resolution 41/69 E of 3 December 1986, in which the Assembly reiterated its demand that Israel should desist from the removal and resettlement of Palestine refugees in the Gaza Strip and from the destruction of their shelters, and requested the Secretary-General, after consulting with the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), to report to it, before the opening of its forty-second session, on Israel's compliance with the resolution.

2. On 21 January 1987, the Secretary-General addressed a note verbal to the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations, in which he drew attention to his reporting responsibility under the resolution and requested the Permanent Representative to inform him, by 30 June 1987, of any steps his Government had taken or envisaged taking in implementation of the relevant provisions of the resolution.

3. In a note verbal dated 8 July 1987, the Permanent Representative of Israel replied as follows:

"Israel's position on this resolution has been set out in successive annual replies submitted to the Secretary-General in recent years. The report of the Secretary-General dated 3 September 1986 (A/41/564) contained the latest of these replies. In addition, Israel's representative to the Special Political Committee reiterated Israel's position during his statement on 28 October 1986 (A/SPC/41/SR.14).

"This resolution is distorted, unbalanced and inaccurate and its sponsors intentionally ignore the improved living conditions in the Gaza District since 1967. Resolution 41/69 E does not mention the 120 per cent increase of pupils attending school in the Gaza District since 1967, nor does it mention the 25 per cent drop in the illiteracy rate among inhabitants in the Gaza District since 1967. Furthermore, it does not mention the extensive development of medical care or the improvement of environmental services - including water supply, sewage and refuse disposal. By conveniently omitting these facts, the sponsors of resolution 41/69 E continue to pervert General Assembly resolutions for propaganda purposes.

"Moreover, since 1967 Israel has initiated community development projects in the Gaza District, enabling over 10,000 families to leave refugee camps and relocate to new residential areas. These projects, part of the voluntary Refugee Rehabilitation Program, are becoming increasingly popular among the refugees because they materially improve their living conditions. Israel's positive role in initiating these housing projects has been recognized by both the Secretary-General and the High Commissioner of UNRWA in their respective reports (A/40/613 and A/40/13)."

4. The following information concerning Israel's compliance with General Assembly resolution 41/69 E is based on reports from the Commissioner-General of UNRWA.

5. In the reporting period, the Israeli authorities demolished 12 shelter rooms, which affected four refugee families comprising 23 persons. Some rooms were constructed by the refugee families concerned and others by the Agency. The particulars are as follows:

(a) On 11 February 1987, two Agency shelter rooms in the Rafah camp, Block N/105, in addition to eight private rooms at Tel-es-Sultan, were

demolished as a punitive action;

(b) On 8 July 1986, two shelter rooms (privately built) at Khan Yunis Camp, Block J/471/40, occupied by one refugee family comprising 10 persons, were demolished, reportedly on the grounds that the construction contravened building regulations.

6. The Agency is following up with the Israeli authorities the re-housing of refugees who remain affected by the demolitions in 1971 in the Gaza Strip. Last year's report referred to the status of 87 families categorized as, living in hardship conditions (see A/41/564, para. 6). The situation on 30 June 1987 was as follows: 14 of these 87 families continued to live in conditions of hardship, 18 remained unsatisfactorily housed (inadequate), 37 were satisfactorily housed (adequate) and 18 had previously purchased houses in projects sponsored by the Israeli authorities. The situation of the 14 families living in conditions of hardship was checked several times during the reporting period. Despite repeated assurances by the Israeli authorities that they would be rehoused, very little progress has been made. The authorities continue to assure the Agency that a solution has been developed and will be implemented as soon as possible.

7. During the reporting period, the Commissioner-General received the following information relating to refugee shelters demolished by the Israeli authorities on the grounds that they had been built without proper authority on State land outside camp boundaries:

(a) In paragraph 7 (a) of last year's report (A/41/564), it was stated that the Israeli authorities had told several families living on the northern perimeter of Jabalia Camp to remove some of their shelter extensions and that these families had taken the matter to the High Court of Israel, which had ruled against them. No demolitions have taken place so far, although the shelters have been isolated by the bulldozing of sand around their premises. The Israeli authorities have had discussions with some members of this group;

(b) Of the 35 families whose shelters on the perimeter of Beach Camp were demolished in 1983 (see A/41/564, para. 7 (b)), 15 have received plots of land at Sheikh Radwan or the Beit Lahiya housing projects. Of the remaining 20 families, three have left the Beach Camp area, one has bought a piece of land outside the projects, and one has moved in with relatives. Fifteen families are living in temporary shelters built by themselves on or near the same site. The Israeli authorities have stated that they would be willing to consider allocating land in a housing project for the families who had not been rehoused, but that it would not be at Sheikh Radwan, which was the project nearest the site.

8. Last year's report referred to some refugee families in Block Q of the Rafah camp who, at the instance of the Israeli authorities, had agreed to relocate to the Tel-es-Sultan housing project (A/41/564, para. 8). At as 30 June 1987, most of the families concerned had been allocated plots of land, but pending construction thereon, they remain in their shelters, which are isolated by the bulldozing of sand around them. A few have refused the allocation and have sought larger plots because of the size of their families.

9. In addition, in the year under review, according to information available to the Commissioner-General, 20 plots of land in housing projects were allocated by the Israeli authorities. In this period, 301 refugee families, comprising 1,854 persons, moved to 174 plots of land in housing projects, having accepted demolition of their shelters in the camps as a prior condition. A further five refugee families, comprising 33 persons, handed over their shelters to the Israeli authorities and moved to five plots of land, but their shelters were made available to three other refugee families. Two of these families had to demolish their original shelters before moving, and the third came from outside the camp. Fourteen other refugee families, comprising 101 persons who were living outside the camps, moved to 14 plots of land. In addition, seven refugee families, comprising 45 persons, moved to seven completed housing units consisting of 22 rooms prior to demolition of their shelters, and another five refugee families, comprising 36 persons living outside the camps, moved to five completed housing units consisting of 15 rooms. In total, during this period, 519 shelter rooms were demolished, of which 260 were built by the Agency, 12 were built with Agency assistance and 247 were built without such assistance.

10. As the figures in the previous paragraph show, although there have been a few exceptions, the practice of requiring refugee families to demolish their shelters as a pre-condition of moving to new housing continued during the reporting period. The Agency has objected to this practice not only because of practical complications in cases of extended families who share the same shelter, where one family wishes to move but another, usually the older, wants to remain, but also because of the overcrowded conditions and urgent need for accommodation for refugee families. The Commissioner-General took the matter up in a meeting with the Civil Administrator of the Gaza Strip on 15 June 1987 and asked for a review and relaxation of Israeli policy in this regard.

11. The Israeli authorities, according to information available to the Commissioner-General, to date have allocated a total of approximately 3,734 plots of land in the Gaza Strip for housing projects. A total of 2,496 plots have been built on by 3,507 refugee families comprising 21,670 persons, buildings on 201 plots are under construction, 910 plots are still vacant and 127 have been built on by non-refugee families. In addition, 2,927 refugee families consisting of 18,052 persons have moved into 2,661 completed housing units consisting of 5,874 rooms.

12. Refugee families are continuing to purchase plots of land at subsidized rates for the construction of houses in the projects developed by the Israeli authorities in the Beit Lahiya, Nazleh and Tel-es-Sultan areas. The construction of multi-story apartment blocks at Sheikh Radwan, sponsored by Israeli authorities and offered for sale upon completion, as reported last year (A/41/564, para. 11), continues.

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\* A/42/150.