



Tuesday, 22 January 1952, at 10.30 a.m.

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Chairman : Mr. Selim SÄRPER (Turkey).

Palestine : (b) Assistance to Palestine refugees : report of the Director of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (A/1905, A/1905/Add.1, A/AC.53/L.36) [*concluded*]

[Item 24]*

1. The CHAIRMAN announced that the list of speakers was closed.

2. Mr. EBAN (Israel) said that his delegation would not participate in the meeting. A week earlier the Government of Israel had appealed to the President of the General Assembly to intercede with the Government of Iraq, in the interests of humanity and regional harmony, to spare the lives of two Jews who had been condemned to death in Iraq. The President of the General Assembly, in answer to the appeal, had requested the head of the Iraqi delegation to convey the representations of the Government of Israel to the Government of Iraq. On several subsequent occasions the President of the General Assembly had informed the delegation of Israel that the head of the Iraqi delegation had promised to convey his Government's reply. The United Nations had just received that reply : on the previous day the news had been received that the two young Jews had been publicly hanged in Baghdad.

3. The CHAIRMAN, calling the representative of Israel to order, said that he suffered most deeply at the death of another human being, but his duty as Chairman was clear : he must rule the Israel representative's remarks out of order, as he had done when similar matters had been raised in 1949, and more recently in November last in the *Ad Hoc* Political Committee. The matter raised had no connexion at all with the item under consideration, and dealt with an issue within the domestic jurisdiction of a Member State.

4. Mr. EBAN (Israel) suggested that he was entitled to explain the reasons of conscience restraining his country, which was directly interested in the item under consideration, from participating in the discussion. As an expression of its grief and protest against the revolting action to which he had just referred, so carried out as to inflict public degradation on human dignity, the delegation of Israel would withdraw from the meeting and would not take part in any meetings that morning.

The delegation of Israel withdrew from the meeting.

5. Mr. AL-JAMALI (Iraq) affirmed that the point raised by the representative of Israel had no connexion whatsoever with the work of the Committee. The criminals referred to had been executed in pursuance of the sentence of the competent court, and the matter was within the domestic jurisdiction of Iraq.

6. The CHAIRMAN said that the incident had already been closed by the ruling he had given.

7. Mr. CARDOZA (Guatemala) thought that the meeting could not be continued in the absence of one of the parties directly interested in the problem. In the interests of impartiality and fairness, and without taking a position with regard to the events in Iraq, his delegation moved the adjournment of the meeting so that the discussion could be continued later at the appropriate high level.

8. The CHAIRMAN called upon the Committee to vote on the motion to adjourn, moved by the representative of Guatemala.

The motion was rejected by 24 votes to 3, with 20 abstentions.

9. Mr. RODRIGUEZ FABREGAT (Uruguay) said that his delegation had always protested against the death penalty. In cases like the one to which the representative of Israel had referred, execution was bound to impair relations between States. His delegation had been prepared to do whatever it could to prevent the

* Indicates the item number on the General Assembly agenda.

carrying out of the sentence, because the death penalty had been abolished in Uruguay and was regarded in that country not as a legitimate incident of judicial procedure but as an arbitrary act of those who were powerful in the world. For the same reasons the Uruguayan delegation was continuing to request the commutation of death penalties in Spain.

10. The CHAIRMAN called the Uruguayan representative to order, pointing out that the subject with which he was dealing had been ruled out of order. Moreover, the Uruguayan representative was involving still other States in the matter. He would be grateful if the Uruguayan representative would confine himself to an explanation of his vote.

11. Mr. RODRIGUEZ FABREGAT (Uruguay) regretted that the penalty had been executed in the case mentioned by the representative of Israel. The Chairman was possibly right in his view that consideration of such cases was not within the Committee's terms of reference; nevertheless, the Uruguayan delegation could not completely agree, since it felt that it was the United Nations duty to do its utmost to ensure international unity. His delegation protested against all death sentences in whatever country they were carried out and whomsoever they affected, because the right to live was inherent in the dignity of the human person.

12. The CHAIRMAN said that the incident was closed.

13. Mr. HOOD (Australia) stated his delegation's attitude to the new draft resolution submitted jointly by France, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States (A/AC.53/L.36).

14. In substance the text appeared to the Australian delegation to be satisfactory. It was a definite advance in the handling of the problem, and it was to be hoped that its adoption would lead for the first time to prospects of a final settlement. The prolonged debates held on the matter for three years were not necessarily regrettable. The position reached by the Committee was without doubt partly due to the efforts made in the previous week, but partly also to the earlier discussions.

15. The proposals contained in the report of the Director and the Advisory Commission of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (A/1905/Add.1) offered substantial hope if not of a final solution at least of a great and early improvement in the situation of the refugees. The Australian Government had always shown its sympathy for the Palestine refugees and was anxious that everything should be done to improve their living conditions and to offer them the hope of a final settlement. As recently as June 1951 it had undertaken to contribute goods and services to the value of about \$600,000 to the programme of relief and reintegration. Those goods and services would be available to the Relief and Works Agency for the implementation of the programme now proposed.

16. The Australian delegation attached special importance to the attainment of a final settlement of the refugee problem and thought that such a settlement might open the way to fruitful discussions of all the

other differences between Israel and the Arab States. The United Nations could not and should not support the refugees indefinitely. For that reason his delegation welcomed the joint draft resolution before the Committee. While recognizing the United Nations' concern with the refugee problem and the rights of the refugees to repatriation and compensation, the proposal put forward a definite programme offering the refugees better living conditions in the immediate present and self-support in the future. The Australian delegation understood that those results would be attained within a reasonable and specified period, and trusted that every effort would be made to keep as closely as possible to the time-table indicated.

17. Mr. Hood pointed out that the proposed programme would not be successful, as the Director of the Relief and Works Agency had made clear, unless all the States concerned in the area and all other Members of the United Nations gave it their whole-hearted support. He praised the constructive work the Director of the Agency had already carried out, and hoped that the governments concerned would co-operate with him in implementing the programme. For those reasons the Australian delegation would support the joint draft resolution.

18. Mr. RODRIGUEZ FABREGAT (Uruguay) stated that he would not undertake to survey the report submitted by the Director of the Relief and Works Agency (A/1905) on which the Committee had already spent much time. The Committee's work had been carried out in two phases: it had first studied the report together with the first draft resolution submitted by France, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States (A/AC.53/L.34); and it was at the moment considering the new draft resolution submitted by those delegations, which had slightly amended their original draft. The Committee must try to reach a well-balanced solution taking into account the humanitarian aspect of the problem so clearly outlined by the United States representative (43rd meeting). All the extraneous elements must therefore be disregarded and the problem considered as a humanitarian question in which the United Nations as a whole was interested.

19. Mr. Rodriguez Fabregat warned his colleagues of the danger of adopting resolutions which would create new obstacles to peace and hinder progress towards agreement under United Nations auspices. Some of the resolutions already adopted had become a new source of dissension. The Uruguayan delegation did not wish to cast its vote for any solution which might aggravate the Palestine problem or prevent the parties from coming to an understanding.

20. The Uruguayan delegation would vote for the new joint draft resolution before the Committee. It was pleased to note that paragraph 3 of the operative part referred to the constitutional processes of the countries of the Near East. Its vote would therefore emphasize the need for safeguarding constitutional processes when granting credit for the implementation of the programme. The slowness of constitutional procedure had not prevented Uruguay from responding on several

occasions to United Nations appeals and from contributing generously to the financing of UNICEF, the United Nations Technical Assistance Programme, and the programme for the rehabilitation of Korea. The contribution of Uruguay to the three-year programme of assistance to the Palestine refugees would also be subjected to the constitutional processes of Uruguay.

21. Mr Rodriguez Fabregat hoped that the refugees would, as a result of United Nations efforts, soon revert to a normal life.

22. Mr. CHOUKAYRI (Syria) expressed his delegation's gratitude to the Director of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for the devotion, sincerity and integrity with which he had endeavoured to carry out the task assigned to him. In his statement (42nd meeting), Mr. Blandford had told the truth about a problem of which the elements had long been misrepresented. He had arrived on the scene of events in the aftermath of those events, and had done everything possible to alleviate the sufferings of the refugees.

23. As Mr. Blandford had pointed out, about one million refugees were homeless. That figure might seem relatively small; but its importance would be appreciated if it were realized that it represented 80 per cent of a whole nation driven from its homeland. The problem was becoming more acute and more serious every day. Mr. Blandford had eloquently described the sufferings inflicted upon the refugees by the storms which had raged in the area. The tents and flimsy dwellings which had sheltered them had been destroyed; hundreds of thousands of men, women and children had been left without a roof over their heads and were wandering in the desert; many had died and some had been buried without any religious rites. During that time, a few kilometres away, the refugees' dwellings had been occupied by Jews, who were using their furniture and burning their wood to keep themselves warm. Admittedly the Jews had formerly been victims of persecution and tragedy; they had been driven from many countries or massacred. But it was in the Arab countries that they had found refuge, and Arab conquest had meant liberation to them. In Spain they had shared glory and later, decline with the Arabs. In modern times, in the darkest days of Palestine's history, when the Arabs had been driven from Palestine and their goods expropriated, the Arab Governments had not driven out the Jews and had protected their property. The sufferings of the Arab refugees caused by the storms had reawakened the conscience of the world to the great injustice which had been done; those storms were at the same time a warning to the United Nations, to the conscience of the world, and to the State of Israel. Oppression could only produce storms which would be even more violent and whose destructive force would be appalling.

24. Mr. Choukayri then passed to the new joint draft resolution. Some speakers, particularly the United States representative, had stressed that the object of the draft, in accordance with the proposals in the report of the Director of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency, was to provide the refugees with

shelter and work. He himself was convinced that the shelter offered to the refugees would never replace for them, the homes which they had been forced to abandon in Palestine. Those homes had meant to them sovereignty, independence, the fundamental freedoms and the right to defend those freedoms. He therefore felt that the joint draft resolution did not sufficiently take into account the dearest wishes of the refugees.

25. The United States representative had also said that splendid future possibilities lay before the refugees. But the only possibility for the refugees was to establish themselves permanently outside Palestine, a very dismal prospect for them, or to establish themselves provisionally outside Palestine until United Nations action made repatriation possible. If the joint draft resolution contained a promise of repatriation, he would note that fact with pleasure and he could only hope that the promise would be fulfilled. But even supposing that repatriation actually took place after the implementation of the proposed three-year programme, the refugees would have played the part of victims for seven years. The three years of exile which they had still to bear was far from being a bright prospect.

26. Mr. Choukayri noted the sympathy for the Arab refugees which the United States representative had expressed on behalf of his delegation. He stressed the generosity of the United States people, but pointed out that for the refugees money was only a palliative. They were appealing to the people of the United States to ensure that the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly were respected; they did not understand how the people of the United States could continue to give assistance, regardless of cost, to the population of Israel and thus in some sort countenance the refugees' exile.

27. It would be inhuman to ignore the plight of the Arab youth. To do so would be likely to foster a spirit of revenge and hatred. Young Arabs must not be able to say some day that the United Nations had been powerless to enforce recognition of the rights of the refugees; and history must not have to condemn the failure of the United Nations. He hoped that some day a delegation from the Holy Land of Palestine, consisting of Jews, Christians and Moslems, would take the seat which the Israel delegation had left at the beginning of the meeting.

28. Mr. LAWRENCE (Liberia) said that the new joint draft resolution was a practical approach to a problem affecting an area of exceptional strategic and political importance. The draft was in accordance with the spirit of the Charter, which recognized the supreme importance of man and his rights. The Liberian delegation would therefore vote for the draft resolution.

29. Mr. MOEKARTO (Indonesia) paid tribute to the Director and staff of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency and to the charitable organizations and specialized agencies which, by their joint efforts, had helped to alleviate the sufferings of the Palestine refugees. The fate of the Arab refugees was a matter of deep concern to his Government.

30. It appeared, however, that views differed on how best to assist the Palestine refugees. Some representatives recommended implementation of the resettlement programme drawn up by the Relief and Works Agency, which was designed to give the refugees not only shelter but also work and restore their self-respect; his delegation supported that humanitarian programme. Other representatives considered that primary consideration must be given to the refugees' desire to return to their homes. His delegation recognized that incontestable right of the refugees, which had been proclaimed and reaffirmed in earlier resolutions of the General Assembly and which derived from the principles embodied in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Each of those two approaches to the problem had its merits. The joint draft resolution was important because it reconciled the two methods of approach.

31. Paragraph 2 of the operative part noted the provisions of paragraph 11 of General Assembly resolution 194 (III), which recognized the right of the refugees to return to their homes, or, if they did not wish to do so, to receive compensation for the property they had lost. The paragraph also noted the provisions of paragraph 4 of General Assembly resolution 393 (V) relating to the reintegration of the refugees into the economic life of the Near East, either by repatriation or resettlement.

32. Furthermore, paragraph 3 of the operative part of the joint draft resolution recognized the concern of the United Nations in the problem of the Palestine refugees, and urged the Governments of the Near East countries to assist, with due regard to their constitutional processes, in the carrying out of the programme.

33. The Indonesian delegation therefore supported the joint draft resolution.

34. Mr. CORNER (New Zealand) said that his delegation would vote in favour of the new joint draft resolution. The New Zealand Government was acutely aware of the tragic situation in Palestine and the sufferings of the Arab refugees, and of the possible effects of that tragedy upon the maintenance of peace in the Near East.

35. While unable to make any commitment, he could give the assurance that his Government would earnestly consider the question of contributions. It had already contributed the equivalent of \$210,000 to refugee relief for 1951-52, while some governments, which had sponsored draft resolutions concerning assistance to Palestine refugees, had, to his surprise, not yet made any contribution.

36. The programme's chances of being translated into reality would influence his Government's decision concerning a further contribution. Unless the new programme met with general support, especially among the governments of the host countries, it could not be carried out successfully. Accordingly, the New Zealand Government welcomed the assurances to that effect given by the representatives of some of those States.

37. Mr. HOVEYDA (Iran) said that the problem of the Palestine refugees called for a prompt solution in

accordance with the resolutions previously adopted by the General Assembly and with resolution 194 (III) in particular.

38. His delegation associated itself with the tribute paid by several delegations to the work of the Director of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency. It also wished to pay a tribute to the conciliatory spirit shown by the sponsors of the new joint draft resolution, and would support that text.

39. It considered, however, that the problem of the Palestine refugees constituted a single and indivisible whole. It therefore hoped that the General Assembly would adopt the draft resolution already adopted by the Committee (A/AC.53/L.33), on the report of the Conciliation Commission, at the same time as the draft resolution on assistance to Palestine refugees.

40. Mr. SHALFAN (Saudi Arabia) said that his delegation would vote for the new joint draft resolution because it reaffirmed the continued concern of the United Nations with the problem of the Palestine refugees. His Government was prepared to make a material contribution to the implementation of the programme drawn up by the Director and the Advisory Commission of the Relief and Works Agency. It considered, however, that whatever the results of that programme, the political, social and economic rights of the refugees must be maintained in accordance with the provisions of the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly in 1948 and 1950, and of the draft resolution adopted on 15 January 1952 (41st meeting) by the *Ad Hoc* Political Committee with regard to the Conciliation Commission's report. His delegation attached particular importance to the latter resolution, as it felt that a just solution of the refugee problem based on the resolutions of the General Assembly must not be subject to bargaining.

41. The representative of Saudi Arabia wished to pay tribute to the sponsors of the joint draft resolution, who had demonstrated a spirit of compromise, and in particular to the United States representative for his tireless efforts to reach an understanding with the delegations of the Arab States.

42. Mr. AL-JAMALI (Iraq) stated that the case of the refugees was so eloquent in itself that it did not need a lengthy defence. The situation of the refugees had been eloquently described at the present meeting by the representative of Syria, and at the 45th meeting by Mr. Tannous, General Secretary of the representatives of the Palestine Arab refugees in Lebanon.

43. The United Nations was confronted in the Middle East with a serious moral and legal problem arising from the exposure of entire populations, without shelter or clothing, to cold, hunger and disease. On the other side of the line of demarcation, however, they could see the houses, fields and orchards from which they had been evicted and which were now occupied and exploited by others.

44. The responsibility for that tragic situation should be determined once and for all. There were two causes, one remote and the other immediate. The remote cause

was the Balfour Declaration of 1917 and the partition of Palestine in 1947, in other words, the exercise of power politics. As the representative of El Salvador had pointed out (45th meeting), the United Nations had incurred responsibility for the refugees' present situation and was under obligation to make good the damage caused to the refugees, restore their dignity and give them back their homes. The immediate cause of the refugees' present situation was the aggression, massacre and terrorism that had prevailed in Palestine even before the Arab States had intervened.

45. Responsibility having been established, the delegation of Iraq eagerly welcomed all humanitarian efforts and all constructive programmes for alleviating the sufferings of the refugees until a final solution of the problem, based on law and justice, was achieved.

46. The Iraqi delegation congratulated the Director of the Relief and Works Agency for the way in which he had dealt with the problem, but it could not agree with him in his allusion to the responsibility of the Arab States of the Middle East, or in his implication that the resettlement of the refugees in the Arab countries was final. The Arab States could not accept that view.

47. The draft resolution before the Committee could not claim to be a lasting solution of the problem. It was only a palliative measure. Only the return of the refugees to their homes, their full recovery of the enjoyment of their rights, and the implementation of the resolutions of the General Assembly, would enable the problem to be solved definitively and peace and stability restored in the Middle East.

48. Whatever solutions were adopted, however, it was important that the refugees should be treated humanely and that their living conditions should be improved until they could return to their homes. He therefore appealed to the Director of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency to re-examine the material conditions in which the refugees were living and to attend also to the problem of the 127,000 Arabs who were living in their homes but who, not being regarded as refugees, were receiving no assistance.

49. The Iraqi representative shared the view expressed by the Syrian representative at the 42nd meeting that the draft resolution before the Committee would be valueless if dissociated from the draft resolution on the report of the Conciliation Commission which the Committee had adopted on 15 January.

50. In conclusion, he appealed to the international conscience to ensure that the Palestine Arab refugees

were treated humanely and that their rights, particularly the right of self-determination, were respected. It was for the refugees themselves to decide their future. If the United Nations wished to remain faithful to its purposes and principles, its action must be guided by the desire of the refugees to return to their homes and lands.

51. The CHAIRMAN put to the vote the joint draft resolution submitted by France, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States (A/AC.53/L.36).

The draft resolution was adopted by 44 votes to none, with 7 abstentions.

52. Mr. MACDONNELL (Canada) explained that he had abstained from voting because his Government's instructions had not yet reached him. The Canadian delegation hoped, however, that it would be able to explain its position when the matter came up again for discussion at a plenary meeting of the General Assembly.

53. Mr. BOKHARI (Pakistan) explained that he had voted for the draft resolution, in the first place, because his delegation was glad to associate itself with the congratulations addressed to the Director of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency. He hoped that when Mr. Blandford and his colleagues returned to Palestine, they would forget the political aspects of the matter that had been evoked in the Committee—sometimes with too much feeling—and bear in mind only the humanitarian aspects. The Pakistani delegation had also voted for the draft because it attached great importance to paragraph 2 of the operative part, which confirmed the provisions of paragraph 11 of resolution 194 (III) and paragraph 4 of resolution 393 (V) of the General Assembly, thus making clear the meaning that should be attached to the expression "reintegration" of the refugees. Lastly, it had voted for the draft because it considered that the Palestine question was indivisible and that the problem of assistance to the refugees was inseparable from the political aspect.

54. Mr. AL-JAMALI (Iraq) said that he had voted for the draft resolution because, although it did not provide any final solution, it did suggest temporary action pending the return of the refugees to their homes. That was the aim towards which the efforts of the United Nations should be directed, and only thus would the refugees be enabled to recover their dignity in a normal life.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.