



THIRD COMMITTEE
44th meeting
held on
Tuesday, 16 November 1982
at 3 p.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 44th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. CALERO RODRIGUES (Brazil)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 90: OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES
(continued) (A/37/3 (Part II), chaps. III and IX, A/37/12 and Add.1, A/37/84, 324,
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- (a) REPORT OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER
- (b) QUESTION OF THE CONTINUATION OF THE OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER
- (c) ASSISTANCE TO REFUGEES IN AFRICA: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

1. Mr. URIARTE (Chile) observed that in 1982 the General Assembly would have to decide whether to extend the mandate of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and said that that Office should pursue its valuable task.

2. UNHCR was right to adhere, with the necessary flexibility, to the mandate given to it by the General Assembly not to express views regarding the political causes of the dramatic refugee problem. However, it was impossible to ignore the fact that the violation of certain basic principles of the international community, such as those relating to the threat or use of force, foreign aggression and intervention and interference in the internal affairs of other States, were giving rise to the steady flow of refugees in several continents.

3. That was why the difficult situation of Afghan refugees in Pakistan was persisting and there continued to be alarming additions to the outflow of Indo-Chinese refugees to the countries of the Association of South-East Asian Nations. Furthermore, the situation in Africa was still dramatic, particularly in the Sudan and Somalia, where the refugee flow was reaching alarming proportions.

4. The preceding year his country had attended the International Conference on Assistance to Refugees in Africa, at which it had made a financial contribution, within the limits of its capacities, and offered technical assistance programmes through bilateral channels. His delegation endorsed the idea of convening an international conference in 1983 to consider the situation regarding contributions and pledges made at the Conference and to assess requirements and measures relating to further assistance to refugees.

5. His Government had co-operated with UNHCR in the past and was continuing to do so, principally in facilitating the resettlement and reunification of family members abroad and in dealing with various specific repatriation cases. It would announce the amount of its following contribution at the UNHCR pledging meeting.

6. Mr. GENOT (Belgium) said that he believed that the chief purpose of UNHCR, from which all its other functions were derived and on which they depended, was to provide international legal protection for all those persons for whose benefit it carried out its activities. While emergency measures and UNHCR activities undertaken in implementation of a special mandate should not be excluded, emphasis should be placed on the absolute priority to be given to implementation of the

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(Mr. Genot, Belgium)

statutory task of UNHCR. It had only been possible to fulfil that task because it had been carried out at a strictly humanitarian and apolitical level. The neutrality of UNHCR was the sole guarantee that the Office could carry out its protection and assistance activities satisfactorily.

7. His delegation was concerned, first of all, that no comprehensive solution to the problem of the "boat people" had been found, in other words, that no genuine international solidarity had developed either with respect to rescue operations or, above all, with respect to reception and resettlement operations. It was neither fair nor desirable that the State whose flag was flown by the vessels that had rescued the refugees in question should have to take responsibility for those refugees.

8. His delegation was also concerned at the problem of attacks against refugee camps. It was to be hoped that the inquiry being undertaken by the Office of the High Commissioner would lead to appropriate measures to mitigate the effects of the disasters to which that problem gave rise. Perhaps the General Assembly should reiterate its appeal to put an end to violent acts of any type against refugee camps. All States, and the refugees themselves, should be aware of the obligations laid down in international law, particularly of the principles on which the international protection of refugees was based.

9. His country had always attached great importance to the reunification of refugee families and supported any positive measures aimed at solving that problem. His delegation was pleased to note that a programme to reunite families from an Asian country had been started.

10. The High Commissioner's task had unfortunately not been completed, and his mandate should therefore be renewed. Belgium would continue to support him in his endeavour to assist refugees and find lasting ways of dealing with their situation. Subject to the appropriate parliamentary approval, the Government of Belgium had pledged a contribution of 22 million Belgian francs for 1983 to the general assistance programmes of UNHCR.

11. Mrs. YAMAZAKI (Japan) said that, despite the efforts made by the international community to solve refugee problems, those problems persisted in various parts of the world, since their principal causes had not been eliminated. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees played an extremely important role, and her Government therefore believed that it should continue for an additional period of five years, starting on 1 January 1981.

12. Japan had acceded to the 1951 United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol and, in 1982, had established a procedure for determining refugee status. A number of persons, out of the several hundred people who had applied for refugee status, had recently obtained that status. Moreover, the construction of a new reception centre for refugees was being considered, in view of the fact that "boat people" were continuing to arrive.

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(Mr. Yamazaki, Japan)

13. It was encouraging that there had been a marked decrease in the influx of Lao refugees into Thailand and a gradual reduction in the outflow of "boat people". Japan understood the policy of the Government of Thailand of discouraging new arrivals, especially of those crossing the border for purely economic reasons. With regard to Lao and Kampuchean refugees, while resettlement opportunities in third countries should continue to be sought, the promotion of voluntary repatriation was becoming increasingly important. She welcomed the fact that there had been positive results in that connection in the case of Lao refugees and wished to encourage the Office to make further efforts to consolidate that trend.

14. With regard to Afghan refugees, her Government wished to pay a tribute to the Government of Pakistan, the country that had the greatest volume of refugees (2.7 million), for its humanitarian efforts. It would be difficult for those refugees to return voluntarily to their country in the immediate future, and her Government would therefore continue to provide assistance to the Afghans, through UNHCR and the World Food Programme.

15. It was regrettable that in 1981 the number of refugees in northern Latin America had continued to rise. Her Government was particularly concerned at the situation of Central American refugees, which had deteriorated. UNHCR would have to play an important role in that area for many years.

16. He welcomed the fact that, thanks to the co-operation of the international organizations concerned and of Member States, the relief assistance programme for African refugees was already being executed. His Government had pledged \$US 23 million for the provision of assistance to those refugees through UNHCR and the World Food Programme.

17. At the thirty-third session of the Executive Committee, Japan had already announced that, in addition to the \$US 17.5 million already pledged for the current year, it had pledged another \$US 28.6 million for the Indo-Chinese, Afghan, African and other refugee assistance programmes.

18. Miss CARTA (France) said that displacements of populations and of refugees had attained such proportions recently that the international community needed not only to display greater solidarity but also to give considerable thought to the measures to be adopted in order to eliminate the root causes of that problem. In that connection, it was to be hoped that, in accordance with resolution 36/148, the Group of Governmental Experts on International Co-operation to Avert New Flows of Refugees would be established as soon as possible.

19. Although there had been no massive outflows of refugees during the period covered by the High Commissioner's report, the global situation continued to be troubling in many respects. In Africa, despite the commendable efforts made by the High Commissioner, more than 5 million refugees were living in absolute poverty, particularly in the Horn of Africa, and were creating insoluble problems for countries of asylum, which were among the poorest countries in the world. The refugee problem had not been solved in South-East Asia either, and it was currently

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(Miss Carta, France)

more necessary than ever to mobilize the goodwill of countries that could receive refugees. The need was no less urgent in Pakistan, where there were 2 million refugees, and the grave crises disrupting Central America continued to produce the largest number of refugees on the American continent. Accordingly, the Office of the High Commissioner should continue to extend its invaluable assistance to the Salvadorian refugees. Her delegation wished to pay a tribute to the High Commissioner for the tremendous efforts he was making in the difficult world context.

20. Among the difficulties facing UNHCR were those relating to the provision of international protection, which was one of its main tasks. In view of the frequency with which acts of violence were committed against refugees in various parts of the world, the international community was duty-bound to seek to protect the fundamental rights of refugee men and women. The development of international protection for refugees and displaced persons was based on respect for and the integral application of the principles contained in the fundamental international instruments, such as the 1951 United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol, which the greatest possible number of Member States should sign.

21. In the past five years, the refugee problem had acquired unprecedented proportions, and the Office of the High Commissioner was currently required to assist more than 10 million refugees throughout the world. In addition, the concept of assistance was no longer limited to providing refugees with material emergency support; the High Commissioner was increasingly focusing his efforts on programmes designed to enable refugees to become self-reliant. Those efforts were commendable, provided that certain excesses did not cause the very nature of humanitarian aid to be questioned. Clearly, priorities must be set in that undertaking.

22. During the reporting period, the High Commissioner for Refugees had adopted more rigorous management methods in view of the abrupt and considerable rise in the financial resources available to him, and it was to be hoped that progress would continue to be made in that connection. It was also to be hoped that efforts to increase the flow of information between the High Commissioner's Office and all States contributing to its activities would be pursued.

23. Despite the difficulties involved in the tasks UNHCR had performed in recent years, it had not failed to respect the terms of its statute. In her delegation's opinion, the purely humanitarian and apolitical nature of the High Commissioner's activities was extremely important, and she trusted that the relevant principles would continue to guide his work. In addition, UNHCR had succeeded in meeting the new needs created by the considerable rise in the number of refugees in the past decade thanks to the flexibility of UNHCR's mandate and, accordingly, her delegation trusted that that mandate would not be changed when it was extended.

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24. Mrs. FLOREZ (Cuba) said that among the most urgent tasks for UNHCR were those of assisting the 5 million refugees and displaced persons living in Africa and of finding a solution to the tragic situation of the wandering Palestinian nation, of the people of South Africa, who were subjected to apartheid, and of the people of Namibia, who were suffering from the colonial domination of the racist Pretoria régime.

25. Her delegation had stated repeatedly that only through the establishment of the new international economic order could the flow of refugees be successfully contained. Meanwhile, the United Nations, and in particular UNHCR, must oblige those primarily responsible for the flow of refugees to refrain from their plundering, their imperialist domination and their economic and financial repression of the under-developed countries.

26. In his propaganda-filled statement made the previous day, the representative of the United States had neglected to mention the tragic condition of the millions of Palestinian, Namibian and South African refugees. He had failed to mention the hundreds of thousands of Latin American refugees who were the victims of trumped-up tyrannical Governments supported by various United States Governments, and he had overlooked the economic blockade his country had been imposing against Cuba, in violation of the principles of the United Nations Charter, for the past 22 years.

27. Among the millions of Latin Americans who, for economic reasons resulting from the imperialist domination, had emigrated to the United States over the years, there were many Cubans. Thousands of them had left the island to settle in the United States prior to the Cuban Revolution, when the island had been subjected to the imperialist domination of its neighbour to the north. Later, when the United States had unilaterally broken off all relations with Cuba, thousands of Cuban families had been separated.

28. In his statement, the representative of the United States had referred to Cuba's "subversive action" in Africa. Cuba was certainly supporting the African peoples in their struggle against colonial domination; it was supporting the people of Namibia and SWAPO in their struggle for independence and the people of South Africa in combating the apartheid régime. It also was co-operating militarily with the People's Republic of Angola so as to drive out the South African racist troops. It was also true that more than 10,000 young Africans were studying in Cuba on scholarships, that thousands of Cuban doctors, teachers and experts were assisting a number of African countries in the common struggle for development and that, together with the African countries within the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the United Nations, Cuba was striving for peace, disarmament, the eradication of colonialism and racism and the establishment of a new international economic order and of international relations based on equality, mutual respect and co-operation between peoples. Cuba, which owed a great deal to its African ancestors, was proud that its relations with almost all the African States were friendly and fraternal and would seek to ensure that they remained so in future, despite the wishes of the United States of America.

29. Mr. BARMA (Chad) pointed out that, because of exceptional circumstances, Africa was one of the continents having the largest number of displaced persons. However, that situation could easily be resolved if life in the countries of origin returned to normal, since the majority of those persons would gladly agree to return to their own country. The situation was the same in Chad where, after a lengthy civil war which had produced many refugees in neighbouring countries, the Government had created the necessary conditions for the early return of refugees. In particular, it had declared an amnesty, had established a tripartite repatriation commission, had signed the 1951 United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol and had ratified the OAU Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa. Thanks to all those measures, it had not been difficult for the High Commissioner to initiate a six-month repatriation programme, which had led to the large-scale repatriation of refugees.

30. However, the war situation persisting in certain regions had not made it possible for everyone to return to the country. Since 7 June, when fighting had stopped throughout the territory, thousands of refugees who had still been abroad had started to return. Naturally, that massive return of refugees had raised the problem of resettlement and rehabilitation for the authorities, since one of the consequences of the civil war had been the widespread destruction of property, and in particular, housing. A new UNHCR programme had therefore been necessary to complete the resettlement of refugees from Chad.

31. His delegation commended the work of the High Commissioner and requested him to pursue and intensify his work so that all the people from Chad who had been obliged to leave their country as a result of the war might return to their homeland and participate in its reconstruction. The post of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees should be maintained. Chad was deeply grateful for the generous assistance lent by all countries and international, governmental and non-governmental agencies on behalf of the refugees of Chad.

32. Mr. ADAN (Somalia) said that it was necessary to renew the mandate of the Office of the High Commissioner and to expand the support given to it so that it could cope with the needs of millions of persons requiring its assistance because of the repressive policies practised by certain States Members of the United Nations and their denial of the most basic human rights of their inhabitants.

33. According to the High Commissioner's report, some States had not strictly observed the principle of non-refoulement of refugees, and some press reports had described various cases of expulsion or refoulement of refugees from their country of asylum with the concomitant risk of imprisonment or loss of life. As if that were not enough, some countries of origin tried to avail themselves of the voluntary repatriation programme by listing those unfortunate people as voluntary returnees. His delegation shared the concern expressed by the High Commissioner in paragraph 20 of his report and expressed the hope that, in the future, all States would observe the fundamental principle of non-refoulement of refugees.

34. But in the case of voluntary returnees, his country recognized the need to help countries requiring assistance in the resettlement and rehabilitation of their

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(Mr. Adan, Somalia)

nationals who had returned upon the termination of the circumstances which had forced them to flee their homes. However, in the Horn of Africa, there had not been evidence of any significant improvement in the circumstances which had led to the outflow of hundreds of thousands of refugees. On the contrary, the situation had continued to worsen and the outflow of refugees had continued to increase. In that regard, he would like to know which refugees would benefit from the large-scale programme of assistance for voluntary returnees, referred to in the High Commissioner's report.

35. The situation in Somalia was practically a microcosm of the global refugee problem. The United Nations and the Office of the High Commissioner had dealt with the problem extensively since its beginning almost five years ago. His country and other countries of asylum with limited resources had pointed out that the humanitarian assistance of the international community was not sufficient to dispose of the problem of refugees. It was necessary to provide them with means for living productive lives in an atmosphere of security and dignity.

36. His Government was committed to doing everything possible to implement the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General. Although it agreed with the figure of 700,000 registered camp refugees for purposes of planning international relief programmes, there were at least 600,000 more living at large in the community. The livelihood of those refugees, representing an additional burden on the country's weak social and economic structure, depended on the generosity of relatives or on the population in general.

37. In addition to the arrangements made by his Government, with international assistance, to provide primary schooling for over 4,000 children in the camps, the situation required that provision should be made for additional school places for 30,000 children each year for the next four years. The fact that there were more than 300,000 children in the camps gave a clear indication of the magnitude of the problem and the difficult task it represented. Of course, it should be pointed out that the educational programmes were extremely rudimentary in nature because of the shortage of teachers, classrooms and teaching materials. His Government had estimated that a budget of almost \$64 million would be needed to carry out a four-year teaching plan for refugee children.

38. Mrs. DINH THI HUYEN (Viet Nam) said that, in spite of promising developments noted in Asia and other regions of the world in the past year, as stated in the report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the problems of refugees remained serious in Africa, Asia, Latin America and, in particular, the Middle East, where thousands of Palestinian refugees had been cruelly murdered.

39. The problems of refugees in those and other regions could not be eliminated at their source as long as the causes persisted. Wars of aggression, the creation of hotbeds of tension, interference in the internal affairs of States, the threat or use of force in international relations, policies of racism, zionism and apartheid, the exploitation and impoverishment of developing countries, economic blockade, political coercion and incitement to exoduses for political purposes were the major causes of the refugee movement.

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(Mrs. Dinh Thi Huyen, Viet Nam)

40. In the Indo-Chinese peninsula, the peoples of Viet Nam, Laos and Kampuchea had been victims of the most barbarous war of aggression in the history of mankind and were at present victims, once again, of the perfidious manoeuvres of imperialists and expansionists, an example of which was the manipulation of the refugee problem in order to destabilize and weaken the three countries politically, economically and socially. Taking advantage of the economic difficulties and devastating consequences of the war faced by those countries, they had used every means of inciting people to become refugees, thus causing a brain drain. Western mass media and public opinion had criticized the psychological warfare launched by the Voice of America to encourage the Vietnamese to leave their country.

41. Her Government had on many occasions affirmed that the problem of refugees was a human problem, and must consequently be solved in a humanitarian spirit, without political motivations. Accordingly, on 30 June 1979, her Government had concluded a memorandum of agreement with the High Commissioner on the programme of legal departures from Viet Nam. Under that programme, departures from Viet Nam would be organized in an orderly and safe manner, thus reducing the difficulties of neighbouring countries. As a result of the concerted efforts made by the High Commissioner, Viet Nam and the countries of resettlement, Viet Nam's Orderly Departure Programme had made considerable progress. The joint communiqué of the High Commissioner and Viet Nam of 8 October 1982 (A/37/557) had reaffirmed the continuation of co-operation between both parties to proceed further with the Orderly Departure Programme.

42. At the same time, her Government had taken firm measures to prevent illegal departures. The best way to prevent illegal departures, which caused difficulties for neighbouring countries, was to facilitate legal and orderly departures. To that end, host countries should provide more resettlement opportunities and refrain from laying down complex criteria and policies discriminating between refugees leaving legally and illegally. At present, the United States still adopted discriminatory policies of that kind, and discouraged, through complex entry procedures, the refugees who left legally, while automatically accepting refugees who left illegally.

43. In spite of its economic difficulties, Viet Nam had since 1975 received and assisted hundreds of thousands of Kampuchean refugees who had escaped the genocidal Pol Pot régime. After 7 January 1979, most of them had returned to Kampuchea, but there remained 30,000 Kampucheans in Viet Nam. The majority of those refugees wished to be resettled in third countries. Her Government hoped that the High Commissioner and the host countries would do their utmost to resettle those refugees quickly according to their wishes. Meanwhile, the High Commissioner and the international community would have to continue to assist them.

44. It was well known that the brutal war of aggression of the United States and its devastating economic and social consequences were the root cause of the refugee problem in Viet Nam. The Vietnamese people was at present concentrating its efforts on national reconstruction, and the United States, instead of contributing to healing the wounds of war, was causing new difficulties and troubles for that

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(Mrs. Dinh Thi Huyen, Viet Nam)

people. It talked about "respect for human rights" and shed crocodile tears for the victims of its aggression and crimes.

45. The problem of Vietnamese refugees could not be solved at its source until the United States and China put an end to their hostile policies and acts against Viet Nam, their incitement and encouragement of departures from Viet Nam and the economic blockade against Viet Nam. Only under those circumstances could the entire Vietnamese people devote all its might to overcoming the consequences of the war and rebuilding its homeland, thus contributing to peace and stability in the region.

46. The statement made by the United States on the previous day had merely consisted of falsehoods leveled against Viet Nam, a country which would never forget the millions of tons of bombs and the thousands of tons of toxic chemicals used against it during the war of aggression. Moreover, that statement was further proof of the hostile policy of the United States towards Viet Nam.

47. Mr. SOON CHERN (Singapore) said that the largest number of refugees and displaced persons was to be found in Africa. He paid a tribute to the African Governments which had taken measures to integrate large numbers of refugees into their countries. Their efforts were all the more praiseworthy since they themselves had to fight for economic survival. They therefore needed considerable international assistance in order to deal with the problems that faced them.

48. In South-East Asia, the flow of refugees from Laos, Cambodia, and Viet Nam had continued unabated. His delegation shared the concern of the delegation of Thailand at the falling rate of resettlement in the past 10 months. His Government offered first asylum to refugees from Indo-China for humanitarian reasons, but guarantees were needed from friendly countries and from the international community to provide greater resettlement opportunities. His delegation wished to express its appreciation to the Governments of the United States of America, Canada, the countries of the European Economic Community, Australia and New Zealand for the resettlement opportunities they had provided for refugees from South-East Asia.

49. In reality, the problems of the refugees were due to the very Governments which professed to be anxious to avoid new flows of refugees. People did not flee their countries solely because of hunger or natural disasters but also as a result of the deliberate policies of some Governments. One of the serious consequences of the "friendly assistance" being given by the Soviet Union to Afghanistan was the refugee problem. It must not be forgotten that in the final analysis the problem was a political one.

50. Miss CAO-PINNA (Italy) said that she was impressed by the introductory statement of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, in which he had described the growth of the operations of his Office during the three decades since its establishment. That growth and the increasing magnitude of the refugee problem were answer enough to the question of continuing the Office of the High Commissioner. The reference by the High Commissioner to the need for his Office

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(Miss Cao-Pinna, Italy)

to maintain continual dialogue with Governments and to establish close links with other institutions in the system was also important.

51. Although the basic causes of the refugee problem were political, its repercussions confronted the United Nations with a purely humanitarian problem. Her delegation was seriously concerned about the frequent violations of the fundamental human rights of refugees that were occurring in various parts of the world, as mentioned, for example, in paragraph 46 of the report of the Executive Committee.

52. The Third Committee and the Commission on Human Rights should resolve to take appropriate measures to deal with violations of all kinds, wherever they might occur, in order to ensure full respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms throughout the world. Until that objective had been attained, the international community could not hope for any gradual lessening of the refugee problem or of the violations of the human rights of refugees and displaced persons.

53. Her delegation attached particular importance to the full implementation of all instruments concerning the international protection of refugees, the creation of conditions for the voluntary return of refugees to their countries of origin and the need to ensure that the burden of the refugee problem was distributed equitably among all members of the international community. As her delegation had stated at the thirty-third session of the Executive Committee, which had taken place recently, the Government of Italy was contributing in a number of ways to alleviating the refugee problem in various parts of the world. It had, for example, contributed more than \$20 million to refugees from African countries in the past year.

54. Mr. AL-KALBASH (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the charge by the delegation of the United States of America that the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya was one of the countries which had created refugee problems in the world was merely a futile and desperate attempt to prevent Libya from aiding liberation movements in Africa and other parts of the world. Quite the contrary, it was United States intervention in the internal affairs of other States which caused refugee problems in many parts of the world. It was the United States that had provoked the exodus of the Vietnamese people, and it was United States aid to the Zionists that was the main cause of the Palestine refugee problem and had led to the massacre of Palestinian civilians.

55. Evidence of United States intervention in Latin America was to be found in the attempts to destabilize Nicaragua and to crush the liberation movements in El Salvador and Puerto Rico, the economic boycott of Cuba and the support for the Fascist régimes in that region. Despite attacks by the United States of America, his country would continue to criticize United States policy and to support liberation movements throughout the world.

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56. Mr. DERESSA (Ethiopia), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that in the light of what the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees had said in his introductory statement, his delegation had looked forward to a constructive debate on the refugee question. He was therefore disappointed that one of the speakers had made a politically motivated statement. He wished to point out that, in his country, returning displaced persons were registered with the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees. On the other hand, Ethiopia had strong reservations about the figures given for refugees in respect of a certain country in the Horn of Africa. When the Committee considered the report, his delegation would speak on that matter. Insinuations could not absolve expansionist régimes of their responsibility for the displacement of millions of persons from their homes as a result of the unprovoked aggression against Ethiopia in 1977 and 1978.

57. Mr. KHALAF (Somalia), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the statement made by his country's Ambassador had in no way been intended to question the integrity of the High Commissioner. All he had said about the Office had been that Somalia would be pleased if all refugees, wherever they might be, could be repatriated voluntarily. Everyone knew where the refugees in Somalia, the Sudan and Djibouti came from. What Somalia wanted was for them to return to their countries and rejoin their families. It merely asked that the passage of persons returning voluntarily to their countries should be monitored and certified and should take place at specific frontier points to be agreed upon beforehand. It was regrettable that Ethiopia should accuse Somalia of being the cause of the refugee flow to Somalia or the Horn of Africa, since refugees were Ethiopia's main export. The basic cause of refugees in the Horn of Africa was Ethiopia's repressive policy.

58. Mr. DERESSA (Ethiopia), speaking in further exercise of the right of reply, said that, according to a document issued by the International Commission of Jurists in the current year, the Somali régime was characterized by the imposition of indefinite detention without appeal and for mass executions, the suppression of all civil and political rights and a system of repression which had forced more than 100,000 Somali people to flee the country in recent years. According to the same document, people who died from torture in Somalia were hastily buried to prevent their families from demanding autopsies. The penalty for possession of written material criticizing the State was imprisonment for a term of 5 to 15 years, and for spreading rumours against the State or its policy, imprisonment for a term of 2 to 10 years. Under those laws, tens of thousands of Somalis had been imprisoned, deported or executed in the past 10 years.

59. Mr. KHALAF (Somalia), speaking in further exercise of the right of reply, said that the representative of Ethiopia should remember what had happened in his country during the "white terror" when people had been slaughtered in the streets and their families ordered to collect their bodies. Those were well-known facts, and however many documents were quoted, Ethiopia's repressive régime could not be absolved of its responsibility for those acts.

The meeting rose at 5.30 p.m.