

United Nations
**GENERAL
ASSEMBLY**



THIRTY-EIGHTH SESSION

Official Records*

SPECIAL POLITICAL COMMITTEE
29th meeting
held on
Tuesday, 15 November 1983
at 10.30 a.m.
New York

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 29th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. STARCEVIC (Yugoslavia)

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Distr. GENERAL
A/SPC/38/PV.29
23 January 1984

ENGLISH

The meeting was called to order at 11.15 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 74 (continued)

INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION TO AVERT NEW FLOWS OF REFUGEES (A/SPC/38/L.6/Rev.1, L.9, L.11 and L.12)

The CHAIRMAN: I would draw members' attention to document A/SPC/38/L.6/Rev.1, containing a draft resolution entitled "International co-operation to avert new flows of refugees", which is sponsored by Austria, the Comoros, Costa Rica, Denmark, Djibouti, Egypt, Gambia, the Federal Republic of Germany, Honduras, Iceland, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Jordan, Lebanon, Luxembourg, Mali, Malaysia, Norway, Pakistan, Philippines, Samoa, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Somalia, Spain, Sudan, Thailand, Togo and Zaire.

Members will recall that this draft resolution was introduced by the representative of Senegal at the Committee's seventeenth meeting, on 1 November. The administrative and financial implications of the draft resolution are set out in document A/SPC/38/L.11. I would also draw members' attention to document A/SPC/38/L.9, which contains amendments to the draft resolution in document A/SPC/38/L.6/Rev.1, submitted by Cuba and Mexico. The administrative and financial implications of the draft resolution as amended by document A/SPC/38/L.9 are set out in document A/SPC/38/L.12.

Does any member of the Committee wish to speak in connection with the draft resolution?

Mr. KA (Senegal) (interpretation from French): As will be recalled, at the sixteenth meeting of the Special Political Committee, on 1 November, I had the privilege on behalf of the sponsors to introduce draft resolution A/SPC/38/L.6/Rev.1, on international co-operation to avert new flows of refugees. After the introduction of the draft and the very brief debate that took place, it seemed that, notwithstanding the consultations that had taken place with various delegations, paragraph 4 was still giving some delegations trouble. For that reason, on the proposal of three or four delegations, we were persuaded to accept the principle of continuing our consultations in greater depth in order to find more satisfactory wording for paragraph 4 that would make it possible for the various delegations to adopt the draft resolution without difficulty.

(Mr. Ka, Senegal)

Cuba and Mexico had introduced a draft amendment to paragraph 4 in this connection. That amendment, with which members are familiar, is contained in document A/SPC/38/L.9. We have a number of times held consultations with the Cuban and Mexican delegations, and at the last meeting with them we reached agreement on a draft for paragraph 4 of draft resolution A/SPC/38/L.6/Rev.1. The draft text was then submitted to the sponsors at another meeting, and they found it acceptable. The new paragraph 4 reads as follows:

"Requests the Secretary-General, without prejudice to the mandate contained in resolution 36/148, to assist, as far as possible and as an exceptional measure, the experts from the least developed countries appointed by the Secretary-General to carry out this mandate, to participate fully in the work of the Expert Group."

We would note that the term "expert" applies to experts coming from capitals or elsewhere; it is not permanent missions to the United Nations that we have in mind.

Before I conclude my introduction of this text I should like to thank all delegations that have in various ways contributed to the agreement on this question for their co-operation and understanding of the motivation of our actions. On behalf of all the sponsors I would in particular thank Cuba and Mexico for the spirit of compromise they have shown, in their acceptance of the text I have just read out, by withdrawing their draft amendment.

Lastly I should like to add the following countries to the list of sponsors: Rwanda, Cameroon and Upper Volta.

This, then, is the fruit of our intensive consultations, which I feel were not in vain. The sponsors hope that the Special Political Committee will be able to come to a consensus decision on the procedural draft resolution in document A/SPC/38/L.6/Rev.1, including paragraph 4, as just amended.

The CHAIRMAN: Members have heard the new formulation of paragraph 4 read out by the representative of Senegal. That formulation has been accepted by all. Subsequently the amendments contained in document A/SPC/38/L.9 have been withdrawn. Does any other member wish to speak before adoption of the draft resolution? That not being the case, I take it that the Committee has concluded its discussion on the draft resolution. May I take it that the Committee is now ready to take a decision on the draft resolution in document A/SPC/37/L.6/Rev.1, as orally amended?

It was so decided.

The CHAIRMAN: May I take it that the Committee wishes to adopt the draft resolution without a vote?

The draft resolution was adopted.

The CHAIRMAN: I shall now call upon those members that wish to speak at this stage.

Mr. LINDAHL (United States of America): The United States delegation is pleased that there has been a decision to adopt by consensus the draft resolution contained in document A/SPC/38/L.6/Rev.1 as orally amended this morning, which reaffirms and extends the mandate of the Group of Governmental Experts on International Co-operation to Avert New Flows of Refugees.

We all know that this is indeed a serious problem, and my delegation is happy to note that the Group of Experts, although late in beginning their deliberations because of organizational problems, nevertheless have embarked upon their task in a serious and professional manner. They have already adopted a programme of work, which gives promise that their report, when completed, may in fact make a real contribution to the analysis of the problem and to the investigation of means of solving it.

In this connection we should like particularly to mention the important contributions made to the work of the Group of Experts by the experts from the Federal Republic of Germany, Togo and Senegal. If I mention only these, it is not because my delegation undervalues the contributions made by others but only because those three experts have been of decisive importance to the work of the Group of Experts.

Paragraph 4 of the resolution we have just adopted calls upon the Secretary-General to assist, as far as possible, participation by experts from the least developed countries. My delegation has always believed that we should not engage in selective funding of participation in the work of our Organization. We believe that, as a general rule, it is not in the interest of the Organization to fund the travel and per diem costs of individuals acting under instructions from their respective Governments. Accordingly we view this resolution with the understanding that any experts travelling at the expense of the United Nations will be considered as experts appointed in their own capacity by the Secretary-General. We do not hold this distinction as in any way prejudicing the Working Group's mandate contained in resolution 36/148.

Mr. NISHIMURA (Japan): I should like to point out that a matter of principle is involved in providing financial support to the governmental experts coming from least developed countries for participation in the sessions of the Group of Experts; it is that the expenses for participation in those sessions by each governmental expert shall be borne by his respective Government. From the standpoint of the rationalization of the finances of the United Nations, this tradition should be strictly observed.

However, in view of the profound importance of the Group's meeting, and considering the paramount importance of achieving a consensus on the resolution, the Government of Japan has joined in its adoption.

Mr. MATHEWSON (United Kingdom): My delegation joined the consensus on draft resolution A/SPC/38/L.6/Rev.1, as orally amended this morning. We were pleased to see a further extension of the mandate of this valuable Group adopted unanimously by the Committee. My delegation has given active support to the work and objectives of the group of governmental experts since it was first proposed in the General Assembly two years ago.

However, our support for operative paragraph 4 of this draft resolution marks an exception to the general principles concerning the system of travel and subsistence allowances to members of organs and subsidiary organs of the United Nations as established in General Assembly resolution 1798 (XVII), adopted in 1962. My delegation continues fully to support the principles enshrined in that resolution, including the principle that travel and subsistence expenses shall not be paid for those who serve on United Nations organs as representatives of Governments.

Mr. AMELGA (Ethiopia): As in previous years, the Ethiopian delegation is happy to join the consensus on draft resolution A/SPC/38/L.6/Rev.1, as orally amended. Furthermore, my delegation would like to assure the Committee that the Ethiopian expert in the Group of Governmental Experts will continue actively to participate in the Group's work and make positive contributions towards attainment of the objectives for which the Group has been established.

I hasten to add, however, that our expert's participation will be guided strictly by the General Assembly's mandate according to which the Expert Group should:

"... undertake as soon as possible, in order to improve international co-operation to avert new massive flows of refugees, a comprehensive review of

(Mr. Amelga, Ethiopia)

the problem in all its aspects, with a view to developing recommendations on appropriate means of international co-operation in this field, having due regard to the principle of non-intervention in the internal affairs of sovereign States ..."

and that it should

"... embark upon the study in question in the framework of a constructive, future-oriented approach and in conformity with the spirit which must form the basis of friendly relations and close co-operation among Member States ..."

From a few of the statements in the general debate on this item, in particular one delivered on 21 October by a member of the Expert Group, we have sensed a less than full commitment to the terms of reference given to the Group by the General Assembly. We hope and believe that that is an isolated departure from the Group's clear mandate and is not shared by the other members.

Inasmuch as there are already numerous legal instruments governing the actions of States, particularly as they affect refugees, Ethiopia does not believe that the Expert Group's work should result in one more legal instrument or accord on refugees. On the other hand, we believe that the work should focus on drawing up general, flexible guidelines to enhance international co-operation to avert new massive flows of refugees. Moreover, there are already many international bodies within the United Nations system that could effectively monitor the implementation of such guidelines. We do not believe that there is any need for the creation of new machinery to implement the final recommendation of the Expert Group.

With regard to the draft resolution just adopted, the Ethiopian delegation fully shares the concerns expressed in the fourth preambular paragraph and, as a result, fully supports the provision of operative paragraph 4. In this connection, we should like to pay a well-deserved tribute to all - in particular to the delegations of Senegal and the Federal Republic of Germany - for the efforts they have exerted in achieving a consensus draft resolution on this item which we are discussing.

Mr. KINGSMILL (Australia): My delegation, too, is pleased that this draft resolution has been adopted by consensus. Nevertheless, we have difficulty with the terms of its operative paragraph 4. We are concerned at the financial implications of that paragraph and at the breaching of the principle involved in having the Organization pay for the costs of governmental experts attending meetings of the Group. It is because of the important humanitarian questions

(Mr. Kingsmill, Australia)

involved and the need for international action on the whole question of averting new flows of refugees that we have had to look beyond these problems and support the consensus decision that has happily now been reached.

The Australian Government's interest in questions of refugees is well known, as are the reasons for it. We supported very strongly the establishment of the Group of Governmental Experts on International Co-operation to Avert New Flows of Refugees and we have given high priority to Australian participation in that Group's work.

Mr. DEBOUTTE (Belgium) (interpretation from French): Belgium joined in the consensus on the draft resolution which we have just adopted. In this way my delegation expressed the importance that it attaches to international preventive action designed to avert new flows of refugees. Actually, that was clearly mentioned in the statement made by my Minister of External Relations on 27 September last in the general debate. For the same reason, Belgium welcomes the initiative taken by the Federal Republic of Germany and supports the work of the Expert Group, whose mandate is set out in resolutions 36/148 and 37/121 which my country joined in sponsoring.

Although we have joined in the consensus, my country would like to express its reservation on operative paragraph 4 of the draft resolution with regard to the financial implications which may well go beyond its framework. With that reservation, Belgium supports the draft resolution.

Mr. SMIRNOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): The Soviet delegation did not object to the adoption without a vote of the draft resolution on this question with the oral amendments to operative paragraph 4 introduced a moment ago.

We note that this draft resolution confirms the mandate of the Group of Governmental Experts set out in General Assembly resolutions 36/148 and 37/121. That mandate emphasizes the importance of taking a constructive, future-oriented approach in considering the question and establishes the principle of consensus for the adoption of the Group's decisions. Such an approach established an acceptable basis for the Group's work, which should be focused on the development of co-operation among States in this sphere.

We also believe that operative paragraph 6 of the draft resolution, which provides opportunity for the Group to hold two 2-week sessions in 1984, makes provision for completion by the Group of its mandate next year. The Soviet

(Mr. Smirnov, USSR)

position on this question has been set forth in a letter dated 5 October 1982 from the Permanent Representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics to the Secretary-General. It emphasizes in particular that the main reasons for the growth in the number of refugees are the policy of aggression and seizure of foreign territories, hotbeds of tension, military conflicts, interference in the internal affairs of States, apartheid, colonial and neo-colonial exploitation of a number of countries and peoples; the inequitable position of the developing countries and the world economic system also lead to massive displacement of persons. So that the question under consideration is complex and manifold.

Clearly, for an effective solution to be found for it what is needed, first and foremost are measures to strengthen international security and promote the development of good-neighbourly relations and trust among States. So far as the economic factors related to the refugee problem are concerned, to eliminate them there is a need for a radical restructuring of international economic relations on a just and equitable basis. In this regard, the generally recognized principles and norms of international law enshrined in the Charter must be implemented in the most thorough manner.

In the opinion of the Soviet delegation, the consideration of specific issues relating to the prevention of new flows of refugees must be carried out in a businesslike manner in order to find common ground and mutually acceptable arrangements among the States directly concerned, without any diktat or outside interference. We see no need for the establishment of any additional United Nations machinery or the elaboration of any guiding principles on the matter of preventing new flows of refugees.

In conclusion I should like to say a few words about the financial implications of the draft resolution which has been adopted. First, the Soviet delegation cannot fail to express its surprise at the fact that, for the second time in a row, the Secretariat has submitted clearly exaggerated requests for financial expenditures for the holding of the Expert Group's sessions. According to document A/SPC/38/L.11, a total of more than \$400,000 is estimated for this. In this connection, we wish to recall that that sum of money would be more than enough, for example, to organize and carry out an entire campaign for providing assistance to refugees, feeding and providing housing for thousands of persons in acute distress.

(Mr. Smirnov, USSR)

With reference to the new text of operative paragraph 4 proposed by Senegal, we understand that the Secretary-General's efforts to help experts from the least developed countries to take part in the Group's 1984 sessions will apply only to experts from the capitals of the States which take part in the Group's work and that those actions will be undertaken by the Secretary-General as an exception to the rule contained in resolution 36/148.

We wish to state that, from our point of view, the Secretariat should pay particular attention to the fact that document A/SPC/38/L.11, to which I have referred, contains some highly inflated requests for documentation. For example, it is proposed to issue two 64-page documents as post-session documentation - although it is well known that a single report should be prepared on the Group's work and that that document, in accordance with the General Assembly decision on this matter, should not exceed 32 pages. Let me give another example. The Financial Services include provision for interpretation of the Group's meetings into all six working languages - although the United Nations Secretariat ought to be well aware that there is no need for that in the light of the Group's membership.

The Soviet delegation therefore emphatically insists that the United Nations Financial Services should do their utmost to reduce to the absolute minimum the budget estimates for the holding of the two sessions of the Group of Experts in 1984, on the basis of the need for the maximum saving of resources under the United Nations regular budget. The Soviet representatives in the Fifth Committee will be keeping a very close watch on the kind of measures that will be undertaken by the Secretariat to that end.

Mr. CHOWDHURY (Bangladesh): My delegation was pleased to support the draft resolution just adopted and to join the delicate consensus which was worked out after much effort. However, we believe that the phrase "as an exceptional measure" in operative paragraph 4 is not relevant to this draft resolution and should have been omitted. Bangladesh believes that the participation of experts and representatives of the least developed countries in any meetings within the United Nations system should be decided on the merits of each case. Therefore the phrase "as an exceptional measure" in this draft resolution should not prejudice any future consideration of participation by the least developed countries in United Nations meetings.

Mr. de la SABLIERE (France) (interpretation from French): My delegation went along with the consensus on draft resolution A/SPC/38/L.6/Rev.1, as orally amended in the course of this meeting. By taking a position in favour of this text, we have tried to express our support for the work conducted by the Group of Experts on International Co-operation to Avert New Flows of Refugees. In addition, we should like to thank the sponsors for their efforts to allow the adoption of this draft resolution without a vote. Finally, we should like to state that the provision in operative paragraph 4 about the manner of payment for some of the experts' expenses is exceptional in nature and, therefore, should not be taken as a precedent.

Mr. NAZARI (Islamic Republic of Iran): With reference to draft resolution A/SPC/38/L.6/Rev.1, adopted by consensus, my delegation would like to say the following. To avert new flows of refugees or, more realistically, to solve the refugee problem, basically my delegation believes that, if all States refrained from acts of aggression and all Members of the United Nations respected its Charter, the peoples who have taken refuge in other countries could return to their homelands and there would be no need for further resolutions or machinery.

Mr. ADJOYI (Togo) (interpretation from French): My delegation would like to say how pleased we are at the fact that draft resolution A/SPC/38/L.6/Rev.1, as orally amended, has been adopted by the Committee without a vote. The adoption of this resolution without a vote clearly indicates the desire of the international community to see to it that the international group working to avert new flows of refugees continue its work. It also constitutes an encouragement for the Expert Group in their future endeavours and I am convinced that each one of those experts, as in the past, will show his characteristic willingness to carry out the mandate entrusted to the Group as a whole. The experts have a historic responsibility regarding participation in and settlement of matters concerning refugees in order to achieve a world of peace and brotherhood and I am convinced that they will be able to shoulder that responsibility.

The CHAIRMAN: As there are no further speakers on this item, we have concluded our consideration of agenda item 74. The Rapporteur will present our report to the General Assembly at the appropriate time.

AGENDA ITEM 73 (continued)

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

- (a) REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONER-GENERAL (A/38/13)
- (b) REPORT OF THE WORKING GROUP ON THE FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND WORKS AGENCY FOR PALESTINE REFUGEES IN THE NEAR EAST (A/38/558)
- (c) REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS CONCILIATION COMMISSION FOR PALESTINE (A/38/397)
- (d) REPORT OF THE JOINT INSPECTION UNIT (A/38/143)
- (e) REPORTS OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/38/149, 361 and Add.1, 382, 386, 418, 419 and 420)

Mr. CHOWDHURY (Bangladesh): It is with sadness and grave concern that my delegation is speaking on agenda item 73, relating to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA); sadness because another year has passed, resulting in further deterioration of the conditions of the Palestine refugees due to repressive measures perpetrated by the Israeli occupation authorities; grave concern because of serious threat to the continuation of UNRWA's services to thousands of refugees due to the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in June last year.

As the Commissioner-General of UNRWA has stated, the turmoil which ensued because of the invasion necessitated an emergency operation at a cost of millions of dollars and challenging all of the resources of UNRWA to assist the Palestine refugees whose lives were shattered. The Agency's work of 30 years in Lebanon was in jeopardy.

While my delegation greatly values the important work that is being done by UNRWA for the Palestine refugees, we at the same time fervently wish that its work can be terminated as soon as possible through a just and lasting solution of the Palestine problem. It pains my delegation to participate under this agenda item every year and find that instead of having progressed, the situation has deteriorated further. The international community can no longer afford to treat such a situation with indifference, neither the humanitarian assistance for the refugees nor their political aspirations. It is really a sad reflection on the ability and effectiveness of the United Nations to resolve an issue involving so many people.

(Mr. Chowdhury, Bangladesh)

The annual report submitted by the UNRWA Commissioner-General, Mr. Olof Rydbeck, for the period from 1 July 1982 to 30 June 1983 and his statement before this Committee on 9 November are considered by my delegation as very important. Given the gravity and magnitude of the responsibilities of UNRWA, my delegation would like to express its deepest appreciation to the Commissioner-General and the members of his team for the dedicated discharge of their duties. Our thanks also go to Mr. O P Kolby of Norway, who, as Rapporteur of the Working Group on the Financing of UNRWA, introduced in this Committee the report of the Working Group, as contained in document A/38/558.

My delegation would like to comment briefly on the three main chapters of the report of the UNRWA Commissioner-General relating to emergency operations in Lebanon, regular operations of UNRWA and financing UNRWA operations. As a whole the report is comprehensive and contained very useful information in a systematic and precise manner. The annexes, which supply statistical information on UNRWA programmes and financing and references to the pertinent record of the General Assembly and other United Nations bodies, are also very useful. We are happy to know that the Advisory Commission of UNRWA, chaired by Japan, has considered the report and found it useful.

Bangladesh notes with serious concern the assessment of the Commissioner-General that the most serious problem for the Palestine refugees, especially in Beirut and south Lebanon, was that of personal security. It is a matter of great regret that killings, threats and other violence against the Palestinians have continued since the massacre of hundreds of civilians in the Sabra and Shatila districts of Beirut in September last year. As UNRWA has neither physical ability nor legal powers, we are of the opinion that the vulnerability of the Palestine civilian refugees and their physical and legal protection should receive the most urgent attention of the United Nations, in particular of the Secretary-General. Without the safety of the refugees, the services provided by UNRWA would be meaningless.

At the same time, my delegation is greatly perturbed by the continuous destruction of the operations of UNRWA in the occupied territories of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, particularly that in contravention of the formal agreement governing the exercise there by UNRWA of the mandate entrusted to it by the General Assembly. It is simply outrageous that 89 UNRWA staff were under Israeli detention along with the Palestinians.

(Mr. Chowdhury, Bangladesh)

The relief efforts of UNRWA for the Palestine refugees in Lebanon have been commendable during the period under review. We support the intention of UNRWA to continue to provide emergency assistance to some 185,000 refugees, of whom about 30,000 are completely destitute, at least until the spring of 1984. We also note that reconstruction of UNRWA facilities would be undertaken over two or more phases. We urge the Member States to respond to the appeal made by the Commissioner-General last June for US \$13 million to cover the cost of an initial phase of emergency reconstruction of UNRWA installations, camp infrastructure and refugee housing.

We have also noted with concern that general distribution of foodstuffs to eligible refugees was suspended in September 1982 in all fields, with the exception of Lebanon, due to the emergency situation there. We believe that suspension of this basic, long-established service should have been gradual, if it was necessary at all, in view of the diversion of resources to higher priority programmes. We hope that it will be possible for UNRWA to restore the general ration to all eligible refugees in future.

The new registration system introduced by UNRWA providing one card for each person rather than for each family is undoubtedly an improvement over the old system. Distribution of these new cards should be completed as soon as possible, preferably by the first quarter of next year. In this connection, my delegation would like to note with satisfaction that most of the UNRWA expenditure of US \$52.75 million in the Lebanon emergency relief programme for the period under review came in the form of generous contributions from Governments, United Nations agencies, the European Community and non-governmental organizations.

My delegation greatly values UNRWA education and training programmes for the Palestine refugees and we continue to emphasize the need for continuation and expansion of the Agency's assistance in these fields. We are happy to note that 65 per cent of UNRWA's expenditure of \$182.9 million in 1982 was committed to education and training. The 651 schools for nearly 400,000 students up to the age of 15, along with seven vocational and technical training centres, provide the most significant help to the refugees in terms of their future as citizens of their independent nation. We hope the United Nations will find ways to compel the Israeli authorities to honour their Charter obligations in this regard.

(Mr. Chowdhury, Bangladesh)

My delegation is relieved to learn from the Commissioner-General that in 1983 UNRWA did not face the kind of financial crisis which in the past had threatened its most valuable programme relating to schoolchildren. We are pleased to note that this was possible largely owing to the response of the European Economic Community and Canada to the appeal of the General Assembly last year to provide contributions in cash rather than in kind.

However, we are disturbed by the report of the Working Group on the Financing of UNRWA according to which UNRWA income in 1983 actually decreased by \$US 16 million despite the sizeable conversion of contributions in kind to cash. We believe that, given the support of the international community through combined efforts, UNRWA will maintain its financial viability and will be able to mobilize the \$233 million in funds required for the Agency's normal programmes in 1984, which is an increase of about 12.5 per cent over last year's budget, taking into account expected inflation and population growth. My delegation strongly supports the recommendations of the Working Group relating to resource mobilization for UNRWA.

We note that the report of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) has recommended that the General Assembly should review the possibility of placing UNRWA's contingent liability for separation benefits, amounting to \$US 61 million in the United Nations regular budget. My delegation notes that the Commissioner-General of UNRWA also supports this idea as "this would be of material assistance to the Agency while involving little risk to and no immediate outlay by Member States."

We also agree with the JIU assessment that the prolonged displacement of UNRWA headquarters from the area of operations had led to a weakening of confidence in the Agency's ability to maintain its programme level and strongly feel that the headquarters should be relocated in its former site, Beirut.

My delegation would like to take this opportunity to thank the Chairman of the JIU, Mr. Vukovic, for his useful statement in this Committee on 9 November.

The Bangladesh delegation's position with regard to the Palestinian refugees displaced since 1967 has been elaborated in this Committee and other forums on many occasions. The Israeli authorities should desist from removal and resettlement of refugees and from destruction of their shelters. The Palestine refugees, being the legitimate owners of their properties now under occupation, have every right to receive revenues from those properties. They also have a right to compensation for

(Mr. Chodhury, Bangladesh)

the destruction of their property. Efforts should therefore be maintained for the appropriate implementation of General Assembly resolutions in this regard.

The Bangladesh delegation also supports the early establishment, under the aegis of the United Nations, of a university of Jerusalem to cater to the needs of the Palestine refugees in the area.

While establishing UNRWA in 1948, the General Assembly reiterated the link between providing assistance to the refugees and achieving peace in the area, emphasizing that continued assistance was necessary "to further conditions of peace and stability".

We therefore strongly believe that the plight of the Palestine refugees is inextricably linked to the achievement of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East. A solution to the Palestine question can only be achieved by recognizing the inalienable rights of the people of Palestine to self-determination, including the right to establish a State of their own in their homeland. The main obstacle to such a solution is Israel's intransigence in pursuing its aggressive and expansionist policies. Decisive action by the United Nations without any delay to restore the inalienable national rights of the Palestinian people is long overdue.

We believe that the education, health and relief services provided by UNRWA not only help the Palestine refugees to be socially productive and maintain a separate identity of their own, but also contribute towards the attainment of peace and stability in the area. Therefore those services should be continued until there is a just and durable solution to the Palestinian question.

In previous years, the Bangladesh delegation introduced, on behalf of the co-sponsors, the draft resolutions under this agenda item in this Committee. It is our intention to do so this year also. We believe that our action would provide a basis for combined efforts by the international community towards solution of the question of Palestine.

Mr. JAMAL (Qatar) (interpretation from Arabic): Sir, as this is the first time for my delegation to speak in this Committee, I am pleased to extend my warmest congratulations to you on behalf of my delegation on your assumption of the chairmanship of this Committee. On this occasion I should like to wish you success in the organization of the work of this Committee. We are confident that your efficiency and experience will enable this Committee to deal effectively and comprehensively with the important matters facing it. I should also like to extend

(Mr. Jamal, Qatar)

my most sincere congratulations to the officers of the Committee on their election. Allow me also to express the appreciation of my delegation to the great efforts embodied in the report of the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). That report is beyond any doubt the fruit of continued effort at the level of the historic responsibility that falls to UNRWA.

The Commissioner-General's report emphasizes that the main problem that led to all the other problems is the occupation of Palestine in 1948 and the displacement of all Palestinians from their homes and lands through Zionist terrorism, followed by the fact that United Nations resolutions emphasizing the right of the Palestinian people to exercise self-determination and to establish an independent State have not yet been implemented.

We conclude from the report that the problem of the Palestinian refugees has become more and more complex day by day, because Israel is determined physically to eliminate their question. Israeli aggression has gone so far in its brutality that they are tearing Palestinian families apart, either by killing the head of the household or arresting and detaining him or by getting rid of whole families completely by demolishing houses. A case in point is the Sabra and Shatila massacres, which were perpetrated at the instigation and with the collaboration of Israeli rulers and military circles who ordered their forces to allow their agents to carry out these brutal massacres under their protection.

The refugee problem began in 1948; around half a million refugees were expelled by the Israeli authorities at that time. This year the number of registered refugees is estimated at 2 million. It is obvious that that number is on the increase owing to the escalation of the brutal military campaigns carried out by the Israeli occupying forces on the West Bank, in Gaza, in Lebanon, or against the Palestinians in the Golan Heights. The report adds that Israeli invasion forces have caused widespread damage to the Palestinian camps in southern Lebanon and in Beirut and have demolished Palestinian houses and other shelters located outside the camps.

The report deals also with the question of personal security, which it considers to be one of the main problems faced by Palestinian refugees, particularly in Beirut and southern Lebanon. In this connection, the report refers to the increasing number of reported murders and to the fact that Palestinian families living outside the camps have been forced to leave their homes under duress. We would have liked the report to have unequivocally placed the

(Mr. Jamal, Qatar)

responsibility for the protection of Palestinian refugees on the occupying Israeli forces, for these incidents are a carbon copy of acts performed in the West Bank by terrorist Jewish organizations. The international community knows well that such incidents are part and parcel of the "Sharon plan", whose aim is to liquidate the Palestinian problem and finally to annex occupied Arab and Palestinian territories.

The Commissioner-General's report points out that the situation in the occupied territories, particularly in the West Bank, is a cause of serious concern. It touches on the crux of the complex problem known as the question of the Middle East: the question of Palestine. The report talks of the proliferation of new Israeli settlements in the West Bank, and this has given rise to serious concern among the Palestinians and to clashes with them. But the report is not exactly correct in its assertion that the expression of Palestinian anger is the main cause of the arbitrary repressive measures taken by the occupying authorities, measures which include closing schools and training centres and imposing curfews in the refugee camps. The true nature of the disturbances is that they are a normal reaction to terrorism by armed Jewish gangs and to the brutal repressive measures often taken by the occupying authorities. The disturbances are simply the response of a people watching its homeland being usurped by force, inch by inch.

It is not these disturbances which have forced the occupying authorities to close schools and to take other repressive measures. In fact, the opposite is true: Israeli expansionist policies and the terrorism by which Israel rules the occupied territories are the true cause of those disturbances. The Israeli authorities constantly repeat their barbaric crimes against the defenceless Palestinian people. The Associated Press reported yesterday that Israeli border police killed two Palestinian youths accused of throwing stones at the Israelis, but that did not suffice: they also arrested others, and the Israeli military governor imposed a curfew in the Tulkarm refugee camp. This incident - which involved the killing of innocent children, the arrest of students and the imposition of a curfew - is but a minor example of the crimes of the Israeli occupation in the West Bank and the other occupied Arab territories.

The deterioration of UNRWA's financial situation and the continued drop in contributions over the past few years have led to repeated reductions in basic services and other programmes, despite the fact that UNRWA's services and programmes are of vital importance for Palestine refugees and that these represent the minimum subsistence level. Moreover, the fact that UNRWA's headquarters is

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distant from its theatre of operations has contributed to the financial deterioration, which has led to a lack of confidence in UNRWA's ability to meet the minimum needs of Palestine refugees. Uncertainty regarding sources of financing is a principal component of UNRWA's financial problem and is an inevitable result of the Agency's dependence upon voluntary contributions.

But we must not think that this is a problem of figures only: the increase in the Agency's expenses is an inevitable result of escalated Israeli aggression against the Palestinians. During the invasion of Lebanon, we saw how the invader's tanks and fighters bombarded the refugee camps and how they fired on the homes of Palestinians. That was not enough for Israel, and it turned its forces on UNRWA, destroying its facilities and arresting international civil servants. Thus, Israel is principally to blame for the deterioration of UNRWA's financial situation, but we consider that the only way to solve the financial crisis is to secure a constant and stable source of financing for the Agency to replace total dependence on voluntary contributions.

My delegation therefore endorses the proposal to include UNRWA expenses in the budget of the United Nations. The system of voluntary contributions would continue but would not be linked to the Agency's budget. That direct responsibility would be a constant reminder that solution of the Palestinian refugee problem depends upon the implementation of relevant United Nations resolutions, in particular General Assembly resolution 194 (III), which called for the return of Palestinian refugees to their homeland and for compensation for those who did not wish to return, and other resolutions stressing the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, foremost among them its right to self-determination and to the establishment of an independent homeland.

Mr. ABDEL-RAHMAN (Sudan): We wish to express our appreciation to Mr. Olof Rydbeck, Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), for the statement he made before this Committee, in which he introduced the report contained in document A/38/13. Our thanks go also to the Secretary-General for his report, contained in document A/38/420, made pursuant to resolution 38/120 J.

A review of those reports reveals that the Palestinian people are still subjected to ruthless, inhuman and barbaric practices. No other people in the history of mankind has ever been faced with such atrocities. Since its creation, Israel has been expelling Palestinians. At the time of UNRWA's establishment,

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refugees numbered half a million; today, the Agency must, as a result of Israeli practices, deal with approximately 2 million refugees. General Resolution 302 (IV) of 8 December 1949 entrusted UNRWA with providing essential services to Palestinian refugees without prejudice to paragraph 11 of General Assembly resolution 194 (III), which provides for the repatriation of Palestine refugees and for compensation for those choosing not to return.

For more than three decades, representatives have convened every session to discuss the report of the Commissioner-General of UNRWA, an agency everyone believes to be a temporary agency. One might venture to say that UNRWA has done almost nothing to implement resolution 194 (III), as is evidenced by the fact that the report ignores it in the same manner that it ignores mention of the efforts undertaken to collect revenues from property of refugees in Palestine. Indeed, the report of the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine describes the unfortunate circumstances which have led to the utter frustration of the various General Assembly resolutions.

It was written on pages 282 and 283 of Our Platform that

"The native population of Palestine will be economically and culturally absorbed by those who will bring order to the land and develop its productive forces. The Jewish immigrants will build up Palestine, and the native population will in time be absorbed by the Jews, both economically and culturally."

The refusal of the Palestinian people to submit to the loss of their national identity and the dispossession of their homeland will continue to be an irreversible challenge. The Palestinians remaining in Israel were deprived of their national rights by the Zionists, who stripped the Palestinian people as a whole of those rights. Thus, an entire people has been deprived of its national rights, and that is why the Zionists continue to this day to deny the existence of the Palestinian people. They still claim that individual Palestinians, not considerable numbers of Palestinians, were evicted from their land. The fact remains that, whether the Palestinians were evicted, dislodged, displaced or uprooted, no Palestinian has ever left his homeland voluntarily.

When it was established in December 1949, UNRWA was given the funds and the authority to carry out relief and works projects for only 18 months. The General Assembly at that time had great expectations that the refugee problem and other Arab-Israeli problems would soon be solved. The international community was

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unaware of - or rather, not in a position to conceive - Israel's grand design. The international community must address itself to the Israeli policy of territorial expansionism which intends, in simple terms, to force the Palestinians to flee and to deny those who have been uprooted their right of return.

In an interview with the newspaper Ma'ariv held in September 1968, Moshe Dayan said that

"it is absolutely essential to understand that one kibbutz in the Jordan valley is not an end; that Nahal Uz [a new kibbutz facing the Gaza Strip] is not an end; and that 3 million Jews are not an end. Each generation will add its own share."

Israel's policy is perpetuated by two overlapping groups: vultures, who feed on the flesh of the Palestinians, whether dead or exiled, provided that they are out of sight; and hawks, who thrive on the living flesh of the exploited Palestinians, in pursuit of an ideal identical to that of the apartheid régime in South Africa.

My delegation commends UNRWA's activities in the fields of health, education and higher learning, and it expresses its gratitude to the contributors to the Agency. Our concern remains focussed on the establishment of a university of arts and sciences at Al Quds-Al Sharif to serve exclusively the higher education needs of Palestinian refugees under United Nations auspices. My delegation has taken note of the report of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU).

UNRWA is part of the price the international community will continue to pay for not having addressed itself to the equitable solution of the problems of the Palestinian people. The Agency, indeed, is not a device for redressing the political and social consequences of the refugee problem.

Mr. TARASOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): This is the fourth decade in a row during which the General Assembly and other United Nations organs have been considering the fate of the Palestine refugees. Past experience has shown that this question is an integral part of a broader problem: the problem of the restoration of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, which, in turn, is at the very core of the Middle East conflict. This is well known, and in past years the United Nations has adopted many resolutions which, taken together, constitute a basis, generally recognized in international law, for the attainment of a comprehensive and just settlement in the Middle East. Only in the framework of such a settlement will it be possible to

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find the needed solutions to various aspects of the Palestinian problem, including that of the Palestinian refugees.

The principles for the solution of the Palestinian problem have been frequently reaffirmed in General Assembly resolutions, and are supported by an overwhelming majority of States Members of the United Nations. These principles are well known, and prominent among them is the restoration of the inalienable national rights of the Palestinians, and the need to permit the 4 million Palestinians to exercise their right of self-determination and their right to a State.

Only when the Palestinian people is no longer a pariah people, with its own national State on its national homeland, will a genuine solution be found for the problems of that people. Thus, the Palestinian refugee problem is primarily a political problem, a direct consequence of the long-standing expansionist policies of Israel against Arab States and peoples. The cutting edge of this policy is aimed primarily against the Arab people of Palestine.

No matter what aspect of Israel's policy in the occupied Palestinian and other Arab territories we consider, we find that they all pursue the goal of undermining the social, economic, demographic, political, cultural and other foundations of the life of the Palestinian population. There has been a total suppression of the political and civil rights of the Arab people, and Palestinian property has been destroyed through expropriation of land and water resources, and constraints have been placed on the development of national culture, education and public health. In addition a harsh régime of terror has been established by the occupying forces, with systematic repression of any manifestation of political activity on the part of the Palestinians, and of any protest against Israeli tyranny. This régime is there for all to see. The obvious goal of these policies is to establish intolerable conditions which will drive the Palestinians out.

The unprecedented cruelty of the Israeli war-mongers in last year's aggression against Lebanon unmasked the aggressive, rapacious substance of Israel's policies. The victims were Lebanese citizens and Palestinians who had taken refuge in Lebanon. Thousands were killed, wounded and maimed, and tens of thousands were left homeless. The fate of the Sabra and Shatila camps is a tragic reminder that the Palestinians continue to be denied the most basic of human rights: the right to a secure existence.

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As we in the United Nations consider the problem of Palestinian refugees we must not forget that in Lebanon the Israeli occupiers are still holding in detention hundreds of staff members of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA); hundreds of them are being held in the Ansar concentration camp.

The Soviet Union calls for the implementation of General Assembly resolutions concerning the problem of Palestine, in particular resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948, which provides for the return of the Palestinians to their homes and, for those preferring not to return home, for adequate compensation for their lost property. Such compensation to the Palestinian refugees and other victims of Israeli aggression should be paid by the aggressor, Israel.

As to statements made advocating a change in the financing system for the Agency, the Soviet delegation wishes to reiterate its position on the question. Such a change would mean, in practice, putting on an equal footing those countries which have helped the Palestinian people attain their rights and those which have impeded that process. Elementary norms of justice and law require that UNRWA expenditures for assisting Palestinian refugees should be paid by the Israeli aggressor, which created the problem in the first place, and by those who, with their support for Tel Aviv's policy of plunder, are attempting to perpetuate the Palestinians' condition as homeless refugees possessing no rights.

All of this, which was rightly emphasized in this Committee by the representative of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), applies fully to the situation created as a result of the Israeli aggression against and invasion of Lebanon. But, as can be seen from the report of the Commissioner-General, Mr. Olof Rydbeck, and from statements made here by many delegations, not merely has Israel been doing nothing to alleviate the suffering of the refugees, but it has been going full ahead with plans to prepare the ground for the final absorption of the Palestinian lands and to make permanent exiles of tens - hundreds - of thousands of Palestinians.

In conclusion, we would note that the Soviet Union, together with a number of other States which do not make direct contributions to UNRWA, takes part in the financing of many programmes carried out for this Agency by United Nations specialized agencies and in the payment of the international staff of UNRWA. In addition, we engage in comprehensive bilateral assistance to the Palestinian people.

The CHAIRMAN: I now call on those representatives wishing to speak in exercise of their right of reply.

Mr. LEVIN (Israel): Today, as on other days before, we have heard a great deal of talk about aggression against the Palestinian refugees. We heard this morning about "vultures" keeping and feeding on the Palestinian refugees. Who are these vultures, and who is committing aggression against the Palestinian refugees?

There is absolutely no doubt: today, as for the last 35 years, those who have kept the problem alive, those who have been against finding any solution to the tragic problem of the Palestine refugees, are the Arab leaders themselves. Today they are using them as pawns in their internecine feuds in the North of Lebanon - and today again, no one here mentioned that fact. No one thinks of the casualties and of those who are killed, because, apparently, it simply does not interest them as long as they cannot drag Israel into it.

Israel thinks the problem of the refugees must be solved. An equitable solution must be found, and the Arab leaders must try to understand the plight of these refugees and try to co-operate in order to find a solution to those problems. I think the time has now come to stop the speech-making and stop shedding the crocodile tears that the Arab leaders are shedding on the question of the Palestine refugees. The time has come for action.

As to the speech made here by the representative of the Soviet Union, who said, among other things, something about "aggressive war-mongers", it is interesting that the Soviet representative never mentions aggressive war-mongers where it is really appropriate, and never speaks of refugees where the subject really belongs. We all know where that is in so far as the USSR is concerned: it is in Afghanistan, and it concerns the over 3 million refugees who are there, trapped on the border, where the killing and the shooting is going on and where more refugees are added daily. It is not necessary to go into all this. We only express the wish that, instead of all these liturgies that we hear about the Palestine refugees, the representatives of the Arab States will finally come to the conclusion that something must be done about the situation.

Mr. HAMADNEH (Jordan) (interpretation from Arabic): For the second time the representative of Israel has spoken of the Palestinian refugees and the situation and conditions in northern Lebanon. He has called on us to find a solution to this problem, disregarding the conditions in which refugees in camps in the West Bank have been living and continue to live, especially the imposition of curfews and siege conditions in the camps.

If the representative of Israel really wants to find a solution to the refugee problem, he should advise his Government to respect and implement all relevant United Nations resolutions. That would suffice in the search for a solution to the question of Palestine, including the refugee problem.

The CHAIRMAN: I invite the representative of the Palestine Liberation Organization to make a statement.

Mr. MANSOUR (Palestine Liberation Organization): The representative of Israel poses a very important question - Who is the real aggressor against the Palestinian people? - and gives us a lecture to the effect that it is now time for action, not speeches.

It is very clear that the aggressor against the Palestinian people is Israel and that the solution to the problem of the Palestinian refugees is very clear and simple, that is, for the Israeli Government to implement fully United Nations resolution 194 (III), which calls upon Israel to allow all Palestinian refugees to return to their homeland. If that and other United Nations resolutions were implemented fully and immediately we would not have to meet every year to discuss the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and the situation of the Palestinian refugees, since that situation would not exist. That is precisely what should be done by the Government of Israel to put an end, once and for all, to the problem of the Palestinian refugees.

The CHAIRMAN: I call on the representative of Israel, whose wishes to exercise the right of reply for a second time.

Mr. LEVIN (Israel): The representative of Jordan spoke about recent events. I should like to quote what the Mayor of Tulkarem said only two days ago on Israel television. He was asked why there was disturbance going on, and his response was:

"What do you want us to do when the Syrians are attacking our people in the north? We cannot do anything in Syria, so the demonstrators have to go into the streets and express their anger at the Syrians. But they have to do it here because there is no other opportunity."

The CHAIRMAN: I call on the representative of Syria.

Mr. ABOUCHAER (Syrian Arab Republic) (interpretation from Arabic): In his first statement the representative of the Zionist entity posed the question who was the aggressor against the Palestinian refugees, and I should like to reply to what he said in his second statement.

The answer is the Zionists and the leaders of the Zionist Movement. The history and record of the Zionist Movement and of Israel are full of incidents and acts of terrorism and collective murders of the Arab nation in general and of the Palestinian people in particular. Zionism and terrorism are two faces of the same coin. For Zionism, terrorism is a normal way; moreover, it is one of the main components of the Zionist ideology. In thought and action, Zionism is the inadmissibility of the absorption of Jews in their communities, immigration to Palestine, Judaizing Palestine, expansion at the expense of neighbouring Arab States and mounting attacks against those Arab States in terms of security, on the one hand, and of Jewish rights, on the other. The Zionist Movement and Israel have enshrined all that in their writings, statements and declarations. I shall give a few examples of some of the statements of Zionist leaders.

In his book The Jewish State, Herzl exemplified the idea of expelling the Arabs from Palestine from the idea of expelling monsters and beasts from a land that one wants to colonize. The Jewish leader Eshkol wrote:

"In order to establish a Jewish State in Palestine, it is inevitable that all Palestinian territories must belong to the people of Israel, and there are three ways of usurping this land: first, through force and military occupation, that is to say, through usurping land from its real owners or by expropriating these lands from their original owners"

Another Jewish leader wrote the following in an article entitled "Zionism today":

"Palestine is full of people, and there are other alternatives to Zionism - either getting Palestine through force or leaving a large number of anti-Israel Muslim Arabs as residents in Israel - and Israel has chosen usurping Palestine by force."

Zeev Jabotinsky, the leader of the Jewish Movement and Begin's instructor, wrote:

(Mr. Abouchaer, Syrian Arab
Republic)

"Palestine must be for the Jews and we must use all possible means to force the Arabs to leave gradually. This has to be our stable policy which will not come to an end. We will expel the Arabs from Palestine and Jordan to the desert and will establish a Jewish State on the banks of the Jordan and outside the borders of Palestine after this."

Next, I should like to quote the following statement by Moshe Dayan in 1979 when he was Minister for Defence:

"I do not see how we can establish a Jewish State without trampling upon the rights of Jews if we say that, in order to settle Jews in a specific place where Arabs have been residing, we have to get permission from the Arabs. If that were the case, we could not establish a Jewish State."

A high-ranking official of 30-years' standing in the Jewish Agency wrote the following concerning the importance of expelling the Arab population of Palestine:

"It is for us only. It has to be clear that there is no place for two peoples in the same country. With the existence of the Arabs we will not be able to achieve our goal to become an independent people in this country. The only solution so that the land of Israel will become Palestine is to expel the Arabs, and there is no way to do that except by transferring all Arabs from here to other Arab States so that no village or tribe will remain here."

That is only a small part of the Zionist writings which justify the use of terrorism against and killing of Arabs to expel them from their lands, villages and cities. The rulers of Tel Aviv are following that course in this Committee.

The CHAIRMAN: I call on the representative of Jordan, who wishes to exercise the right of reply for a second time.

Mr. HAMADNEH (Jordan) (interpretation from Arabic): I should like to refer to what the representative of Israel has said about an interview on Israeli television with the Mayor of Tulkarem, (Mr. Hilmi Hanoun).

When Mr. Hilmi Hanoun, the Mayor of Tulkarem, was asked why demonstrators throw stones at Israeli soldiers if they are angry at others, he said that "the demonstrators are throwing stones because they find the Israeli soldiers the real underlying reason for all the disasters they are facing".

The CHAIRMAN: I call on the representative of Iran.

Mr. NAZARI (Islamic Republic of Iran): Today in the Middle East it is quite clear who is the aggressor and who suffer at the hands of an illegally and artificially created entity. All that has been done so far by the illegal entity occupying Palestine and its protectors is to temporize the Palestine problem and present it as a daily political question on the United Nations agenda for the past 38 years, while at the same time denying the Palestinian people its inalienable rights. Finally, I hope that the Palestinian people will continue its struggle against the illegal occupying régime in Palestine in order to gain its freedom.

The meeting rose at 12.50 p.m.