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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 11th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. DIALLO (Guinea)

CONTENTS

AGENDA ITEM 76: INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION TO AVERT NEW FLOWS OF REFUGEES
(continued)

AGENDA ITEM 75: UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND WORKS AGENCY FOR PALESTINE REFUGEES IN
THE NEAR EAST:

- (a) REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONER-GENERAL
- (b) REPORT OF THE WORKING GROUP ON THE FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS RELIEF
AND WORKS AGENCY FOR PALESTINE REFUGEES IN THE NEAR EAST
- (c) REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS CONCILIATION COMMISSION FOR PALESTINE
- (d) REPORTS OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

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The meeting was called to order at 10.55 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 76: INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION TO AVERT NEW FLOWS OF REFUGEES
(continued) (A/SPC/39/L.4 and L.6)

1. Mr. MUETZELBURG (Federal Republic of Germany) informed members of the Committee that, as a result of consultations, all the interested delegations had been able to agree on the following wording of paragraph 5 of draft resolution A/SPC/39/L.4: "Calls upon the Group of Governmental Experts to work expeditiously on the fulfilment of its mandate in two sessions of two weeks' duration each during 1985 and to make every effort to conclude its comprehensive review of the problem in all its aspects".
2. Mr. YEONG (Singapore) pointed out that his delegation, which was a sponsor of draft resolution A/SPC/39/L.4, had always supported the draft resolutions on that item. In 1979, Singapore, together with the other ASEAN countries, had called for the convening of an international conference on refugees, in particular, to discuss the problem of the Vietnamese boat people. As a result of that conference, the outpouring of boat people had been slowed but had not stopped.
3. His country, which had first-hand experience with the refugee problem, agreed that it must be tackled at its source, which often included man-made factors such as invasion and occupation by foreign forces, especially in South-East Asia. The dimensions of the refugee problem were such that international co-operation was necessary, for example, to help the countries thus affected to cope with the corresponding problems.
4. The CHAIRMAN drew attention to the programme budget implications of draft resolution A/SPC/39/L.4 (A/SPC/39/L.6) and said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to adopt draft resolution A/SPC/39/L.4, as orally revised, without a vote.
5. Draft resolution A/SPC/39/L.4, as orally revised, was adopted without a vote.
6. Mr. HERZBERG (United States of America), speaking in explanation of vote, welcomed the adoption of draft resolution A/SPC/39/L.4 without a vote and expressed the hope that the Group of Governmental Experts would be able to formulate practical proposals to help to avoid in future the suffering currently experienced by many millions of refugees. He also expressed the hope that the current division of labour, in which some countries caused massive flows of refugees, while others, including his own country, were obliged to care for them, would be brought to an end.
7. Because of the importance and urgency of the refugee problem, his delegation had not opposed an increase in the assessed portion of the United Nations budget. The experts from least developed countries, who were serving in the Group of Governmental Experts in their individual capacity, had made a valuable contribution to the discussions and, in most cases, came from countries which had been directly affected by recent influxes of refugees. Accordingly, his delegation had not

(Mr. Herzberg, United States)

requested a separate vote on paragraph 3 of the draft resolution. However, the Secretary-General should try to ensure that the modest travel expenses of those experts were absorbed by the current biennial budget.

AGENDA ITEM 75: UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND WORKS AGENCY FOR PALESTINE REFUGEES IN THE NEAR EAST:

- (a) REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONER-GENERAL (A/39/13)
- (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/39/575)
- (c) REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS CONCILIATION COMMISSION FOR PALESTINE (A/39/455)
- (d) REPORTS OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/39/375, 457, 411, 464 and Add.1, 538, 372 and 528)

8. Mr. RYDBECK (Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East) drew attention to the consensus among all Member States, and among the refugees themselves, on the fact that there would be no viable alternative to the UNRWA education, health and welfare services until a political settlement had been reached on the Palestine issue. As he had indicated in his foreword to the Agency's report (A/39/13), UNRWA symbolized international commitment to the welfare of the Palestine refugees.

9. The operational and financial difficulties which impeded the Agency's efforts to carry out its mandate included the factional fighting in various parts of Lebanon and the occupation of south Lebanon, where there were daily reports of death and destruction. In order to prevent further bloodshed, he fully endorsed the Secretary-General's suggestion that, following an eventual Israeli withdrawal, elements of UNIFIL should be immediately deployed in order to ensure the safety of the population, including the Palestine refugees living in camps.

10. Although UNRWA had phased out its emergency relief effort for the Palestine refugees in Lebanon, their needs were still acute. Almost 10 per cent of those registered in Lebanon were destitute and continued to receive food rations, blankets, clothing and assistance with housing.

11. In the past six months, the Agency had focused on helping the refugees in Lebanon to secure adequate schooling and health care and had embarked on self-support and income-generating projects, in co-operation with non-governmental organizations. The education subsidy had been increased to about 10 per cent of the cost to parents, and hospital subsidies had been raised. Thus far, the cost of those extra services had been absorbed by the regular budget, and delivery had been remarkably regular. Moreover, the refugees who had demonstrated against the discontinuation of emergency rations (see A/39/13, para. 14) were currently availing themselves of the education and health services.

(Mr. Rydbeck)

12. He expressed concern about the way in which the Agency's ability to pursue its tasks had been hampered by those in authority, in contravention of the immunities to which United Nations organizations were entitled. For example, the Sibliin Training Centre, the Agency's only vocational and teacher-training centre in Lebanon, was still being occupied by the militia of the Lebanese Progressive Socialist Party, and Israeli forces still occupied the Shajara School.

13. Communication between the Agency's field programme in Lebanon and its central installations in Beirut was essential, and, in that connection, he thanked UNIFIL for its valuable assistance with radio communications and helicopter service. In recent weeks, UNRWA had experienced a particular problem with the transport of supplies, vehicles and staff to south Lebanon because of the restriction on access imposed by the Israel Defence Forces. However, a pragmatic solution providing for the admission of supplies once a week seemed to be working, and he had been assured that the Israeli Government intended to facilitate the Agency's task.

14. Freedom of movement entailed an obligation on the part of the Agency to prevent any abuse of that important principle. By the same token, the United Nations had a duty to uphold the principles which must guide the functioning of its organs. However, the Agency had a responsibility both to the General Assembly and to the refugees themselves to ensure that it was able to carry out its mandate, and it was therefore obliged to arrive at a modus vivendi on certain issues.

15. As he had indicated in previous reports, the demolition of shelters was very distressing for the refugee community in the Gaza Strip. While the Agency did not object to measures to improve their living conditions, the refugees should be allowed to decide for themselves whether to take advantage of the new accommodations. He was therefore concerned about the reports that the Israeli authorities were using coercive measures to transfer refugees from camps to housing projects, frequently at their own expense and despite repeated assurances to the contrary. Through his representatives in the Gaza Strip, he had urged the Israeli authorities to cease all such actions.

16. As he understood it, agreement had been reached in principle to enable the refugees stranded on the Egyptian side of the border between the Sinai and the Gaza Strip to return to the Gaza Strip and to benefit fully from UNRWA services. Meanwhile, they would continue to receive limited services, on an interim basis.

17. Thanks to increased donations in cash, most notably from the European Community and the Government of Canada, the Agency had been able to improve its services to the Palestine refugees and to draw up plans to meet future needs. In that connection, he welcomed the suggestions made by the Joint Inspection Unit in its report on UNRWA (A/38/143 and Add.1). However, measured against the accumulated needs, the achievements of the past year, while improving the refugees' morale, had been modest.

18. In fact, improvements did not depend so much on an absolute increase in funds as on the availability of cash, the flexibility to allocate it in a properly planned fashion and the timely payment of pledges. Indeed, investments in construction could result in a subsequent reduction of costs.

(Mr. Rydbeck)

19. Seventy-one per cent of the Agency's budget represented staff costs, particularly for teachers as a result of the growing school population. Its locally recruited staff was paid according to the prevailing rates in the area, not according to the best rates. While he had not accepted the level of increases proposed by the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC), increases had recently been implemented, entirely within the budgeted amount for 1984. A second increase in 1985 would bring the total to two thirds of the ICSC recommendation.

20. It was generally agreed that, if UNRWA collapsed, the instability in the Near East would be alarmingly aggravated. However, at a time of cost increases, its income had fallen. In 1984, Governments had provided only 68 per cent of its budget, as compared with almost 82 per cent in 1980. By exercising tight control, the Agency would manage in 1984, but he appealed to Member States to co-operate fully with his fund-raising efforts and to ensure that UNRWA had the necessary resources to carry out its task in 1985.

21. Mr. BERGH JOHANSEN (Norway), speaking in his capacity as Rapporteur of the Working Group on the Financing of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, introduced the report of the Working Group (A/39/575). Part II gave a brief summary of the activities of the Working Group in 1984. Part III provided information on the financial situation of UNRWA as described to the Working Group by the representative of UNRWA on 3 October 1984. Unless further contributions were pledged before the end of the year, the budgetary deficit would stand at \$54.2 million. The increase in expenditures stemmed largely from higher staff costs due to continued inflation in the area. Since the drawing down of cash balances might not be possible any more in 1985, the most effective way of bridging the gap between expenditure and income in 1985 was for Governments to increase contributions.

22. Part IV of the report contained the concluding remarks by the Working Group on the financial situation of UNRWA. The Working Group was very pleased to note that the Commissioner-General expected to be able to maintain the Agency's operations until the end of 1984 without any major reductions in services.

23. Nevertheless, it had taken note of the disturbing continued downward trend in contributions from the international community. Under those circumstances, the Working Group was seriously concerned at the prospects for 1985 because the Agency would be unable to avoid a financial crisis if current trends in expenditures and income continued. The Working Group was confident that the Commissioner-General would, as in the past, maintain the strictest economies and use available resources in the most efficient manner. Nevertheless, the international community must increase its financial support if UNRWA was to continue its operations.

24. The Commissioner-General, the Working Group and the refugees themselves had emphasized that the educational programme of UNRWA should have the highest priority. The willingness of some of the major contributors to convert their contributions in kind into cash contributions had been decisive in maintaining the education programme at its current level. It was hoped that the contributors concerned would continue to assist the Agency in that regard.

(Mr. Bergh Johansen, Norway)

25. Pending a political settlement of the refugee problem, the humanitarian services of UNRWA were indispensable. In the meantime, however, the States Members of the United Nations must make the necessary financial contributions to ensure the Agency's viability. The Working Group strongly urged all Governments to recognize the serious financial situation confronting UNRWA and to respond to it.

26. Mr. SALAH (Jordan) said that the documentation on the agenda item confirmed once again that there were two basic facts that required prompt and decisive action: the increasing aggravation of the Palestine refugee problem and the difficult financial situation of UNRWA.

27. At the root of the problem were Israel's refusal to allow the Palestine refugees to return, in accordance with paragraph 11 of General Assembly resolution 194 (III), and its continuing occupation of Arab territory. Moreover, the Palestine refugees were being subjected to additional hardships by the Israeli occupation authorities in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and Lebanon.

28. Israel's persistent refusal to implement General Assembly resolution 194 (III) had led to the continued displacement of the refugees and the third and fourth generations were now born in exile. Israel had also persisted in acts of violence and oppression against Palestine refugees, such as the repeated imposition of curfews, arbitrary arrests, the destruction of dwellings and the relocation of camps.

29. Israel had not spared UNRWA from harassment and interference in its activities. In its ongoing endeavour to liquidate the refugee issue, Israel was trying to destroy UNRWA as an institution caring for Palestine refugees. The report of the Commissioner-General contained numerous examples of Israeli hostility not only to the refugees themselves but to UNRWA as an institution that helped them to endure the difficult circumstances of exile pending their return. Israel had not only caused the displacement of the Palestinian people and the continuance of that displacement but was destroying all that that people had built with the assistance of the international community and its Arab brothers to shelter itself from the elements.

30. The reports of the Secretary-General contained in documents A/39/372 and 457 contained examples of other Israeli practices directed against Palestine refugees, such as the destruction of shelters, the murder of children and the demolition of camps and the relocation of their refugee inhabitants. The intention behind that plan, which had come to be known as the Ben Porat plan, was to abolish the Palestinian camps in the West Bank and Gaza. Israel wished to eliminate the permanent symbol of its aggression represented by the camps and their refugee inhabitants and had therefore set about demolishing them.

31. There was information that the so-called Israeli civil administration in the occupied territories had recently stepped up its efforts to relocate the inhabitants of the camps to new projects outside them. Some of the inhabitants of Amal camp in Khan Yunis had received notice to evacuate their homes and the Israeli authorities had begun construction of a number of housing projects to the north of Gaza to absorb the inhabitants of Beach and Jabalia camps.

(Mr. Salah, Jordan)

32. Israel's purpose in demolishing the Palestinian camps and transferring their inhabitants to other areas was a precise replication of the bantustan policy of the racist Government of South Africa. The true nature of Israel's intentions was therefore apparent, as was the falsity of the humanitarian façade with which it sought to conceal them.

33. Although UNRWA deserved recognition for its efforts in providing services to Palestine refugees, it was clear from the report of the Commissioner-General that the total amount contributed by the international community to the 2 million Palestine refugees over a period of more than 32 years was \$2.1 billion or about \$50 per refugee per year. That figure was not enough to provide refugees with even the lowest acceptable standard of living. Nevertheless, at a time when the Palestine refugee problem was becoming exacerbated, there had been an appreciable lowering in the standard of services and care provided by the Agency. Rations had been suspended and social welfare programmes, the construction of training centres and health care programmes had been frozen. His delegation hoped that those responsible for planning Agency activities and programmes would not, in proposing concentration on the education programme, which was indeed of extreme importance, forget the importance of other services which had to be provided in order to ensure the sound social basis which would give true meaning to the Agency's educational activities.

34. Although the role of UNRWA had originally been intended as a temporary one, events in the region in the last few years had reaffirmed the need for it to continue to function and to be provided with the necessary resources pending a just political solution enabling the Palestine refugees to return to their homes. The difficult situation of the Agency was entirely attributable to the means by which it was funded, namely voluntary contributions. The Agency's financial deficit, instead of making it reduce services, should give it the impetus to seek more assured and more permanent sources of funding.

35. His delegation was grateful to the Commissioner-General for his agreement in principle with the request for the resumption of the ration distribution to refugees in Jordan. His Government, and those of the other Arab States, could not accept a reduction in programmes as a solution to the Agency's financial difficulties. The existence of the Agency and the continuation of its programmes at the required level was the first priority, followed by the task of seeking sources of funding.

36. Jordan, which had borne the brunt of the Palestinian problem and the consequences of the displacement of the Palestine refugees, had done much to provide those refugees with shelter and a life of dignity pending their return. The services provided and contributions made by Jordan could not and need not be fully reflected in the report of the Commissioner-General. Jordan did what it had to do in fulfilment of its national commitment, and such was the basis of its attitude towards UNRWA and of its co-operation with it. Israel, which had caused the refugee problem had, in contrast, a negative attitude towards it and, consequently, towards UNRWA itself, as had been brought out in the Commissioner-General's report.

(Mr. Salah, Jordan)

37. It appeared from the reports of the Secretary-General contained in documents A/39/455, A/39/464 and Add.1 and A/39/528 that the refusal of Israel to co-operate was the only obstacle to progress on the matters in question. Israel was apparently determined to prevent the establishment of the University of Jerusalem in spite of the pressing need for it.

38. His delegation believed that something must be done and that the United Nations should be able to adopt a position in keeping with the provisions of the United Nations Charter with respect to Israel's continued obstinacy in ignoring the will of the international community.

39. Mr. ABOUCHAER (Syrian Arab Republic) expressed his Government's great appreciation for the work carried out by UNRWA in difficult circumstances and with limited resources. The question of the Palestine refugees remained a source of tension and instability in the Middle East jeopardizing international peace and security. No United Nations resolutions on Palestine had been implemented, because Israel continued to refuse to recognize the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, particularly the right to return to their homeland and to establish their own independent State. The United Nations had played a role in bringing about the tragedy of the Palestinian people by adopting an erroneous decision leading to the establishment of an alien Zionist aggressive entity in Palestine, and, therefore, should bear the responsibility for the efficient functioning of UNRWA.

40. With regard to the report of the Commissioner-General of UNRWA (A/39/13) his delegation reiterated its objection to the submission by the Commissioner-General of his draft report to the Israeli occupation authorities, in view of the political implications of that practice, and to the special treatment accorded to the comments of Israel which could be noted in the last paragraph of the letter of transmittal. Israel's comments would not help solve the question of the Palestine refugees because Israel was the usurping occupying Power and responsible for the plight of those refugees. The effect of Israeli distortions of facts could be seen, for example, in paragraphs 3, 132 and 135 of the report. Furthermore, the report failed to reflect adequately the comments made by the Arab delegations at the meeting of the Advisory Commission of UNRWA held in Jordan in August 1984.

41. He shared the views expressed by the Chairman of the Advisory Commission of UNRWA in his letter to the Commissioner-General, particularly with regard to the importance of the Agency's fulfilment of its obligations to the Palestine refugees until a just solution to their problem was found, in accordance with United Nations resolutions, and with regard to the affirmation of the responsibility of the international community to enable UNRWA to continue to carry out its tasks and to recommence ration distribution to all refugees throughout the area of operations. His Government also shared the Commission's deep concern at the arbitrary practices to which the refugee camps, particularly those in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, were exposed.

42. Paragraph 3 of the foreword seemed to imply a desire to gradually transfer the responsibilities of the Agency to the host Arab States so that the international

(Mr. Abouchaer, Syrian Arab Republic)

community could abandon its responsibility for meeting the needs of the Palestinian refugees. Syria totally rejected any such approach. It was gratifying to note the statement in paragraph 4 of the foreword that the Agency was, above all, the symbol of international commitment to the welfare of the Palestine refugees and to a just resolution of their plight. Nevertheless, he wondered why the Agency did not always carry out its tasks on the basis of that commitment. If UNRWA was strictly a humanitarian institution, why were its services decreasing year after year? The international community, particularly the colonial Powers responsible for the creation of Israel, should provide the Agency with the funds to carry out its humanitarian task.

43. He expressed concern that the discontinuation of the emergency rations referred to in paragraph 14 of the report and wondered when such practices would stop. The general ration distribution could not be considered a lower priority programme. It was hoped that the Commissioner-General would resume the general ration distribution in accordance with General Assembly resolution 38/83 E. Furthermore, the planning of the Agency's operations fell within the competence of the General Assembly, not of the Commissioner-General. The reduction of services was only a pretext for phasing out the work of the Agency by transferring the responsibility for its services to the host Arab States. His Government rejected all attempts to reduce or eliminate the services of the Agency in any area.

44. By the admission of the Commissioner-General the services of the Agency were at their lowest level and could not be reduced further, particularly after the complete elimination of the secondary education programmes several years earlier. He called upon the Agency to try to improve and expand its services and urged the international community to meet its obligations in that area. His delegation supported the comments made in that regard in the report of the Working Group on the Financing of UNRWA (A/39/575).

45. It seemed that each year the Agency announced its intention to reduce some services or eliminate others because of a budget deficit. The international community must assume the responsibility for that problem and bring about a lasting solution. The recurring shortfall in the budget stemmed from inflation and the dwindling contributions of the international community. If the Palestine refugees had been able to obtain the revenue from their properties, the budget deficit of the Agency would have been met. The problem of the Palestinian people had imposed on Arab States, particularly the Arab host States, financial burdens which were larger than the contributions of the international community to the Agency. It was regrettable that the report did not accord sufficient importance to the contributions of the Arab host States. Instead, it emphasized the less significant contributions from international organizations.

46. The Syrian Arab Republic hosted approximately one quarter of a million Palestine refugees. Only a small part of the responsibility for them was borne by UNRWA. Syria was a small developing country with limited resources. It had been forced to assume financial burdens which exceeded the contributions from the most generous donors to UNRWA. It was gratifying to note that the report of the Commissioner-General included information on the services provided by the Syrian Arab Republic to Palestine Refugees.

(Mr. Abouchaer, Syrian Arab Republic)

47. The financial contributions to the Agency from some States were almost negligible in comparison to the assistance which they provided to Israel. The most conspicuous example of that was the United States, which had increased its annual assistance to Israel to \$3 billion and had gradually reduced its contribution to the budget of the Agency over the past three years.

48. One of the solutions to the chronic budget deficit of the Agency was to finance the cost of local staff from the regular budget of the United Nations. The ideal solution would be to make the budget of the Agency part of the regular budget of the United Nations.

49. The report made no reference to the need to relocate the headquarters of the Agency to its former site within its area of operations in accordance with General Assembly resolution 38/83 A. The reasons which had necessitated the temporary transfer of the headquarters outside the area of operations were no longer valid. His delegation, therefore, called for the speedy implementation of that resolution, particularly since the relocation would help reduce costs.

50. He noted with satisfaction the references in the report to the aggressive actions by the Israeli occupation authorities against the Palestinian refugee camps in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, such as the punitive demolition of refugee shelters, the storming and closing of vocational training centres and the interrogation of staff. Nevertheless, the Commissioner-General had failed to link the demolition measures with the broad scheme of the Israeli Ministerial Commission aimed at eliminating refugee camps in the West Bank and resettling the refugees elsewhere. The statement in paragraph 141 of the report that the Agency supported voluntary moves to Israeli housing projects gave particular cause for concern. The Agency must not become an instrument for the elimination of the question of Palestine refugees, which was a goal of the colonial Powers that had created Israel.

51. Paragraph 168 of the report criticized action taken by the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic requiring an official of UNRWA to leave the country. Such a statement constituted interference in the internal affairs of Syria, which would not take such action without valid reasons. His delegation reiterated its objection to the practice of listing Israel among the States providing direct Government assistance to Palestine refugees. He, therefore, called for the deletion of the references to Israel in tables 11 and 15 in the annex I of the report because Israel was the usurping Power which had deprived the Palestinians of their human and national rights. In that regard, he reaffirmed his Government's position that Israel must abide by the provisions of General Assembly resolution 194 (III) particularly paragraph 11.

52. He hoped that the Commissioner-General would take his delegation's comments into consideration in his next report. He called for the implementation of the General Assembly resolution 38/83, particularly with regard to the resumption of ration distribution, the revenues derived from Palestine refugee properties, the protection of Palestine refugees, and assistance to Palestine refugees. Lastly, he expressed satisfaction with the laudable work carried out by the Agency and associated himself with the appeal of the Commissioner-General to the international community to ensure that the Agency was provided with the necessary resources.

53. Mr. SHAKER (United Arab Emirates) said that there had been no improvement in the tragic situation of the Palestine refugees over the past 37 years and that the Israeli authorities continued to practise various forms of oppression against hundreds of thousands of them in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and south Lebanon.

54. Since the Palestine refugee problem was basically one of a usurped homeland and a people forcibly expelled from that homeland, a genuine solution could not be found in the provision of humanitarian assistance alone. An end must be put to Israeli lawlessness in the region, so as to enable the Palestinian people to exercise its right to self-determination and sovereignty in its own land.

55. The international community had legal, ethical, political, economic and cultural responsibilities towards the Palestinian people. Until such time as it could regain its legitimate rights, the international community was therefore called upon to continue providing basic services to the Palestine refugees.

56. Israeli policy in the occupied Palestinian territories had the aim of destroying Palestinian identity by destroying the social, economic, political and cultural bases of Palestinian society. That policy sought to create intolerable conditions in order to force those who remained to leave.

57. Israel was, essentially, an aggressive expansionist State which did not content itself with expelling the Palestinians from their homes but continued to pursue them outside Palestine. The Israeli aggression against south Lebanon was no more than one in a series of acts of aggression against the Palestinians who had taken refuge there.

58. In its resolution 38/83 I, the General Assembly had urged the Secretary-General to undertake effective measures to guarantee the safety and security and the legal and human rights of the Palestine refugees in all the territories under Israeli occupation. It was clear from the report of the Secretary-General on the protection of Palestine refugees (A/39/538) that he had been unable to undertake such measures because of lack of co-operation on the part of the Israelis. The number of incidents affecting Palestine refugees in south Lebanon had increased sharply in spite of appeals made to Israel, in view of its responsibilities as occupying Power, to stem the ongoing campaign of harassment and violence. Israel had inflamed the situation by stationing units within the refugee camps.

59. The Israeli authorities had also interfered with the activities of UNRWA itself. Restrictions had been imposed on the duty travel of UNRWA staff to the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and the practice of summoning staff for interrogation on several consecutive days had continued. The protection of staff in areas under Israeli occupation in Lebanon continued to be a source of concern to the Agency.

60. The Agency's educational programme had not been exempt from the hostility of the Israeli authorities. In the West Bank, they had prevented the reopening of schools and ordered the closure of others on various pretexts. Education had been disrupted by curfews, the withholding of import permits for textbooks, the interrogation of students, and the closure of youth activity centres.

(Mr. Shaker, United Arab Emirates)

61. Because of the Israeli position on the matter, no progress had been made in establishing the University of Jerusalem for Palestine refugees in accordance with General Assembly resolution 35/13 B. The attitude of the Israeli authorities towards institutions of higher education had become well known and their objection to the proposed university was therefore not surprising. The establishment of such an institution was urgently required in order to meet the needs of the Palestine refugees for higher education, and his delegation called upon the General Assembly to take the necessary steps at its present session to implement the resolution in question.

62. The Israeli authorities were attempting to destroy UNRWA as a symbol of international commitment to the cause of the Palestine refugees. Pending a just and permanent solution to the question of Palestine, his delegation considered that prime responsibility for the funding of UNRWA should devolve on those States which had played a decisive role in creating Israel and which had failed to deter it from persisting in its crimes against the Palestinian people. The budget of the Agency should become an integral part of the regular United Nations budget.

63. His delegation called upon the States of the world to support the cause of the Palestinian people, its defiance of continued attempts at expulsion, and its legitimate resistance under the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization.

64. Mr. CHAMMAS (Lebanon), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that clarification was needed, at the present stage of the debate, concerning UNRWA headquarters. With regard to the last paragraph of the letter from the Chairman of the Advisory Commission of UNRWA to the Commissioner-General, reproduced in the front matter of the Commissioner-General's report, his delegation hoped that the situation would soon permit the return of UNRWA headquarters to its former site.

65. He would like the Commissioner-General to supply, at a future meeting of the Committee, clarification of the last paragraph of the letter of transmittal of his report. He would like to know, in particular, precisely at what stage the draft report was shown to representatives of the Government of Israel and their comments were given consideration. Did that take place before, after or at the same time as the report was submitted to the Advisory Commission?

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.