

982nd meeting

Friday, 21 November 1975, at 3.25 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. Roberto MARTINEZ ORDOÑEZ (Honduras).

A/SPC/SR.982

AGENDA ITEM 54

United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (*concluded*) (A/10114, A/10115, A/10268, A/SPC/L.336-338):

- (a) Report of the Commissioner-General (A/10013 and Corr.1);
- (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/10334);
- (c) Report of the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine (A/10271);
- (d) Report of the Secretary-General (A/10253)

CONSIDERATION OF DRAFT RESOLUTIONS (*concluded*) (A/SPC/L.336-338)

1. The CHAIRMAN informed the Committee that Somalia had joined the sponsors of draft resolution A/SPC/L.336 and that India, New Zealand, the Philippines and the Sudan had joined the sponsors of draft resolution A/SPC/L.337. He said that if there was no objection, he would suspend the meeting before putting the two draft resolutions to the vote so that any representatives wishing to explain their votes could have their names placed on the list of speakers.

The meeting was suspended at 3.30 p.m. and resumed at 3.35 p.m.

2. Mr. CRAIG (Ireland), speaking in explanation of vote before the vote, said that Ireland shared with its partners in the European Economic Community (EEC) a wish to see a just and peaceful settlement in the Middle East which would recognize the rights of all the parties. In a statement issued on 6 November 1973, the members of EEC, including Ireland, had set out the principles which they felt should underlie such a settlement. In particular, all the States in the region, including Israel, had a right to exist within secure and recognized frontiers, and means must be found to enable the Palestinian people to give political expression to their right to a national identity.

3. As the representative of Italy had indicated in his statement on 18 November (979th meeting) the nine States members of EEC were resolved to continue to support the activities of UNRWA. Ireland had for many years contributed to the Agency to the extent that its resources permitted, and it would continue to do so.

4. Draft resolution A/SPC/L.336, which was before the Committee, contained two main elements. In the first place, it called for the return of the displaced inhabitants to their homes and camps in the territories occupied by Israel since 1967. Since one of the basic principles contained in the joint statement made by the States members of EEC in 1973 was the need for Israel to end the territorial

occupation which it had maintained since the conflict of 1967, it was clear that his delegation was in favour of those paragraphs, which it regarded as central to the draft resolution.

5. In the second place, operative paragraph 5 of the draft resolution condemned Israeli military attacks on refugee camps and called upon Israel to desist from such attacks. The year before, a similar paragraph in the corresponding resolution (3331 D (XXIX)) had "deplored" Israeli attacks, and his delegation had voted for that resolution. The new wording was clearly stronger than that of the previous year; moreover, the vote on draft resolution A/SPC/L.336 was taking place a short time after certain other votes in the General Assembly which had been widely represented as part of an unfair campaign directed against Israel. For those reasons, his delegation wished to be very clear and explicit with regard to its vote and the reasons for it. His delegation was aware that, in addition to the attacks by Israel mentioned in the resolution, there had been violent attacks, often indiscriminate in character, on the civilian population in Israel, and he understood that responsibility for such attacks was accepted by groups which wished to establish Palestinian rights; it had been charged that those attacks had been directed from certain refugee camps. His delegation rejected such violent methods without qualification.

6. However, draft resolution A/SPC/L.336 referred to attacks by Israel on the refugee camps. The reports of the Commissioner-General (A/10013 and Corr.1) and the Secretary-General (A/10253) indicated that Israel had accepted responsibility for those attacks. Although it had been said that the attacks had been carried out as retaliation and therefore had a certain justification, his delegation, irrespective of its views on the conflict in the Middle East, considered them to be wrong. Inasmuch as the attacks had continued despite appeals by the General Assembly, his delegation had no option but to vote for the draft resolution.

7. The CHAIRMAN put draft resolution A/SPC/L.336 to the vote.

At the request of the representative of Kuwait, a recorded vote was taken by roll-call.

Kuwait, having been drawn by lot by the Chairman, was called upon to vote first.

In favour: Kuwait, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libyan Arab Republic, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mali, Mauritania, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Nepal, Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Somalia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukrainian Soviet Socia-

list Republic, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Cameroon, United Republic of Tanzania, Upper Volta, Yemen, Yugoslavia, Zaire, Zambia, Afghanistan, Algeria, Argentina, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burma, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, China, Congo, Cuba, Cyprus, Czechoslovakia, Dahomey, Democratic Yemen, Egypt, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Gambia, German Democratic Republic, Greece, Guinea, Guyana, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Ivory Coast, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kenya.

Against: Swaziland, United States of America, Israel.

Abstaining: Liberia, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Venezuela, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Germany (Federal Republic of), Iceland.

The draft resolution was adopted by 84 votes to 3, with 18 abstentions.

8. U OHN SEIN (Burma), speaking in explanation of vote, said that his delegation had voted for the draft resolution because it shared the concern of the international community at the plight of the Palestine refugees and supported efforts aimed at alleviating their sufferings pending the settlement of political problems in the area. His delegation supported the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people in Palestine to self-determination without external interference and to national independence and sovereignty. However, he wished to state for the record that his delegation had reservations with regard to operative paragraph 5 of the draft resolution just adopted.

9. Mr. PETHERBRIDGE (Australia) said that his delegation had abstained because the references in the draft resolution to Israeli attacks on Palestinian refugee camps gave only one part of a complicated situation in which attacks took place from both sides of the borders.

10. Mr. SERUP (Denmark) said that his delegation had been unable to vote for draft resolution A/SPC/L.336 because the condemnation expressed in operative paragraph 5 of Israel's military attacks on refugee camps clearly represented an exacerbation in relation to what had been said in previous resolutions. Furthermore, the draft resolution did not mention terrorist attacks on Israeli settlements or cities, and that gave it an unbalanced character.

11. Mr. KAMOSHIDA (Japan) said that his delegation had voted in favour of the draft resolution. With regard to paragraph 5, his delegation had listened carefully to the reasons given by the representative of Israel, but it could not recognize the idea of "defensive attack" in any circumstances. The Government of Japan was opposed to the use of force in international conflicts, with the exception of the cases specified in Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations.

12. Mr. RUDOLPH (Federal Republic of Germany) said that the positive attitude of the Federal Republic of Germany towards UNRWA was well known. It was because of that attitude that his delegation had co-sponsored draft

resolutions A/SPC/L.334 and A/SPC/L.337 and had voted in favour of draft resolution A/SPC/L.335. However, while it was deeply concerned over the sufferings of the Palestine refugees, it had been unable to vote in favour of draft resolution A/SPC/L.336, essentially for the same reasons which had led it to abstain the previous year in the vote on General Assembly resolution 3331 D (XXIX). Paragraph 5 of the draft resolution once again reflected a one-sided attitude, even more so because of the change in the wording.

13. Mr. BATTISCOMBE (United Kingdom) said that his delegation had abstained in the vote because it considered that the reference to Israeli attacks on refugee camps in paragraph 5 was one-sided and unbalanced in that it referred only to acts of violence committed by one side without mentioning those committed by the other side, which had provoked the raids it condemned. That did not alter the fact that the United Kingdom Government deplored the Israeli attacks, just as it deplored all acts of violence in the Middle East. If there was to be peace and a just and lasting settlement in that region, it was of vital importance that the cycle of violence and counter-violence should be brought to an end.

14. Mr. SHERER (United States of America) said that his delegation had voted against the draft resolution that had just been adopted because in paragraph 5 one of the complex and tragic problems arising from the conflict in the Middle East was treated in a one-sided manner and no mention was made of the acts of provocation. His delegation did not believe that unbalanced judgements could help to break the chain of reaction and counter-reaction which had caused so much suffering in the region.

15. Mr. VRAALSEN (Norway) said that his delegation was in general agreement with draft resolution A/SPC/L.336. Norway greatly appreciated the important work done by UNRWA and deplored the acts of violence committed by the parties, which made that work more difficult. However, it had abstained in the vote because it considered that paragraph 5 presented the problem of violence in a one-sided manner, in that it confined itself to condemning Israel instead of considering the problem in a wider and more appropriate context.

16. Mr. SCARANTINO (Italy) said that his delegation had voted in favour of the draft resolution because it supported the right of the refugees displaced after the war of 1967 to return to their homes. It had, however, reservations concerning paragraph 5, which it considered unbalanced, since it reflected only a partial view of the situation. His delegation wished to place on record that, while it condemned the Israeli military attacks on the refugee camps, it had the same attitude towards every other act of violence and, therefore, towards the acts committed by guerrillas against innocent civilians in Israeli territory. His delegation felt it was currently inappropriate to refer to the general problem of the crisis in the Middle East, but it wished to reiterate that, in order to achieve a just and lasting settlement and to restore the rights of the Palestinian people, it was essential that all sides put an end to acts of violence.

17. Mr. DINKELSPIEL (Sweden) said that while his delegation recognized the plight of the Palestine refugees

and their right to return to their homes in the territories occupied as a consequence of the 1967 hostilities, it had abstained in the vote because of the atmosphere prevailing in the Committee with regard to the question of the Middle East. His delegation deplored all acts of violence, including those mentioned in paragraph 5 of draft resolution A/SPC/L.336. It felt, however, that the paragraph in question was even more unbalanced than a similar paragraph in the resolution adopted at the twenty-ninth session by the General Assembly (3331 D (XXIX)). No mention was made of other acts of violence and only one side was condemned.

18. Mr. ESCOBAR (Colombia) said that his delegation reaffirmed the right of the Palestinian people to recover the territories occupied by Israel in 1967, and that Israel should give back those territories and return to its recognized frontiers. It deplored the sad plight of the Palestine refugees, a plight which should be brought to an end by means of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East. His delegation had, however, abstained in the vote because of the atmosphere in which the debate had taken place, because of the unjust and violent attacks against the people and nation of Israel which did not help to create conditions conducive to peace, and because of the wording of paragraph 5 of the draft resolution which one-sidedly condemned Israel and remained silent about the acts of violence and terrorism to which the Israeli population had been subjected, acts which deserved equal condemnation.

19. Mr. FITZ (Austria) said that his delegation was in agreement with much of draft resolution A/SPC/L.336. The Austrian Government deplored the sufferings of the refugees and had frequently helped to mitigate them. In keeping with its humanitarian policy, Austria supported the right of the Palestine refugees displaced in 1967 to return to their homes and had asked for steps to be taken towards that end. Furthermore, the Austrian Government had always deplored any act of violence, especially when it was directed against innocent civilians. Paragraph 5 of the draft resolution that had just been adopted, however, condemned one party without taking into account the fact that violence engendered violence and that all concerned should desist from such acts. Accordingly, his delegation had abstained in the vote in order to make it clear that the draft resolution was unbalanced and was not conducive to creating the atmosphere necessary for a solution to the problem of refugees in the Middle East.

20. Mr. MAGONGO (Swaziland) said that his delegation was in favour of peaceful negotiation. It had voted against draft resolution A/SPC/L.336 because it did not believe that it was just to condemn only one side.

21. The CHAIRMAN put draft resolution A/SPC/L.337 to the vote and said that, if there were no objections, he would take it that the Committee adopted it unanimously.

The draft resolution was adopted unanimously.

22. Sir John RENNIE (Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine

Refugees in the Near East) thanked all those who had commended the work of UNRWA and said that he would convey their words to the staff of the Agency, who had worked under great pressure. He pointed out that the meeting of the *Ad Hoc* Committee of the General Assembly for the Announcement of Voluntary Contributions to UNRWA would be held on 26 November and drew the Committee's attention to paragraph 5 of the annex to the letter sent by the Secretary-General to all Governments concerning the Agency's needs for 1976. In that paragraph the Secretary-General pointed out the serious consequences that could result if sufficient funds could not be found to meet those needs.

AGENDA ITEM 51

Comprehensive review of the whole question of peace-keeping operations in all their aspects: report of the Special Committee on Peace-keeping Operations (A/10366)

23. The CHAIRMAN suggested that the list of speakers on the item under consideration should be closed at the end of the following meeting. If there were no objections, he would take it that the Committee agreed to his suggestion.

It was so decided.

GENERAL DEBATE

24. Mr. ALFARARGI (Egypt), speaking as Rapporteur of the Special Committee on Peace-keeping Operations, first of all expressed his regret that, as indicated in paragraph 6 of the report (A/10366), it had not been possible to make further progress in the completion of agreed guidelines for peace-keeping operations. That lack of progress was not due to any lack of effort; the task of achieving agreed guidelines was a difficult one since the issues involved were fundamental. As a result, important differences of opinion had arisen between some members of the Working Group concerning basic political and institutional problems which needed further negotiations.

25. Despite that, he did not wish to express a pessimistic view regarding the future. He was sure that many members of the Special Committee shared his opinion and were determined to redouble their efforts to achieve concrete results. As indicated in paragraph 7 of the report, the members of the Special Committee felt that more time and greater accommodation were required to overcome existing differences and to reach agreement. In that same paragraph, it was stated that the Special Committee felt that special attention should be paid to the consideration of specific questions related to practical implementation of peace-keeping operations. That introduced a new concept which might provide a good basis for debate.

The meeting rose at 4.15 p.m.