

UNITED NATIONS CONCILIATION COMMISSION FOR PALESTINE

GENERAL COMMITTEE

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SUMMARY RECORD OF A MEETING BETWEEN THE
GENERAL COMMITTEE AND THE DELEGATION OF
ISRAEL

held in Lausanne, on Monday,
15 August 1949, at 4 p.m.

Present: Mr. Yenisey (Turkey) - Chairman
Mr. de la Tour du Pin (France)
Mr. Rockwell (U.S.A.)
Dr. Azcarate - Principal Secretary
Mr. Sasson) - Representatives of Israel
Mr. Lifshitz)

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Appointment of Arab representatives for the reunion of
separated refugee families.

The CHAIRMAN informed the Israeli delegation that he had, in the course of the meeting held that morning, drawn the attention of the Arab delegations to the delay in appointing representatives to collaborate with the Israeli authorities in the administrative arrangements for the reunion of separated families. He had received an assurance from them that the necessary steps were being taken with all possible speed. He wished to know whether the representatives of Israel had any further information on the subject.

Mr. SASSON recalled that during the previous meeting held between the General Committee and the delegation of Israel, he had informed the Chairman that the representatives of Egypt, the Hashemite Jordan Kingdom and Lebanon on the Mixed Armistice Commission had told the Israeli members of that Commission that their respective Governments had taken note of the proposal made in that connection and had agreed to appoint representatives. Since then, however, his delegation had received a telegram from the Government of Israel saying that the Governments of Egypt and Lebanon had indeed taken note of the matter but that the Hashemite Jordan Kingdom had not done so as yet. Further to that, he did not have any real information on the subject, but hoped more details would be available shortly.

Mixed Committee of Experts on Blocked Accounts

The CHAIRMAN informed the Israeli delegation that the Arab delegations had agreed to setting up a Mixed Committee of Experts on blocked accounts and had agreed that the representative of Egypt, Mr. Labbane, would speak for all the Arab States in the Committee, which would therefore be able to start work the following day. The Arab delegations had, moreover, stated that the Arab Refugee Organizations had agreed that the nominee of the Arab States should also speak for them on the Mixed Committee. The Egyptian representative had asked whether it would be possible for him to be assisted in the Mixed Committee by advisers and experts, to be drawn both from the other Arab delegations and the refugee organizations. The Chairman wished therefore to make it clear to the Israeli delegation that, although the Mixed Committee would consist only of one Arab representative and one Israeli representative under the temporary chairmanship of the Principal Secretary, both representatives could have as many technical advisers as they wished.

The Mixed Committee would be called upon to report to the General Committee on the procedure to be followed and on its future plan of work. Should the General Committee consider it necessary, the Mixed Committee might then be instructed to proceed in order to put the agreed plan into application in Jerusalem or elsewhere. It would, however, begin to study the problem in Lausanne.

The Chairman ~~wished~~, at that point, to inform the Israeli delegation that the Arab delegations had that morning raised the question of certain cheques for £124,000 belonging to Arab exporters from the time of the Mandatory Regime which was still blocked in Israel, whereas the corresponding sum had already been made available to the Israeli recipients. The Arab representatives had therefore requested that that cheque be unblocked forthwith without waiting for a general settlement of the problem to be arrived at. The General Committee had informed the Arab delegations that such a matter fell under the competence of the Mixed Committee of Experts and that the question could be raised at its first meeting by the Arab member.

The Chairman also stated that a press communique would be issued on the first meeting of the Mixed Committee and that the Principal Secretary would submit his draft for the Mixed Committee's approval on the following day.

He wished to know whom the Israeli delegation had appointed as its representative on the Mixed Committee.

Mr. SASSON, in reply, said that Mr. Lifshitz would represent the delegation of Israel on the Mixed Committee and would probably be assisted by several expert advisers.

He wished to put several questions to the Committee, purely for purposes of information. In the first place, he wished to know whether, since it had been stipulated that the Mixed Committee would make a study of the matter in Lausanne and then formulate certain recommendations whereupon it might be instructed to proceed to Jerusalem, that would mean that the same Committee might be transformed into an executive body. Secondly, Since the Arab Refugee Organizations were being represented on the Mixed Committee, he wished to know what status those organizations held with regard to the Committee. Finally, he requested elucidation as to the terms of reference of the Mixed Committee.

The CHAIRMAN, in explanation, said that the Mixed Committee would not serve only in an advisory capacity. The first phase of its work would in fact consist of making recommendations to the General Committee, but, if it were deemed useful to do so, the same Committee might be entrusted with executive tasks. The Arab Refugee Organizations for their part, had legal standing in relation to the General Committee. That was fully understood by them and they had agreed to their interests being represented by the Arab member on the Mixed Committee. As for the terms of reference of the Mixed Committee, they had not been stipulated in any precise form. The essential question with which they would have to deal was the unblocking of frozen assets and it was for them to decide upon the method they would employ to that end.

Mr. de la TOUR DU PIN, for the purpose of further clarification, said that the work of the Mixed Committee of Experts would be based upon the following documents: the memorandum sent by the Commission to the delegation of Israel following the Arab request for unblocking of frozen assets, contained in the memorandum of 18 May (document AR/8), the Israeli reply accepting unblocking on a basis of reciprocity (document IS/31) and, lastly, the summary records containing declarations of the Arab acceptance for the unblocking of such accounts, pound for pound. He did not personally think therefore that any misunderstanding did, or could, exist between the delegations and within the General Committee itself on the line the Mixed Committee's work should

take and, if any misapprehension should arise, he was sure the Principal Secretary would be able to clarify the matter to the satisfaction of the Mixed Committee.

Mr. SASSON wished to congratulate the General Committee on having succeeded in establishing a first direct contact between his delegation and those of the Arab States. He hoped that was but a first step forward and that it would be followed by many more.

The CHAIRMAN also expressed the Committee's gratification at the result achieved and its appreciation for the spirit of cooperation shown by all delegations concerned. He hoped that achievement would be followed by others and would therefore mark the first step towards a solution of all the questions pending before the Committee.