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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 23rd MEETING

Chairman: Mr. KORHONEN (Finland)

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* A full transcription of all statements made under this item will be issued in documents A/SPC/40/PV.16 et. seq.

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- (g) REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS CONCILIATION COMMISSION FOR PALESTINE
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The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 75: REPORT OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE TO INVESTIGATE ISRAELI PRACTICES AFFECTING THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF THE POPULATION OF THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES (A/40/702); REPORTS OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued) (A/40/541, 542, 575, 583, 649 and Add.1, 686, A/SPC/40/L.8 to L.14)

1. Mr. SHARFI (Sudan), introducing draft resolution A/SPC/40/L.8 on behalf of the sponsors, said that the resolution addressed two major issues, namely, the arbitrary detention of Arabs in the occupied territories by the Israeli authorities, and the question of Ziyad Abu Eain, and recalled General Assembly resolutions 38/79 A and 39/95 A. The subject was directly linked to fundamental issues of human rights, and he called upon the international community to confirm its respect for the legitimate human rights of the population of the occupied Arab territories. He hoped that the draft resolution would meet with the approval of the members of the Committee.

2. Mr. TARAR (Pakistan), introducing draft resolutions A/SPC/40/L.9 and L.10 on behalf of the sponsors, said that the first resolution strongly demanded that Israel acknowledge and comply with the provisions of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, in the Palestinian and other Arab territories it had occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, while the second demanded that Israel desist forthwith from taking any action which would result in changing the legal status, geographical nature or demographic composition of those territories. He hoped that the two draft resolutions would be adopted by an overwhelming majority.

3. Mr. RAHIM (Bangladesh), introducing draft resolutions A/SPC/40/L.11, L.12, L.13 and L.14 on behalf of the sponsors, said that the first resolution condemned Israeli policies and practices in the occupied Arab territories, including Jerusalem, and called upon Israel to take immediate steps for the return of all displaced Arab and Palestinian inhabitants to their homes and to allow the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Population of the Occupied Territories to visit the area.

4. He read out certain revisions* to the text which condemned draft resolution A/SPC/40/L.12, the expulsion of prominent Palestinians by the Israeli military occupation authorities.

5. Draft resolution A/SPC/40/L.13 condemned Israel for its legislative and administrative measures intended to alter the character and legal status of the Syrian Golan Heights and called upon that State to desist from its repressive measures.

6. Draft resolution A/SPC/40/L.14 condemned the systematic Israeli campaign of repression against and closing of universities and other educational and vocational

* Revised draft resolution subsequently issued as document A/SPC/40/L.12/Rev.1.

(Mr. Rahim, Bangladesh)

institutions in the occupied Palestinian territories. He hoped that all the draft resolutions which he had introduced would receive the full support of the Committee.

AGENDA ITEM 79: UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND WORKS AGENCY FOR PALESTINE REFUGEES IN THE NEAR EAST (continued)

- (a) REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONER-GENERAL (continued) (A/40/13 and Add.1)
- (b) SPECIAL REPORT OF THE WORKING GROUP ON THE FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND WORKS AGENCY FOR PALESTINE REFUGEES IN THE NEAR EAST (continued) (A/40/207)
- (c) LETTER DATED 27 MARCH 1985 FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE WORKING GROUP ON THE FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND WORKS AGENCY FOR PALESTINE REFUGEES IN THE NEAR EAST ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued) (A/40/216)
- (d) NOTE BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL TRANSMITTING THE SPECIAL REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONER-GENERAL ON THE FINANCIAL SITUATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND WORKS AGENCY FOR PALESTINE REFUGEES IN THE NEAR EAST (continued) (A/40/299)
- (e) LETTER DATED 30 MAY 1985 FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE ADVISORY COMMISSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND WORKS AGENCY FOR PALESTINE REFUGEES IN THE NEAR EAST ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued) (A/40/350)
- (f) REPORT OF THE WORKING GROUP ON THE FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND WORKS AGENCY FOR PALESTINE REFUGEES IN THE NEAR EAST (continued) (A/40/736)
- (g) REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS CONCILIATION COMMISSION FOR PALESTINE (continued) (A/40/580)
- (h) REPORTS OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued) (A/40/543, 612, 613, 614, 615, 616, 756, 766)

7. Mr. MANSOUR (Observer, Palestine Liberation Organization) expressed appreciation of the efforts of Mr. Rydbeck, former Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNWRA), and promised the full co-operation of his organization with the new incumbent, Mr. Giacomelli.

8. The Palestinian refugee problem was almost as old as the United Nations itself, and it could only be considered in the context of a just political solution to the question of Palestine, such as that contained in General Assembly resolution 38/58 C.

9. Zionist terrorism attempted to make a reality of the myth that Palestine was a country without a people. The continual expulsion of Palestinians from their homeland, as a result of the aggression of the Zionists and their imperialist supporters, had increased the number of Palestinian refugees to over 2 million. Moreover, the Zionist authorities made ceaseless efforts to exterminate Palestinian

(Mr. Mansour, Observer, PLO)

refugees throughout Lebanon, and even as far away as Tunis. Rather than succumb to that oppression, the Palestinian people had taken up arms to put an end to the occupation and attain their inalienable rights.

10. His organization had a number of comments to make in connection with the report of the Commissioner-General of UNRWA (A/40/13 and Add.1) and the statements of the Commissioner-General and the Rapporteur of the Working Group on the Financing of UNRWA. There had been a marked deterioration in the security situation in Palestine as a result of the "iron fist" policy of the Israeli occupying forces. Refugee camps had been demolished or sealed off from the outside world. Families were induced to move through fear, pressure and intimidation. The lives of Palestinians continued to be threatened as a result of Israeli State terrorism and the invasion of Lebanon of June 1982.

11. The Israeli occupation authorities were closing down youth centres in the occupied Palestinian territories, imposing double shifts in schools and closing schools for weeks or months at a time.

12. UNRWA staff were subjected to arrest or detention by the Israeli authorities. Israel had refused to pay UNRWA approximately \$US 4.5 million in compensation for loss and damage caused to its facilities as a result of the invasion of Lebanon.

13. The crisis in the Israeli economy had been transferred to the occupied Palestinian territories, and Palestinians had gone out on strike in protest at the high level of unemployment. His organization had noted that the training centre at Sibliin would be reopened in the autumn of 1985. It was to be hoped that all Palestinians eligible to receive the individual registration cards issued by UNRWA would receive them as soon as possible. UNRWA should refrain from using the Israeli names for the occupied Palestinian and other Arab territories, including Jerusalem. His organization condemned Israel for failing to co-operate with the Secretary-General on the feasibility study for the proposed University of Jerusalem "Al-Quds" (A/40/543).

14. He supported all efforts to stabilize the finances of UNRWA, and called upon States to take steps to resolve the Agency's financial problems.

15. Mr. ABoul GHEIT (Egypt) expressed deep concern over the working conditions of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, as set forth in the report of the Commissioner-General (A/40/13 and Add.1). It had been the intention of the General Assembly in 1948 that UNRWA should be a temporary agency entrusted with the task of preserving the rights of Palestinian refugees made homeless by Israeli acts of violence and military terrorism. It had been expected that the refugees would return to their homes as soon as possible, but instead they had spent nearly 40 years in misery.

16. Another point of concern to which the report of the Commissioner-General drew attention was the continuing gradual decline in contributions to UNRWA from certain groups of States, which showed that international commitment to the services provided by the Agency was also in decline. The report also showed, in paragraph 6 of the foreword by the Commissioner-General, a clear understanding of the Agency's

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(Mr. Aboul Gheit, Egypt)

political role and of the drastic consequences that would ensue if the Agency were allowed to disappear. It was essential that Member States of the United Nations should provide contributions in order to maintain the essential services provided by UNRWA. An additional sum of approximately \$20 million was required during 1986 simply in order to ensure the level of services provided during 1985. If the Agency's financial deficit were to lead to a reduction in the basic services provided to refugees, it would be a matter of shame for the United Nations and the international community as a whole.

17. The report showed that Israel had consistently refused to co-operate with UNRWA, whether by answering requests for information or by providing compensation for damage to property. Israel had contravened the fourth Geneva Convention by destroying the homes of many Palestinians, had prevented supplies from reaching refugee camps, interfered with the work of UNRWA personnel, and carried out executions of Palestinians living in refugee camps in Lebanon.

18. UNRWA needed the support of all those who believed that a just, durable and comprehensive solution to the Middle East question was essential. Any negotiations towards a settlement must include participation by the legitimate representatives of the Palestinian people and must ensure the right to self-determination of the Palestinian people and the right of all peoples and States of the Middle East to live in peace with one another as good neighbours. Until such a settlement was attained, the United Nations must not neglect its duty towards the Palestine refugees.

19. Mr. TANG Guangzhi (China) said that UNRWA had done a great deal of useful work since its establishment, and that the existence of the Agency was vital. Extensive services had been provided to refugees under extremely difficult conditions. However, UNRWA was confronted with serious financial difficulties, and it was hoped that more contributions would be provided to it, particularly by developed countries. China, for its part, had always provided moral support and material assistance, in the form of food, grain, foreign currency, essential daily items, medical equipment and medicine, despite the fact that its status as a developing country placed a limit on such contributions.

20. For nearly four decades, millions of Palestinians had been forced to live as refugees, and it was not difficult to imagine the misery in which they lived. It was ironic that, while the international community co-operated to provide financial and material assistance to the Palestine refugees, Israel continued to refuse to recognize the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people. Any solution to the question of the Palestine refugees must include the following essential points: a halt to Israeli acts of aggression and expansion; a complete withdrawal by Israel from all the Arab territories it had occupied since 1967; and respect for the inalienable national right of the Palestinian people to return to its homeland and to establish its own State. The United Nations could not deny its responsibility for a settlement of the Palestinian question, and of the Middle East question as a whole, and should take immediate steps to reach the required solution.

The meeting rose at 4.25 p.m.