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UNITED NATIONS CONCILIATION COMMISSION FOR PALESTINE

Letter dated 7 December 1954 addressed by the
Chairman of the Conciliation Commission to the
Representatives of Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon,
Saudi Arabia, Syria and Yemen

Sir,

I have the honour to inform you that the representative of Israel has transmitted to the Conciliation Commission for Palestine the text of an announcement made by the Government of Israel on 16 November 1954 relating to the procedures to be followed by persons wishing to apply for the release of absentee or refugee accounts held in banks in Israel, as well as for articles deposited for safe custody and the contents of safe deposit lockers.

The text of the announcement is enclosed herewith, together with a letter addressed by the Commission to the representative of Israel, and the Conciliation Commission would be grateful if you would transmit it to your Government for its information.

Please accept, Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Adil Derinsu

Chairman

United Nations Conciliation Commission
for Palestine

ENCLOSURE 1

November 16th, 1954

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE GOVERNMENT OF ISRAEL

On 27 September the Government of Israel announced its intention and on 3 November elaborated its decision to proceed with the release to absentee or refugee owners of the outstanding balance of their accounts with banks in Israel, together with articles deposited for safe custody and the contents of safe deposit lockers. The Government of Israel have since been in a position to consider practical proposals as to the measures for implementing their decision and they are now able to announce that the release procedure will be as follows:

All account holders who have already been receiving releases at the monthly rate of 50 pounds sterling and up to a maximum of 500 pounds sterling, will shortly receive a letter, addressed to them at the address given on their previous application form, enclosing a simple form of request for the release and transfer of the remaining balance held in their name. This form, when completed, should be submitted, either directly by the applicant or through any local organization he may select, to the nearest branch of Barclays Bank D.C.O. or of the Ottoman Bank or the London office of these two banks or through the nearest UNRWA office.

Account holders who have not so far submitted applications or whose applications were not eligible under the previous release scheme will be required to make an application in the manner specified above on special forms which should be available within two weeks at branches of Barclays Bank D.C.O. and the Ottoman Bank and at UNRWA offices in the countries bordering Israel. Application forms will be available at the London offices of the two banks. The Government of Israel will ensure that applications are dealt with as expeditiously as possible and certainly within 14 working days of receipt.

All amounts deducted under the 10% Compulsory Loan and all amounts which have been transferred to the Custodian of Absentee Property in respect of balances of accounts exceeding 500 pounds sterling, will be refunded and included in the final release.

The transfer of the amount released will be made in sterling, at the rate of one Israel Pound equals one pound sterling, in one payment.

Applicants requiring the release of articles deposited for safe custody or the contents of safe deposit lockers will also be required to complete a special application form. After verification by the bank and approval of the application by the Government of Israel the articles can be released in one of the following ways:

- (a) to the depositor himself on personal application;
- (b) to the representative of the depositor on production of an adequate letter of authority;
- (c) by posting the articles either to a bank nominated by the applicant or to the applicant himself on his written application, subject, of course, in all cases to compliance with the normal customs regulations in force at the time, but not to any Currency or Exchange Control regulations which for this purpose will not be applied in respect of any article released by the Israel Custodian of Absentee Property.

If, in terms of (a), the depositor wishes to make personal application the Government of Israel is prepared to facilitate this by providing an escort and transport if necessary for the depositor and his property.

The Government of Israel reserves its right to refuse entry to any person at its sole discretion.

ENCLOSURE 2

7 December 1954

Sir,

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of 30 November 1954, transmitting the text of the Israel Government's announcement of 16 November, in reply to the Commission's request for clarification made to you at its meeting of 25 November.

In the light of your notification of 30 November, it is now the Commission's understanding that the announcement of 16 November comprehends the extent of the agreement between Israel and the banks concerned relating to release procedures and the Commission is, accordingly, transmitting the text of the announcement, together with a copy of the present letter, to the representatives of the Arab Governments for their information. The Commission understands that the United Nations Relief and Works Agency and the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization are willing to furnish their co-operation to the same extent as previously, as is the Commission.

Please accept, Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

(Signed) . Adil Derinsu

Chairman

United Nations Conciliation Commission
for Palestine

Mr. Mordecai F. Kidron
Deputy Permanent Representative of Israel
to the United Nations
Delegation of Israel
11 East 70th Street
New York, N.Y.
