

United Nations
**GENERAL
ASSEMBLY**

TWENTY-FIFTH SESSION

Official Records

**SPECIAL POLITICAL COMMITTEE, 735th
MEETING**



Friday, 27 November 1970,
at 3.35 p.m.

NEW YORK

Chairman: Mr. Abdul Samad GHAUS
(Afghanistan).

AGENDA ITEM 35

**United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine
Refugees in the Near East: report of the Commissioner-
General (continued) (A/8013, A/8040, A/8084 and
Add.1, A/SPC/140, A/SPC/141, A/SPC/L.196)**

1. Mr. ZUBERI (India) said that the annual discussion of the problems besetting the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, whose very existence now appeared to be in jeopardy, was a constant reminder of the fact that justice had not yet been secured for the Palestine refugees. The plight of those refugees was a political as well as a humanitarian problem which was inextricably intertwined with issues which had a direct bearing on peace and stability in western Asia. Large tracts of Arab territory were under Israeli occupation and more than a million people had been displaced, some for the third time in twenty years. His delegation could not accept the acquisition of territories by force, and was deeply distressed that General Assembly resolution 194 (III), which laid down the principles of repatriation and compensation for the refugees, and 2252 (ES-V) had not been implemented. The continued plight of the homeless refugees was a matter of profound sorrow and concern to the people of India.

2. The Palestine refugee problem would not be solved until peace returned to the troubled region of the Middle East. The Security Council had adopted unanimously resolution 242 (1967), which provided the basis for a lasting peace in the area, but subsequent events had been most discouraging. The continued occupation by Israel of Arab territories which it had conquered by force meant continued misery for the refugees, which, in turn, would mean an ever-growing demand for financial resources for

UNRWA. The Agency's monthly food ration was now distributed to approximately 837,000 persons, and the number of persons entitled to such help, according to the criteria set by UNRWA itself, exceeded that figure. Many of the Agency's services had been greatly restricted and some had been discontinued, but one bright spot was the progress of education among the UNRWA refugees. In 1970, the impressive figure of 219,378 refugee children had been enrolled in UNRWA schools. It would be a great tragedy if the Agency's education programme was curtailed for lack of funds.

3. While agreeing that everything should be done to ease UNRWA's financial problems, his delegation wished to draw attention to a change in the political dimensions of the Palestine refugee problem which was reflected in the attitude of the refugees themselves. His delegation hoped that negotiations through Ambassador Jarring would soon be resumed and would result in the implementation of resolution 242 (1967) of the Security Council, and a just and lasting peace in the area. Until a permanent solution to the refugee problem had been found, however, UNRWA could not be allowed to disintegrate. India would therefore maintain its contributions to the Agency for 1971 at the same level as in previous years. In addition to financial aid, it also provided several university scholarships every year to the Palestine refugees. However, those scholarships, possibly because they were given through host Governments and Palestine organizations, were not mentioned in the report of the Commissioner-General (A/8013).

4. He associated himself with the tributes paid to the Commissioner-General, his staff and UNRWA field workers for the magnificent work they had done, and asked the Commissioner-General to convey his delegation's sympathy to the families of the eleven staff members of UNRWA who had lost their lives during the disturbances in Jordan in September 1970.

The meeting rose at 3.45 p.m.