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Chairman: Mr. Miguel Rafael URQUIA (El Salvador).

Report of the Director of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (A/2470, A/2470/Add.1, A/AC.72/L.12) (concluded)

[Item 19]*

1. Mr. ARDALAN (Iran) recapitulated the circumstances in which the Relief and Works Agency had been set up, referred briefly to the tasks which had been entrusted to it and thanked Mr. Blandford and Mr. Carver for the excellent work they had done as directors of the Agency.
2. He noted with satisfaction that the composition of the Advisory Commission had been enlarged; the participation of Syria, Jordan and Egypt would have a most beneficial effect on the Agency's work. Lebanon should also be a member, for the number of refugees it had received amounted to one-tenth of its population.
3. Certain passages of the annual report (A/2470) and certain statements by Mr. Blandford and the United States representative showed that the problem of the refugees was all the more urgent because their number continued to grow and they might therefore constitute a threat to peace and security in the Middle East. The problem remained in its entirety and Iran could not disinterest itself from it.
4. The Agency and the Advisory Commission were of course responsible for helping the refugees, but first and foremost steps must be taken to give the refugees the means to fend for themselves. Hitherto, however, the Agency had not been able to carry through that important part of its task, because the refugees were afraid of losing their rights to repatriation and compensation, which General Assembly resolution 194 (III) expressly recognized. Despite the refugees' attitude, the Agency's work had been made easier by the conclusion of four agreements with the host countries, involving a total sum of \$111 million. The works covered by the agreements were to be spread over a period of about six years. The report itself indicated that the number of refugees would have reached 1,025,000 by 1958-59. Therefore, even if those works were carried through there would still be 455,000 refugees unemployed after that date and an additional

credit of \$110 million would be required to provide for their needs. The voting of the necessary credits was thus a matter of urgency if the situation was not to deteriorate. It was also essential that the credit of \$200 million approved by the General Assembly for the implementation of major projects should not be scaled down. The Iranian delegation would therefore warmly support the draft resolution (A/AC.72/L.12) submitted jointly by the United States of America, the United Kingdom, France and Turkey. He thought it right that the Agency should be extended until 1955, but at the same time felt it desirable that it should be asked to submit to the next session of the General Assembly a far-reaching plan that would better serve the interests of the refugees.

5. He proposed that the budget submitted by the Agency and the Advisory Commission should be approved, and hoped that, once the funds were available, shtelter would be found for refugees who were still living outside the camps and that supplementary rations would be distributed to the children. With regard to the \$200 million required for the continuation of the Agency's work, he thought that the recommendations of the Acting Director and the Advisory Commission should be complied with. He was glad to learn that the plans for general development were progressing normally, for that would mean that more and more of the refugees could be taken off the list of those needing help, and would give grounds for hope that the \$18 million provided for relief during the financial year ending on 30 June 1955 would be adequate.

6. He would vote for part B of the joint draft resolution authorizing the Advisory Commission to increase its membership. He was particularly pleased to learn that Pakistan had expressed a desire to be a member of the Commission and he would support its candidature.

7. Mr. TARCICI (Yemen) said that he would refrain from referring to the drama of Palestine and dwelling on the responsibility of the Israel authorities and their supporters abroad.

8. While Mr. Carver was to be thanked for his work on behalf of the refugees and for the facts and figures in his report, the report naturally could not do justice to the full magnitude of the human tragedy that was being enacted in the refugee camps. For example, the report merely noted that many refugees were infected with trachoma and conjunctivitis, but could not say that more than half the total number were suffering from those two diseases. A great effort was needed, too, to visualize the state of mind of the children who, according to paragraphs 54 and 55, were receiving only half a ration, or the feelings of parents who were unable to satisfy their children's hunger.

9. He was not drawing attention to the humanitarian aspect of the problem in order to draw tears of pity from the Committee, but rather to throw into relief the responsibility of Israel and of those who sanctioned

* Indicates the item number on the agenda of the General Assembly.

that crime against humanity. That misery had been caused by refusal to apply resolution 194 (III).

10. With regard to the plan for the resettlement of refugees, it was noted in paragraph 9 of the report that "the opposition of the refugees, with which the indigenous population of the host countries tended to sympathize, constituted a formidable obstacle which must be overcome, if tangible progress is to be achieved in implementing the provisions of the three-year plan". There, too, the human aspect of the matter was being neglected. The authors of the report seemed to consider that the attachment of the refugees to their rights, their land and their mother country, to the very principles which had led the United Nations to vote those resolutions constituted "a formidable obstacle", but they did not breathe a word about Israel's refusal to implement the Assembly's resolutions. The report should at least have mentioned them.

11. Finally the report referred to 250,000 persons described as "economic refugees", who were receiving no assistance from the Agency. They were living on the demarcation line between Israel and Arab countries and were separated from their property by a line of fire and steel. Most of them could see their lands occupied by immigrants who had come from all over the world. It was difficult to realize what it meant for a man to see a stranger occupy and exploit his lands whilst his own family went hungry. Those 250,000 men, women and children were living through a daily tragedy that was nowhere mentioned in the report. He hoped the next report would fill the gap.

12. The following conclusions were to be drawn from the debate:

(a) By refusing to implement the United Nations resolutions the Israel authorities had assumed a very heavy responsibility.

(b) Israel's negative attitude to the resolutions showed flagrant ingratitude towards the United Nations and undermined its very foundations.

(c) The scheme for reintegration could scarcely provide employment for all the refugees, whose numbers were continually increasing. It would be five years before a part of the refugees could benefit from the work done by the Agency; and, unless a large number of them were repatriated to Palestine, their need for assistance would continue indefinitely.

(d) The report itself stated that the host countries were not in a position to absorb all the refugees without help from outside.

(e) The allegation that the Israelis were poor people fighting against the wealthy Arabs was totally false, since the Jewish immigrants who had come to Palestine had appropriated the Arabs' property and were also receiving material aid from abroad.

(f) Although the Arab countries needed their natural resources to raise the living standards of their own peoples, they had agreed to waive their rights over a part of their resources to permit a provisional resettlement of the refugees.

(g) Israel had not confined itself to appropriating the property of the refugees, but was also trying to deprive the host countries of their water resources by trying to change the course of the river Jordan.

(h) The impossibility of resettling all the refugees in host countries showed that the problem could be solved satisfactorily only by applying General Assembly resolution 194 (III).

(i) The impossibility of persuading the refugees to waive their rights was categorical proof of the need to apply the resolution concerning their repatriation.

(j) Owing to the indulgent attitude of certain great Powers, Israel had adopted an intransigent attitude and was flouting the most elementary human rights and constantly trampling on the rights of the countries which had offered shelter to the refugees.

(k) General Bennike's report (S/3122) to the Security Council showed clearly that such an attitude ran counter to the principles of the United Nations and to humanitarian principles.

13. To sum up, the three following conclusions should be drawn; first, if pressure had been put on Israel to induce that country to apply the resolution of the United Nations, the refugee problem would have been solved in a just and humane fashion. Secondly, since the refugees refused to abandon their rights, rights recognized by the United Nations, the only final solution was repatriation in conformity with the resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948. Any other solution would be of a provisional nature only. Thirdly, the proposal for temporary resettlement did not prejudice the right of the refugees to return to their homes and property in Palestine.

14. Those were the considerations which would influence the Yemen delegation's vote on the joint draft resolution submitted to the Committee.

15. Mr. RIAD (Egypt) said that, as he had already stated his Government's views on the matter, he would deal with a few specific points raised during the debate.

16. The United States representative had said at the 25th meeting that his country was not prepared, in the words of one of the committees of the United States Congress which had studied the question at length the previous summer, indefinitely to bear so large a share of the financial burden while Israel and the Arab States showed so little initiative in seeking a solution of the problem dividing them. Those words, spoken by the representative of a country paying 70 per cent of UNRWA's budget, were of special import because, if the United States stopped contributing to the expenses of UNRWA, it would be signing the death-warrant of the Palestine refugees. The United States congressional committee had certainly confined its studies to the question of the Arab refugees. Otherwise, it would have been led to recommend the suspension of United States economic aid to Israel until the government of that country obeyed the General Assembly's resolutions.

17. The representative of Israel, in his statement at the 29th meeting, had attempted to relieve his Government of its responsibilities. He had said that the intervention of the Arab States in Palestine in 1948 had been in defiance of General Assembly resolution 181 (II) of 1947 and he had described that intervention as an act of aggression. He had gone on to emphasize that it was the intervention of the Arab States in Palestine which had forced the Arabs of the area to leave their homes and that, consequently, the Arab States bore the responsibility for the refugee problem. The facts showed, however, that hundreds of thousands of Arabs had already been driven out of their homes before the Arab forces had gone into Palestine, thus totally refuting the Israel representative's assertion. Fortunately, facts were much more powerful than propaganda. It should perhaps also be recalled that the Arab armed

forces had entered Palestine to come to the aid of the Arabs persecuted and massacred by the Zionists.

18. The Israel representative had also said that the governments of the host countries were not co-operating with the Agency. That assertion was refuted by the annual report and by the special report, which acknowledged the assistance those governments had given the Agency.

19. Mr. Lourie had painted a gloomy picture of the conditions of the Jews in the Arab countries. However, the 50,000 Jews living in Egypt were living there in freedom and enjoying the same rights and privileges as Egyptian nationals. It was not enough that the Israel Government had spread ruin and hardship among the Palestine refugees; to add to that, it accused them of doing nothing to improve their miserable condition. But the reports of those who had visited the Arab refugees in Egypt showed that, on the contrary, they had gone to work courageously and were successfully farming land that was difficult to work. Yet they could see from their hillside the lands which belonged to them, from which they were barred.

20. The joint draft resolution was based on General Assembly resolutions and was in line with the Advisory Commission's views. The Egyptian delegation would therefore vote for it.

21. Mr. DEJANY (Saudi Arabia) said that he did not intend to give the Israel representative the satisfaction of diverting the discussion in the Committee from the subject of the refugees, which was the item on the agenda, to the subject of Saudi Arabia upon which he had made violent and fallacious attacks. That was further proof of the way in which Israel was evading the truth about the refugees by endeavouring to confuse the main issues and entangling them with many problems to which they were not related.

22. There had been nothing new in the Israel representative's statement, but one passage deserved special attention. He had said that the influx into his country of thousands of Arabs from hostile territory was a threat to national security with which no government would agree. That was amazing logic: refugees were barred from returning to their homes because they were coming from hostile territory. Yet the refugees were not citizens of those countries; they belonged to the land and homes Israel had usurped from them. It was Israel that was prolonging the sojourn of the Arabs of Palestine in that unhealthy climate. Moreover, it should be pointed out that Israel's policy was responsible for the refugees' frame of mind of which its representative complained.

23. Not satisfied with taking away the country, homes and lands of another people, the Israelis now alleged that their security would be menaced by the return of the legitimate inhabitants of the country. The only despots in history who had done anything so outrageous were those whose victims were the Jews; and even those despots had never claimed that they were persecuting the Jews for security reasons. If the legitimate inhabitants of a territory were to be excluded from their own country on grounds of security, a considerable proportion of the inhabitants of the world would be refugees. It could not be over-emphasized that those who most loudly deplored such a policy were precisely those who now found it expedient to apply it.

24. Mr. DAOUDY (Syria) said that he would not expatiate on the statement of the Tel Aviv authorities, because it was riddled with falsehoods which were not

worthy of comment. He would merely say that Syria had agreed to serve on the Advisory Commission solely in order to improve the lot of the refugees during their temporary stay in the host countries, and to provide them with opportunities for work. It could not be maintained that the presence of Syria on the Advisory Commission prejudiced the right of the refugees to return to their homes. He had already shown that it was the Agency's task, under resolution 302 (IV), to co-operate with the Conciliation Commission in order to ensure the repatriation of the Palestine Arab refugees. He wished to state once again that the problem of the refugees was primarily a political one, the solution of which lay neither with Syria nor in any other Arab country; it must be sought in Palestine itself.

25. Mr. KHALIDY (Iraq) wished to reply to the remarks made by the representative of Israel at the previous meeting.

26. Mr. Lourie had said that the Iraqi representative's arguments were for the most part a figment of his imagination and that the alleged atrocities to which he had referred were merely a propaganda weapon of the Iraqi Government. He (Mr. Khalidy) would reply that the atrocities committed by Israel armed forces, the latest of which was being debated in the Security Council, were a matter of record and the attempts of the Israel representative to divert attention from them would not succeed in concealing them.

27. In his statement, the representative of Israel had tried to arouse the sympathy of the Committee for the misfortunes of his country. He had spoken of defenceless women and children murdered by Arab armed forces in 1948. That was the usual tactic used by Zionists to elicit sympathy and gain support. That was the tactic they used in the United States to raise funds to finance their policy of expansion and aggression. But the world was beginning to discover the truth, for deeds spoke louder than words. Was it possible that, during military operations in 1948, the Arab military leaders should have wilfully evacuated part of the Arab population living in the theatre of operations, thus hampering troop movements and creating a serious supply problem? The Arabs of Palestine had been living there from time immemorial and were deeply attached to the soil; it was due only to the pressure of circumstances that they had consented to leave their homes. It therefore could not seriously be argued that the exodus of a million Arabs from Palestine was the result simply of the armed intervention of Arab forces in Palestine.

28. Mr. Lourie had quoted extracts from speeches made by so-called Arab leaders and articles which had presumably been published in periodicals printed in Arabic. He (the Iraqi representative) denied that there was any value in the Press reports cited by the representative of Israel; the Press in every country reflected all shades of opinion. The pronouncements of so-called Arab leaders were a fabrication of the Zionist propaganda machine.

29. In the course of his campaign of misrepresentation, the Israel representative had referred to the alleged slaughter of 30,000 Assyrians in Iraq in 1933 and what he had called the pogrom of 1941. In fact, there had been the insurrection of the Assyrian minority in Iraq in 1933 which the Iraqi Government had been compelled to suppress, as it was the duty of every State to guard itself against insurrection. It was true that the incident had been dealt with at the expense of a number

of lives among the insurgents and the members of the Iraqi armed forces, but the number had been much lower than the figure cited by the Israel representative. The incidents in 1941 had occurred when a group of Iraqi Zionists had begun a campaign of sabotage and other acts directed against the safety of the State. The Iraqi Government, realizing that the culprits had been the victims of Zionist propaganda, had at first made allowances, but as the terrorist acts had continued, it had been forced to take action. The culprits had been brought before the courts in the normal way and sentenced. The attitude of the Iraqi Government towards Zionist terrorists might be compared with that of the Israel Government towards the Arab refugees living in the border areas of Palestine.

30. Mr. Lourie had also referred to the Iraqi Zionists who had gone to Israel in 1949 after being forced, he had said, to leave all their possessions behind them in Iraq. The truth was that the Iraqi Zionists had been given the option by the Government either of leaving Iraq and settling in Israel or of declaring their loyalty to Iraq. Those who had opted for emigration to Israel had been assisted to go there in transport aircraft by the Iraqi Government. Those who had chosen to stay were living peacefully in Iraq and enjoying the same rights as other citizens.

31. Mr. Lourie had then dealt with the question of Iraq's natural resources and had tried to show that they would enable the Iraqi Government easily to admit a large number of refugees. It was true that Iraq was a rich and prosperous country and it was a fact that the Israel representative should remember when he spoke about the general economic development of the Middle East. Israel was not, as its Government tried to suggest, the only prosperous and progressive country in the Middle East. In any event, the question was not whether Iraq could or could not absorb more people, but whether the Arab refugees, dispossessed by force of their goods and their land, had the right to recover them and to return to their homes. That right had been formally recognized by the General Assembly and no speech, no distortion of the facts could impair it.

32. Mr. LOURIE (Israel) said that he wished to make two brief remarks. First, the representative of Iraq had given a completely incorrect description of the massacre of the Assyrians in Iraq; the facts were so well known that there was no need to insist upon them. He mentioned the point only to show what credit could be attached to the representative of Iraq's other statements. Secondly, the representative of Iraq had said nothing to indicate that Iraq would do anything whatsoever to help the refugees whom it was claiming to defend or to relieve the distress for which it shared responsibility.

33. Mr. KHALIDY (Iraq) said he was compelled to deal with the two observations made by the representative of the Tel Aviv authorities. First, the facts of the so-called massacre of the Assyrians were well known; he had been in Baghdad when the events had taken place and he knew very well what had really happened. Furthermore, the facts had been recorded in League of Nations documents and everybody could check them. The way in which Mr. Lourie had distorted the facts induced him (Mr. Khalidy) to think in his turn that little credit could be attached to the Israel representative's statements.

34. Secondly, Iraq was already assisting the refugees and had admitted a number of them to its territory.

Before further steps were taken, however, the responsibility must be fixed. Responsibility for the refugees rested in the first place on Israel and in the second place on the United Nations. Until the refugees had been repatriated and reinstated in the possession of their property, nothing could be done and the good faith of Israel would not have been proved. Lastly, since Mr. Lourie had thought it incumbent upon him to speak of "massacres" in the Arab countries, he (Mr. Khalidy) would like to ask him a simple question—what had become of the murderers of Count Bernadotte?

35. The CHAIRMAN said the delegation of Israel had asked him to have distributed to the members of the Committee a pamphlet recently published by the Government of Israel on the subject of the Arab refugees. It was not an official United Nations document; he would like to know the opinion of delegations on the subject.

36. Mr. TAKIEDDINE (Lebanon) thought that the document in question should not be distributed; it had already been dealt with at a press conference and published in the newspapers. The general debate had enabled all aspects of the matter to be thoroughly discussed; and the Committee should now proceed to vote on the joint draft resolution without allowing itself to be held up by delaying tactics, the purpose of which was to prolong the discussion unnecessarily.

37. Mr. LOURIE (Israel) pointed out that it was a well-established practice to comply with a delegation's request for the distribution of a document. At the seventh session, for example, the Iraqi delegation had asked the Chairman to have a certain document distributed and no one had objected. The Israel delegation would like to elaborate on certain aspects of the matter dealt with in the document and it would certainly be convenient if the document were available.

38. Mr. CROSTHWAITE (United Kingdom) thought that at the seventh session it had been agreed that a document which a delegation had wished to be distributed should be placed at the disposal of all those desiring to consult or obtain it; it had been considered that it would be too much to ask the Secretariat to arrange for the distribution of documents other than official United Nations documents. The same solution might be adopted in the present case.

39. Mr. LOURIE (Israel) said that the United Kingdom representative's suggestion was entirely acceptable to him.

40. The CHAIRMAN announced the closure of the general debate and called for observations on the joint draft resolution (A/AC.72/L.12).

41. Mr. MAURTUA (Peru) said that his delegation's attitude had been defined at preceding sessions; it testified to Peru's support of relief for the Palestine Arab refugees. Whatever had been said in the general debate, it was undeniable that there were hundreds of thousands of refugees whose plight might deteriorate still more if the United Nations did not continue to assist them. Until a final solution of the problem was achieved through the repatriation or equitable compensation of the refugees, it was impossible to remain unmoved by their tragic situation. The United Nations must do its utmost to make that painful episode in the history of the Near East a thing of the past and to reaffirm its authority. All Member States should be actuated by a feeling of solidarity and seek to ensure the reign of justice in human relations.

42. The Peruvian delegation would vote for the joint draft resolution. It congratulated the Relief and Works Agency on the work it had already accomplished under the auspices of the United Nations, and took advantage of the opportunity to express its keenest sympathy with the Palestine Arab refugees.

43. Mr. TAKIEDDINE (Lebanon) pointed out that the Israel representative's contention that the Agency had been established to arrange for the resettlement of the refugees in the Arab countries was entirely without foundation. The contention was refuted by resolution 302 (IV); it was also refuted by the Acting Director of the Agency and by the joint draft resolution. To prove that, it was enough to read paragraph 1 of the operative part of the draft resolution, in which the General Assembly would make it clear that its decision was to be "without prejudice to the provisions of paragraph 11 of resolution 194 (III)".

44. The essential aim of the joint draft resolution was the maintenance of assistance for the refugees and the adoption of temporary measures to improve their situation without prejudice to their possible repatriation. In that connexion he had been gratified to note that the representative of the United States had clearly reminded Israel of its responsibilities with regard to the repatriation or compensation of the refugees. The delegation of Lebanon would vote for the joint draft resolution subject to the express reservation that it in no way prejudiced the right of the refugees to repatriation.

45. Mr. URIBE CUALLA (Colombia) said that his delegation unreservedly supported the joint draft resolution since it was fair and humane and would do what could be done to settle a problem which had deeply stirred public opinion throughout the world. He hoped all delegations would approve the joint draft resolution, which was designed to ensure that the unfortunate refugees were treated with justice and were allowed to live in peace. The adoption of the text would contribute towards the solidarity of the nations and the re-establishment of peace.

46. Mr. BRIGHT (Liberia) remarked that his delegation had not taken part in the general debate, because it had clearly expressed its opinion at preceding sessions. The joint draft resolution showed that a solution of the problem was not possible now and that the resolution in question was suggesting a stop-gap measure.

47. The delegation of Liberia would vote for the draft resolution, which seemed to provide for the well-being of the refugees on a temporary basis. It was doing so in the absence of something else more substantial and in the hope that a satisfactory solution would be found before the next session of the General Assembly.

48. Mr. JORDAN (Union of South Africa) said that his delegation felt the keenest sympathy for the unfortunate Palestine Arab refugees. He had not spoken in the general debate because his Government's views had been explained at preceding sessions.

49. The delegation of the Union of South Africa would vote for the joint draft resolution, but its vote would in no way commit the Government of the Union with regard to its contribution to the relief fund, since that matter would have to be considered and dealt with separately.

50. Mr. CHHATARI (Pakistan) said that a vote in favour of the draft resolution did not mean any financial commitment on the part of his Government one way or the other. The question of funds would be taken up by the Pakistan representative on the Negotiating Committee with the Government of Pakistan and its decision would be communicated in due course.

The draft resolution was adopted by 46 votes to none, with 5 abstentions.

Organization of the Committee's work

51. The CHAIRMAN said the Committee should proceed to consider the last item on its agenda: "The question of race conflict in South Africa resulting from the policies of *apartheid* of the Government of the Union of South Africa: report of the Commission appointed to study the racial situation in the Union of South Africa".

52. Mr. JORDAAN (Union of South Africa) remarked that his delegation was the one most directly concerned with that item. When the Committee had established the order in which the items on its agenda were to be considered, it had been agreed that it would not consider at the same time as the Fourth Committee matters directly concerning the Union of South Africa, so as to enable the head of that country's delegation to take part personally in the discussion. The Fourth Committee, however, was at present considering the question of South West Africa. Furthermore, the report of the Commission appointed to study the racial situation in the Union of South Africa (A/2505 and Add.1) was still being studied by the departments of the Union Government concerned. The report was very long, and the Union Government would like to examine it thoroughly.

53. The delegation of the Union of South Africa was not yet in a position therefore to take part in the consideration of the item. Though he could make no promise, he thought that on 16 November he would be able to give the Chairman the date, probably 18 or 19 November, on which his delegation would be prepared to begin consideration of the item.

54. Mr. CROSTHWAITE (United Kingdom) and Mr. LOPEZ (Philippines) supported the suggestion of the representative of the Union of South Africa. The Chairman might keep in touch with the Union delegation at the beginning of the following week, and fix the date of the Committee's next meeting in the light of the information he obtained.

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 12.50 p.m.