



General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/41/564
3 September 1986

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Fortieth session
Item 77 (d) of the provisional agenda*

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 40/165 E of 16 December 1985, in which the Assembly reiterated its demand that Israel 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-first session, on Israel's compliance with the resolution.
2. On 3 February 1986, the Secretary-General addressed a note verbale 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 1986, of any steps his Government had taken or envisaged to take in implementation of the relevant provisions of the resolution.
3. In a note verbale dated 16 July 1986, 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, issued on 11 September 1985 (A/40/613), contained

* A/41/150.

the latest of these replies dated 12 August 1985. In addition, during his statement dated 8 November 1985 (A/SPC/40/SR.26), Israel's representative of the Special Political Committee addressed several points raised in this resolution.

"The annual adoption of this resolution reflects the sponsors' refusal to acknowledge the improved living conditions in the Gaza District since 1967. Resolution 40/165 E makes no mention of the 120 per cent increase of pupils attending school in the Gaza District since 1967 or of the 25 per cent drop in the illiteracy rate among the inhabitants in the Gaza District since 1967. Nor does it mention the extensive development of medical care or the improvement of environmental services - including water supply, sewage and refuse disposal. By omitting these facts, the sponsors of resolution 40/165 E continue to pervert General Assembly resolutions for propaganda purposes.

"Moreover, operative paragraph one of resolution 40/165 E demands that Israel 'desist from the removal and resettlement of Palestine refugees in the Gaza Strip and from the destruction of their shelters'. This accusation is groundless. Since 1967, Israel has initiated community development projects in the Gaza District, enabling some 80,000 people 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.

"The occupants of old shelters have been moved to new homes of better quality. Vacant dilapidated and unsanitary shelters have been demolished because of the threat they pose to sanitary conditions in the camps. The overall result is that the level of housing in this area has been significantly improve "

4. The following information concerning Israel's compliance with General Assembly resolution 40/165 E is based on reports received from the Commissioner-General of UNRWA.

5. In the reporting period the Israeli authorities demolished 13 shelter rooms affecting seven refugee families comprising 66 persons. These rooms were constructed by the refugee families concerned and not by the Agency. The particulars are as follows:

(a) On 6 September 1985 two shelter rooms in the Rafah camp, Block E/16, and one in a housing project near Rafah were demolished on the grounds that the rooms had been occupied by persons alleged to have stabbed an Israeli in Gaza town. The Agency has protested to the authorities that the demolitions also resulted in rendering homeless the other members of the families against whom no allegations were made, and constituted punitive action.

(b) On 15 June 1986, nine shelter rooms in Gaza town, occupied by four refugee families, comprising 27 persons, were demolished, reportedly on the grounds that the construction contravened building regulations.

(c) On 26 June 1986, the Israeli authorities demolished a room in a shelter in Gaza town, occupied by one family comprising nine persons. Two other rooms in the same shelter were locked by the authorities. This was done on punitive grounds, because of an alleged offence against security by the owner of the shelter. The Agency has protested to the authorities, for the reasons given in subparagraph (a) above.

6. The Agency is following up with the Israeli authorities the rehousing of refugees who remain affected by the demolitions in 1971 in the Gaza Strip. Last year's report (see A/40/613, para. 6) referred to the status of 87 families categorized as living in hardship conditions. Nineteen of these families continue to live in conditions of hardship (although one is believed to have been allocated land in a housing project during the last week of this reporting period), 18 remain unsatisfactorily housed (inadequate), 37 are satisfactorily housed (adequate), and 13 had previously purchased houses in projects sponsored by the Israeli authorities. The position of the 19 families living in conditions of hardship has been checked several times during the reporting period. Despite repeated assurances by the Israeli authorities that they will be rehoused, very little progress has been made. The authorities have assured the Agency that a solution has been developed and would be implemented as soon as possible.

7. During the reporting period, the Commissioner-General received the following information relating to the demolition of refugee shelters 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/40/613), it was stated that the Israeli authorities 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 bulldozing of sand around their premises. The Israeli authorities have had discussions with some members of this group.

(b) The 35 families whose shelters on the perimeter of Beach Camp were demolished in 1983 (see A/40/613, para. 7 (b)) have still not been rehoused. Twenty-eight of these families are living in temporary shelters built by themselves on or near the same site, and seven families have left the site. Very recently, the Israeli authorities have stated that they might be willing to consider allocating land for these families in a housing project, although not in Sheikh Radwan which is the project nearest the site.

8. Some refugee families in Block Q of Rafah Camp have, at the instance of the Israeli authorities, arranged to construct new houses on sites which will form part of the Tel-Es-Sultan housing project. Unfortunately, there are some families that lack the ability to undertake such work. They remain in their original shelters but have had sand bulldozed around their shelters, sometimes as high as the shelter itself, on the grounds that the development of this area for future housing must continue. The Agency has urged the authorities to take a more humanitarian approach towards these remaining families.

9. In the year under review, according to information available to the Commissioner-General, 381 refugee families, comprising 2,366 persons, moved to 236 plots of land in housing projects sponsored by the Israeli authorities. In addition, three refugee families, comprising 20 persons, moved to three completed housing units of nine rooms in all at Sheikh Radwan Project. As a pre-condition, this has required the demolition of 627 shelter rooms of which 310 were built by the Agency, 7 were built with Agency assistance and 310 were built without such assistance. Not only does this cause practical complications in cases of extended families sharing the same shelters, where one family wishes to move but another, usually the older, wants to remain, but it also prevents the Agency from using the vacated shelters to help in relieving the situation of other refugee families living in poor, overcrowded conditions.

10 The Israeli authorities, according to information available to the Commissioner-General, have to date allocated a total of approximately 3,714 plots of land in the Gaza Strip for housing projects. A total of 2,303 plots have been built on by 3,187 refugee families comprising 19,682 persons, 261 plots are under construction, 1,036 are still vacant and 114 have been built on by non-refugee families. In addition, 2,915 refugee families, consisting of 17,972 persons have moved into 2,649 completed housing units, consisting of 5,837 rooms.

11. Refugee families are continuing to purchase plots of land at subsidized rates for constructing houses in the projects developed by the Israeli authorities in the Beit Lahiya, Nazleh and Tel-Es-Sultan areas. A new development has been the construction of multi-story apartment blocks in Sheikh Radwan, sponsored by the Israeli authorities. These apartments are offered for sale upon completion.
