

# United Nations GENERAL ASSEMBLY

TWENTY-SECOND SESSION

Official Records

**SPECIAL POLITICAL COMMITTEE, 591st  
MEETING**



Friday, 15 December 1967,  
at 10.45 a.m.

**NEW YORK**

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*Chairman:* Mr. Humberto LOPEZ VILLAMIL  
(Honduras).

## AGENDA ITEM 34

Report of the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (continued) (A/6713, A/6723 and Corr.1, A/6723/Add.1 and Corr.1, A/6787 and Corr.1, A/SPC/L.155, A/SPC/L.156 and Add.1, A/SPC/L.157)

1. Mr. ZADOR (Hungary) said that the mere fact that the General Assembly was once again discussing the Palestine refugees showed that a solution remained to be found. The Agency had done much to help the refugees over the years, but relief could not solve the problem as such. Despite its humanitarian side, the problem was the product of political factors; otherwise it would not be being discussed in the Special Political Committee. His delegation's view on refugee questions had always been that the primary task of the United Nations was to promote the repatriation of the refugees. It had therefore consistently supported General Assembly and Security Council resolutions asking Israel to facilitate the return of the Palestine refugees to their homes, for which the activities of UNRWA were no substitute. Everyone knew how Israel had reacted to those resolutions.

2. The plight of the refugees could not be considered separately from the factors responsible for their being refugees. The representative of Israel had tried to unload the responsibility for that situation on the Arab countries. But no Arab country had ever invaded Israel, occupied its territory or expelled its citizens from their homes. It was Israel which had committed such acts of war against the neighbouring Arab countries. Hungary recognized the right of every nation to independent existence, but it would never recognize the right of any country to change its frontiers by war. Every State Member of the United Nations was bound by the Charter. His country had therefore rendered direct assistance to the Arab peoples' struggling to achieve independence and develop their countries. It was not Israel's existence which was in doubt, but that of several Arab States

threatened by Israel's repeated acts of aggression, as was shown by the continually increasing flow of refugees. Neither UNRWA nor any other organization could be expected to cope with that flow, and it was therefore the duty of the United Nations to stop it at its source, namely, to achieve the just settlement referred to in paragraph 2 (b) of Security Council resolution 242 (1967). In his delegation's view, such a settlement required the withdrawal of Israel's forces to the positions they had occupied before 5 June 1967. Only then could the humanitarian problem of the refugees be solved. In the meanwhile, his delegation would support draft resolutions designed to alleviate their hardships.

3. Mr. FRANZI (Italy) expressed his delegation's appreciation of the devotion shown by the Commissioner-General of UNRWA and his staff, and particularly of their efforts since the conflict in June 1967. The Commissioner-General's report (A/6713) showed that UNRWA was ready to pursue its activities and to expand them if the necessary financial means were provided. The expansion could take the form of improving the educational and training programmes and giving the necessary assistance to new refugees. Italy agreed in principle with such a programme for 1968 and, as stated at the recent Pledging Conference on 6 December 1967, would make a substantial contribution to it.

4. Italy welcomed the fact that the Agency had given special attention—often with success—to revising the lists of refugees, as requested on previous occasions by various delegations, including his own. It was unjustifiable that help should be given to people with means of support from other sources when there were those who really needed it. The expected deficit in UNRWA's 1968 budget would be some \$7 million, a high figure. But a very small effort and the renunciation of pointless positions of principle on the part of everyone, and in particular those who had not yet made a contribution, would suffice to cover it. Only then could the Agency, one of the best examples of international co-operation, fully accomplish its noble aims.

5. The Commissioner-General stressed in his report that it would be desirable for Governments to examine the possibility of planning long-term assistance programmes for the Agency, which would enable it to plan ahead and achieve better results at less expense. The Italian Parliament had already approved the yearly allocation of funds for the Agency up till 30 June 1969. Another suggestion was that part of the Agency's budget—administrative expenditure in particular—should be transferred to the regular United Nations budget if the necessary funds could not be obtained on a voluntary basis (see A/6713,

para. 9). Such a measure would substantially reduce the expected 1968 deficit. While the positions of principle of some delegations would make it difficult for it to win approval, his delegation hoped that they would reconsider the situation, because only then could UNRWA pursue its programme with some assurance and without drastic reductions.

6. His delegation was prepared to support a draft resolution consistent with the ideas it had outlined and had co-sponsored draft resolution A/SPC/L.156. It also looked forward to a political settlement in the Middle East, which was the only way of ending the refugee problem. Such a settlement must be based on the relevant United Nations resolutions, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the rules of international law.

7. Mr. CHAMMAS (Lebanon) expressed his delegation's satisfaction at the work done by the Commissioner-General of UNRWA and his staff under difficult conditions, especially since the aggression committed by Israel on 5 June 1967. His Government had co-operated very closely with the Agency, as indicated in paragraph 18 of the Commissioner-General's report (A/6713). For nineteen years the Palestine refugees had been seeking justice from the body responsible for the partition of their homeland. Though their human needs were great, justice, and not charity, had been their quest. But justice had been denied them, because of Israel's continued defiance of the United Nations and refusal to carry out the relevant resolutions, particularly paragraph 11 of General Assembly resolution 194 (III). That paragraph stated that refugees wishing to return to their homes should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date and that compensation should be paid to those who chose not to do so or who had suffered loss or damage to property. The Government of Israel, however, had made no effort to ascertain the wishes of a single refugee. Its disregard of the United Nations' decisions amounted to a categorical rejection of the Organization's authority.

8. The Commissioner-General's report was clear and fair and revealed the human situation behind the statistics—hundreds of thousands of refugees living at subsistence level. But the true dimensions of the problem were not evident until it was put into perspective. In paragraph 51 of his report, the Commissioner-General rightly stated that political issues underlay the whole refugee problem and could not be ignored if comment was to be meaningful. The facts of the political situation had been given by the representative of Kuwait at the 588th meeting. The Palestine Arabs had been uprooted from a land they had occupied for centuries and reduced to the status of refugees. The failure of the United Nations to ensure their return, in accordance with paragraph 11 of General Assembly resolution 194 (III), was deeply regrettable and contrary to the concept of justice and the principles of equal rights and self-determination. But Israel alone bore the blame for having expelled hundreds of thousands of Palestinians from their birthplace, in pursuance of a preconceived plan, in order to settle aliens from all over the world in their place.

9. Israel had always claimed that the refugees' plight was not of its making; but the record showed otherwise. For example, at the fifth emergency special session on Israel's aggression against three Arab States, the General Assembly had adopted resolution 2253 (ES-V) on the measures taken by Israel to change the status of the City of Jerusalem. The General Assembly had considered those measures invalid and had called upon Israel to rescind them and desist from any further action. Israel, however, had asserted that the measures it had taken were of an administrative character. The world would not accept that description of such acts as the destruction of the Mughrabia quarter, the pillage of houses and the expulsion of people. Nor would it fail to note that in the census taken by the Government of Israel in the Gaza Strip and on the west bank of the Jordan, the Jerusalem area was excluded.

10. At the fifth emergency special session, the General Assembly had also adopted resolution 2252 (ES-V), welcoming Security Council resolution 237 (1967), in which the Council had called upon Israel to ensure the safety, welfare and security of the inhabitants of the areas where military operations had taken place and to facilitate the return of those who had fled the areas since the outbreak of hostilities. How had Israel responded? The report of the Secretary-General concerning the mission of Mr. Gussing (A/6797) spoke for itself. The Commissioner-General, for his part, stated in his report that the number of refugees permitted to return was only about 3,000 of the 93,000 who had crossed to the east bank before 4 July and who were prima facie eligible to return in accordance with the conditions stipulated by the Government of Israel (see A/6713, para. 36). If Israel had any concern for the refugees as human beings, it would permit their return forthwith. The Commissioner-General also noted that UNRWA's capacity to help would be much greater if the refugees returned to the west bank where the Agency already had installations and facilities (*ibid.*, para. 37). But Israel's only concern was to prevent the refugees and all the other displaced Palestinians from returning home, because their return would hinder the realization of the Greater Israel which was its aim.

11. On 30 September 1965, in his statement to the twentieth session of the General Assembly (1343rd plenary meeting), the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Lebanon had said that if there was ever to be peace and stability in the Middle East, the United Nations must shoulder its responsibility for undoing the injury and injustice inflicted on the Arabs of Palestine and re-establishing conditions for a just and peaceful settlement. That remained true. The United Nations must restore to the Palestinian refugee his dignity and worth as a human person and his fundamental human rights. Then peace would return to the Middle East. If the Organization failed in that task, it would confirm the view that where there was interest there could be no justice.

12. Mr. LAGERFELT (Sweden) paid a tribute to the Commissioner-General and his staff. While their work in previous years had been excellent, in 1967

they had had to face special difficulties, which they had successfully overcome. The events in June 1967 had added to what the Commissioner-General had rightly called the basic dilemma of UNRWA, namely, the continually widening gap between resources and needs (see A/6713, para. 3). It was, however, the humanitarian aspects of the problem that must be given priority in the Committee's deliberations; there were political issues underlying the refugee problem, but they should be dealt with primarily in another context. He would therefore confine himself to matters arising directly from the Commissioner-General's report.

13. In the past four years, UNRWA's income had not even been adequate for the proper discharge of its normal responsibilities and it had consequently had to draw upon its operating reserve in order to meet the deficit (*ibid.*, para. 7). That was a situation unworthy of the world community. It fully explained the Commissioner-General's proposal that the whole method of financing the Agency should be reviewed (*ibid.*, para. 9). One of the suggestions put forward, that the administrative part of the Agency budget should be transferred to the regular United Nations budget, had much to be said for it. It must not, however, lead to a decline in voluntary contributions; on the contrary, the Agency's total resources must be increased in order to place its work on a stable financial basis.

14. His delegation had been particularly impressed by the way in which the Agency's education programme had developed. The importance of the programme had been acknowledged in decision 6.8, taken by the Executive Board of UNESCO at its seventy-seventh session, on collaboration with UNRWA. The work of rehabilitating the older refugees and preparing the young to support themselves was producing hopeful results and helping to alleviate misery. His Government therefore hoped that it would be continued, and if possible expanded. He drew attention to the statement in the report that the Agency could usefully spend some \$10.5 million on buildings and equipment and \$7 million a year on recurrent operations over and above the \$16.5 million it was currently spending on educational services (*ibid.*, para. 12).

15. In connexion with the financial situation, his delegation regretted the fact that some long-standing claims of UNRWA against various States had not been settled. Although there might be counter-claims in some cases, everything possible should be done to ensure that the cost of the Agency's operations was not unduly increased. He noted with satisfaction that the problem of verifying equitable distribution of relief assistance seemed to be on its way to a solution, thanks to the growing understanding shown by the Governments of the region. The problem was a very important one, because it would be most unfortunate if contributors to the voluntary budget got the impression that their contributions were not being used as efficiently as possible.

16. The Swedish Government was aware of the immensity and complexity of the problem faced by UNRWA, as was shown by the support it had steadfastly given the Agency. A solution to the political problem had baffled the United Nations for years.

But it was also true, as the Commissioner-General stated in his report, that up to the time of the recent hostilities a slow but steady process of rehabilitation had been at work among the refugees and had begun to lead to an improvement in their economic and social condition (*ibid.*, para. 54). The events of June 1967 had halted that process and created the formidable problem of the new refugees. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 2252 (ES-V), the Commissioner-General had sought to provide emergency assistance for them.

17. However, their situation remained serious and was getting more and more urgent, as the Commissioner-General had indicated in his statement at the 584th meeting (A/SPC/121). It was therefore essential that the Assembly should give him a clear mandate to continue his work for the new refugees on the same basis as in resolution 2252 (ES-V). That was why Sweden had co-sponsored draft resolution A/SPC/L.156. His delegation had read with great concern the statement in the report that only a small fraction of the total number of persons who had applied for permission to return to the west bank of the Jordan had so far been permitted to do so (A/6713, para. 36). There had, moreover, been no material change since the preparation of the report. That added enormously to the Agency's difficulties and costs. It had had to duplicate the organization, housing and facilities established on the west bank. In its resolution 237 (1967), the Security Council had called upon the Government of Israel to ensure the safety, welfare and security of the inhabitants of the areas where military operations had taken place and to facilitate the return of those who had fled the areas since the outbreak of hostilities. His delegation trusted that no obstacles, whether of an administrative or technical nature, would be allowed to prevent the implementation of that resolution, which had been endorsed by General Assembly resolution 2252 (ES-V).

18. In paragraph 66 of his report, the Commissioner-General asked five questions. The answer to the first three was an unqualified "yes". But that "yes" would be worthless unless something was done about the fourth question, concerning the provision of adequate funds. The needs of the new refugees would require the allocation of an extra \$7 million in 1968. Yet at the recent Pledging Conference on 6 December 1967, it would be remembered, the total sum pledged had amounted to only \$26.3 million. The need for a new method of financing and for a clear-cut plan was thus beyond dispute. The problem had both a long-term aspect and a short-term one, but Security Council resolution 242 (1967), affirming the necessity for achieving a settlement of the refugee problem surely covered both. His Government was prepared to play its full part in implementing any decision taken by the United Nations to help the Palestine refugees.

19. Mr. PACHACHI (Iraq) said that every year since 1948, the General Assembly had adopted resolutions reaffirming the inalienable right of the Palestine refugees to return home. The virtually unanimous endorsement of that fundamental right had sustained the refugees in their suffering. Yet, as the Commissioner-General of UNRWA had indicated in his report (A/6713), the refugees had still had neither

an opportunity of returning nor compensation for their property. Israel had been allowed to flout the United Nations resolutions and still refused to recognize the most elementary human rights of those whose country it had taken over.

20. His delegation was grateful to the Commissioner-General for his report and for the valuable work of UNRWA, which had spared the refugees much suffering. His Government was contributing \$100,000 annually to the Agency and would have contributed more during the current year had not the recent aggression imposed heavy burdens on its resources. The report gave a distressing picture of the suffering inflicted on the people of Palestine during the previous six months. Almost half of the 300,000 homeless had become refugees for the second time; nearly 100,000 Syrians had left the areas occupied by Israel and 300,000 had been evacuated from the Suez Canal area. Human endurance would reach the limit with the arrival of winter. There were numerous examples of Israel's callous disregard for the refugees. There could be no excuse for the destruction or neglect of UNRWA facilities. Less than a month previously, Israel had shelled a refugee camp in Jordan, killing a number of persons, while hundreds of other refugees had perished in the Suez Canal area during the bombardment of population centres.

21. The most cynical example of Israel's violation of its international obligations was its refusal to implement General Assembly and Security Council resolutions by facilitating the return of the refugees. The Israel representative had given no convincing explanation of his Government's refusal to do so. Israel had admitted that only 14,000 refugees in Jordan had been permitted to cross back to the west bank although some 100,000 had asked to be allowed to do so. The discrepancy was not due to the action of the Jordanian Government, as was clear from the reports of the Commissioner-General and of the Secretary-General concerning the mission of Mr. Gussing (A/6797). The latter had pointed out that even if the potential daily rate of 3,000 returnees mentioned by Israel had been achieved, only some 35,000 could have returned in the time. In view of Israel's continued refusal to implement the resolutions adopted in mid-1967, the Assembly should reaffirm them and exert whatever pressure was needed to secure their prompt implementation. It was even more important that the Assembly should reaffirm its long-standing position on the refugees by upholding their fundamental right to return.

22. As to the five questions in paragraph 66 of the Commissioner-General's report, his delegation would answer the first three in the affirmative. With regard to the fourth, the United Nations must provide the necessary funds to meet the needs of a people for whose welfare it had assumed a special responsibility. It was regrettable that the Commissioner-General should have had to ask the fifth question, especially in view of the sums spent by Governments on armaments.

23. The paramount consideration that the Committee should bear in mind was that it was dealing with the fate of a whole people and their right to survive

as a homogeneous national community. Much had been said of late about innocent passage, boundaries, belligerency and the like, but little had been heard about the people of Palestine. There would be no lasting settlement until the consequences of the violent onslaught on that people were recognized and dealt with fearlessly. The one unalterable fact was the refusal of the people of Palestine to disappear as a national entity, despite all inducements and threats to persuade them to give up their claim to their ancestral homeland. They could not be denied their right to self-determination and freedom. Nor could the Arabs of Palestine be asked to resign themselves to the status of second-class citizens in their own country.

24. After the Second World War, Zionism had been able to enlist the support of the United States in its attempt to create a State dominated by an alien settler minority. In 1967 it was unthinkable that the future of a Territory under international mandate could be decided in total disregard of the wishes of its people. Yet, in 1947, Palestine had been sacrificed because its people and the majority of the peoples of Asia and Africa had been voiceless and unable to exert any influence on the course of world events. The creation of Israel had been a reversal of the universal trend towards national liberation. The people of Palestine had been the victims of a colonial invasion unparalleled in its ferocity. Like other colonial peoples, they aspired to regain their rights and recover their usurped homeland. They were entitled to the understanding and support of the other peoples of the world, especially those which had recently emerged from colonial rule.

25. The Israel representative's proposal for a five-year plan for the refugees had received considerable publicity, even before being introduced in the Committee at its 588th meeting. It was proposed that consultations should be held immediately and followed by negotiations between the Arab host countries and Israel. The Arab countries, however, supported by the overwhelming majority of Member States, considered that the refugee problem was not negotiable but must be settled according to the wishes of the refugees themselves. If Israel really wanted to solve the problem, it should announce its acceptance of the resolution adopted since 1948 and co-operate with the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine in the implementation of paragraph 11 of General Assembly resolution 194 (III).

26. The Israel representative had also said at the 588th meeting that the long-term future for the bulk of the Gaza refugees lay in their being given an opportunity of establishing themselves elsewhere. Did that mean that Israel hoped to drain Gaza of the majority of its Arab inhabitants as a prelude to annexation? Perhaps the Commissioner-General could provide some information on the subject.

27. The Israel representative had also claimed that for his country the alternative to victory had been annihilation. The implication was that the Arabs had been bent upon genocide. He rejected that imputation as a defamation of the Arab people, who would never be capable of such a crime. The Zionists,

however, might be capable of liquidating the Palestinian Arabs, who were the main obstacle to the realization of their dream of a "greater Israel".

28. Mr. ITAGAKI (Japan) paid a tribute to the Commissioner-General of UNRWA for his report (A/6713) and to the Agency for its work in alleviating the plight of the refugees. Also praiseworthy was the work of the specialized agencies and voluntary organizations co-operating with UNRWA.

29. His Government considered UNRWA's work as a major factor contributing to peace and stability in the Middle East. It had been greatly shocked to learn of the effects of the June hostilities on the whole refugee problem and had therefore been glad to co-sponsor General Assembly resolution 2252 (ES-V). It had immediately made an emergency contribution of \$100,000 to UNRWA. His Government had regularly contributed to the Agency's budget and its total contribution now amounted to \$332,500. It would make an appropriate contribution to the 1968 regular budget of the Agency.

30. As to the questions in paragraph 66 of the Commissioner-General's report, his delegation believed that the answer to the first three should be affirmative. But relief was not in itself any solution. It was urgently necessary to find answers to the problems of repatriation, compensation and resettlement referred to in paragraph 52 of the report. The objectives of the United Nations in that connexion had originally been set forth in General Assembly resolution 194 (III). Japan had voted in favour of Security Council resolution 242 (1967) in the belief that a just settlement of the refugee problem was essential for peace in the Middle East. He hoped that the Special Representative to the Middle East would bear that in mind in discharging his task. With regard to draft resolutions A/SPC/L.155 and A/SPC/L.156, his delegation considered them complementary. It would vote in favour of the former and wished to be included among the sponsors of the latter.

31. Mr. EREN (Turkey) said that the film shown to the Committee after its 587th meeting had shown the destitution of the Palestine refugees and the need for urgent action. It had provided vivid evidence of the scope of UNRWA's efforts. The tragic events of June 1967 had taxed the Agency's meagre resources, but the way it had met the emergency was proof of its efficiency. At the same time, it had endeavoured to continue its regular activities. Among its most notable achievements had been the expansion of its educational facilities.

32. Next, he joined other speakers in paying a tribute to the Commissioner-General and his staff. Nevertheless, his delegation was discouraged by the uncertainty with regard to financial support for the Agency. In an age when freedom from privation, disease and ignorance had become a universal standard it was inconsistent that the subsistence of 1 million people could be left to the vagaries of international charity. His Government had made regular contributions and in 1967 had increased its annual participation by 25 per cent. It had supplemented that help by a programme of scholarships for refugees. Despite foreign exchange difficulties, it had provided the equivalent

of \$611,000 in response to General Assembly resolution 2252 (ES-V). In an emergency involving human lives, his delegation found it hard to accept the financial limitations indicated in paragraph 66 of the Commissioner-General's report (A/6713). Previous speakers had given positive answers to the first three of the questions raised by the Commissioner-General and a more positive approach was therefore required to the last two. The emergency in June 1967 had shown that the work of the Agency was important for the peace of the area and it must therefore have the support it needed.

33. The United Nations had repeatedly reaffirmed the wisdom of General Assembly resolution 194 (III) and would do so again during the current session; but nothing had been done to further the repatriation or compensation of the refugees. It was in that connexion that progress was necessary to overcome the deep sense of injury and injustice among them.

34. Mr. SIDOR (Poland) said that following Israel's latest aggression, the 1.5 million Palestinian Arab refugees had been joined by several hundred thousand new ones, who, under various pretexts, were being denied the right to return to their homes. Thousands of emaciated people were vegetating in crowded, insanitary barracks, where they lacked schools, medical care and, worst of all, hope for the future. His Government had been among the first to help the victims of the recent war, providing food, medical equipment and supplies worth 390 million zlotys.

35. The problem of the Palestinian refugees was the result of Israel's permanent expansionist policies, which were made possible by the support and protection of certain Western States. Israel's elation after its military victory had made it contemptuous of United Nations resolutions and the implementation of Security Council resolution 237 (1967) and General Assembly resolution 2252 (ES-V) had thus become impossible. Paragraph 36 of the Commissioner-General's report (A/6713) showed that while more than 200,000 persons had crossed to the east bank of the river Jordan, Israel had so far permitted only some 14,000 to return, even though at least 100,000 had applied to be allowed to do so. Those figures indicated the deterioration in the situation resulting from Israel's policy of clearing the Arab population from conquered areas to make way for Jewish settlers. Israel's methods in realizing that objective could only give rise to deep concern. The Arab population was daily subjected to force and terror. The brutal treatment of the inhabitants by the Israel authorities should be strongly condemned and the wanton destruction by Israel forces of UNRWA facilities, resulting in a loss of some \$800,000, was further cause for indignation.

36. It was clear from the Commissioner-General's report that the treatment meted out to the Arab population was traditional in the sense that Israel's purpose had always been to evict them. A writer in the Jewish Newsletter of 2 February 1959 had described how some of the Arabs had been evicted by force of arms and others induced to leave by tricks, lies and false promises. It was a cruel and tragic irony that a people which had been subjected to

systematic extermination by the nazis should now use similar methods.

37. The representatives of some Western States had repeatedly suggested that the only solution of the problem was integration of the refugees within the Arab host countries. Israel therefore accused the latter of ill-will and of opposing the rehabilitation of the refugees. But in paragraphs 53 and 54 of his report the Commissioner-General refuted that accusation and stressed both the progress achieved in rehabilitation and the goodwill of the Arab States. The report clearly contradicted the contention that the Arab States took advantage of the refugee problem to further their political objectives. His delegation fully agreed with the report in that respect.

38. Some countries would like to confine the problem to its economic aspects and search for a solution in that context. That was tantamount to avoiding a political solution and attempting to make the Arab countries bear the responsibility. The recent aggression, the new waves of refugees and the new problems that had arisen had demonstrated that the application of half-measures could result only in a further aggravation of the problem. His delegation's view was that a just solution could be achieved through the systematic implementation of the General Assembly resolutions which had unequivocally recognized the right of the Arab refugees to return to their homeland.

39. Mr. SHARAPOV (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) said that three times in the past nineteen years Israel had, in violation of the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, forced thousands of innocent men, women and children to leave their homes and had caused them untold suffering.

40. At its twenty-first session the General Assembly had noted with deep regret that repatriation or compensation of the refugees as provided for in paragraph 11 of General Assembly resolution 1194 (III) had not been effected, and that the situation of refugees continued to be a matter of serious concern (resolution 2154 (XXI)). In other words, Israel, a Member of the Organization, had for eighteen years ignored all its resolutions. From the report of the Commissioner-General (A/6713), it was clear that the refugee problem was still acute, and that Israel's aggressive acts in June 1967 had been followed by new crimes causing suffering to many more thousands of Arabs, some of whom had become refugees for the second time.

41. It would be wrong to imagine that such a small State as Israel could challenge the authority of the United Nations on its own for so long. Israel was supported by much stronger forces, which were therefore accomplices in the crimes it had committed. In the recent events in the Middle East an important role had been played by Western monopolies, which derived immense profits from the extraction of oil in the area, and by the Governments of certain Western countries, which acted under instructions from the monopolies. The representatives of Western countries, in their statements to the Committee, had made much of the financial

assistance which their Governments were giving to UNRWA; but their contributions were a mere drop in the ocean compared with the profits they were making in the Middle East. United States and United Kingdom imperialists were using their dominating position in the oil industry to attack the key positions in the economies of many countries, and to interfere in their domestic and foreign affairs.

42. It was not surprising, therefore, that the forces which had armed Israel and encouraged its aggression were now defending its piratical acts in the Middle East. The suffering of millions of Arab refugees meant nothing to them, provided that gold was pouring into their banks. As Karl Marx had said a hundred years ago, capitalists were capable of committing any crime for profit. The Western countries, particularly the United States, had used Israel as their Trojan horse in the Middle East to pursue their own economic interests and to frustrate the desire of the Arab States for economic and political independence. The fact that Israel had been able to produce a well-equipped army was solely due to the support it had received from the Western imperialists.

43. No arguments could justify Israel's aggression against the Arab States, or the barbarities which Israel troops had committed in occupied territories. The United Nations should force Israel to observe international law, and to stop seizing the territory of Arab States and expelling the indigenous population. In 1948-1949, Israel had seized a considerable part of the territory of a new Arab State which the United Nations had been intending to create. It had expelled one and a half million people from their homes, and the resultant refugee problem had increased tension in the area. After Israel's invasion of Egypt in 1956, there had been further mass expulsions of the local population. Israel's latest aggression and the new refugee problems which it had created were the direct consequence of a deliberate policy pursued by extremist circles in Tel Aviv.

44. The Palestine refugees and the persons who had been expelled from their homes after Israel's latest aggression were entitled to expect that their sovereignty and lawful rights and interests would be restored to them. But first Israel would have to withdraw from the territory it had seized. Unless that important problem was settled, none of the other problems—and certainly not the refugee problem—could ever be solved.

45. As the head of his delegation had stated at the General Assembly's fifth emergency special session (1533rd plenary meeting), his country consistently pursued a policy of peace and was strongly opposed to aggression and the enslavement and oppression of one people by another. That was the approach it adopted to Israel's aggression against the United Arab Republic, Syria and Jordan, and to the problem of the Palestine refugees and the refugees from Israel's latest aggression. His delegation hoped that the problem would be solved in the spirit of the Charter and the relevant General Assembly resolutions.

46. Mr. EL-FARRA (Jordan) said that the Israel representative's statement at the 588th meeting had



contained many assertions which could and should be refuted. He himself wished to deal only with a few of them.

47. First, the Israel representative's account of the circumstances in which the refugees of 1948 and the intermediate period had left their homes, and of the reasons why the refugee problem had never been solved, was patently false and had been entirely refuted by the representative of Kuwait at the same meeting.

48. Secondly, the Israel representative had stated that Security Council resolution 242 (1967) had placed a solution of the refugee problem in the broad context of peace. That was a one-sided interpretation of the resolution, which was designed to distort the truth about the refugee problem, to complicate the task of the Special Representative to the Middle East, and to persuade the Organization to endorse the use of force as a substitute for compliance with the Charter. Any interpretation of the Security Council resolution which was incompatible with the Charter was null and void; and it was certainly incompatible with the Charter for any State to use advantages which it had gained by force as a bargaining point.

49. Thirdly, the Jordanian delegation had in an earlier statement (585th meeting) invited Israel to fulfil the obligations it had assumed in the past under the General Armistice Agreements of 1949, the Protocol of Lausanne and the relevant United Nations resolutions, before asking that its promises for the future should be accepted. But there was nothing in the Israel representative's statement to suggest that the Government of Israel was intending to fulfil its past obligations.

50. Fourthly, the Israel representative had asserted that refugees crossing the River Jordan to the east bank had done so of their own accord, and had not been expelled. But he himself had been told by many refugees that they had left the west bank either because their homes had been blown up or because they had been intimidated. In a press release published on 31 October 1967 by the Department of Sociology at the American University at Beirut, a team of independent investigators including one United States citizen, who had spent the whole of September 1967 in refugee camps on the east bank, had confirmed that the refugees had been forced to leave the west bank by intimidation or acts of physical violence.

51. During the General Assembly's fifth emergency special session (1536th plenary meeting), the King of Jordan had charged the Israel military authorities with the widespread use of napalm and fragmentation bombs, and his delegation had circulated a letter dated 29 June 1967 from the representative of Jordan to the Secretary-General<sup>1/</sup> enclosing photographs of persons killed or injured by weapons of that kind. He formally requested that copies of the document should be distributed to members of the Committee during the present discussion. Only the previous day, The New York Times had published a report from its correspondent in Tel Aviv stating

that a number of Arabs had been seriously injured by a mysterious explosion in a market place in Israel-occupied Gaza. As it was unthinkable that Arabs could have planted a bomb to kill or maim members of their own people, he could only assume that the bomb had been planted by Zionists to intimidate the local population and induce them to leave.

52. Mr. SAYEGH (Kuwait), exercising his right of reply, said that he wished to comment on the proposal which the Israel representative had made at the 588th meeting, allegedly as a first step in the direction of conciliation and peace.

53. Referring first to the spirit in which the proposal had been introduced, he said he did not think that proposals aimed at conciliation and peace should be accompanied by arrogant ultimatums. Yet, in stating that any delegation putting forward proposals inconsistent with Security Council resolution 242 (1967) or raising controversial issues would take upon itself a very grave responsibility, the Israel representative had been attempting to intimidate the Committee and control its discussions. Proposals aimed at conciliation and peace should not be accompanied, either, by endless distortion of fact. The Israel representative had claimed that the three wars in the Middle East had been launched by Arab attempts to wipe Israel off the map. Surely no delegation believed that the Arabs had started the wars of June 1967 or October 1956; and, as for the war of 1948, he wished to point out that before the first Arab soldier had set foot in the Mandated Territory of Palestine on 15 May 1948, Zionist military and para-military units had attacked the occupied villages and towns in the area assigned to the Arabs under the partition plan. Thus, even before the so-called State of Israel had been established, Israel had already become an aggressor.

54. The Israel representative had also accused Arab leaders of dramatizing the refugee problems for political purposes. But the refugees themselves were determined to return home, and the Arab leaders were only echoing their wishes. In any case, it ill befitted Israel to accuse other States of dramatizing human suffering for political reasons. Had not the Zionists, in the period before the termination of the United Kingdom Mandate, allowed and even encouraged European Jews to set out for Palestine in unseaworthy ships? And, if a ship had sunk and all the passengers been drowned, had not the Zionists used the incident to dramatize the sufferings of the Jewish people and put pressure on the United Kingdom Government?

55. The Israel representative had stated that in the 1948 war, more than half a million Palestinian Arabs had left their homes and moved to neighbouring areas, while about the same number of Jews had been uprooted from Arab countries to Israel where they had been successfully absorbed. But, as the delegation of Kuwait had pointed out at the 588th meeting, no one could possibly be deceived by that attempt to represent the effect as the cause or the culprit as the victim.

56. Turning to the substance of the Israel representative's proposal, he pointed out that the implementation of the rights of the refugees was not included

<sup>1/</sup> Official Records of the General Assembly Fifth Emergency Special Session, Annexes, agenda item 5, document A/6740.

on the agenda for the proposed consultations. On the contrary, the Israel Government was suggesting that Israel and the Arab host countries should together discuss how the refugees could surrender their rights. But the refugees' right to repatriation, as conformed in General Assembly resolution 194 (III) and in many other resolutions, was inalienable. Furthermore, the Arab peoples believed that the Palestine refugees had a right not merely to repatriation, but to return home by their own free choice and not at the discretion of the Israel authorities, to return to their individual homes and properties, and not to areas assigned to them by the Israel Government, and to live in their former homes in safety and security, enjoying all the guarantees of non-discrimination. That right was not subject to negotiation or compromise.

57. Next, he wondered why the Israel representative had proposed a new forum for the consultations. If the Israel Government wished to discuss the implementation of the refugees' right to repatriation, it could do so forthwith in an existing body which had a very clear mandate, namely, the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine. Israel's previous record suggested that the reasons why the Israel Government had proposed a new forum for the consultations were, first, that it was not intending to discuss the implementation of the refugees' right to repatriation; secondly, that it hoped to avoid international supervision; thirdly, that it was intending to evade its international obligations; and fourthly, that it hoped to put the blame on the Arabs if the negotiations should break down. Furthermore, it appeared that the proposed consultations were to be conducted outside the framework of the United Nations. The Israel representative

had not even thought it necessary to provide the Committee with details of his Government's plan. But the United Nations had a special responsibility towards the people of Palestine, and could not be absolved of that responsibility on the proposal of a single State. Lastly, there was no indication in the Israel representative's statement that the people of Palestine themselves were to participate in the consultations. The Zionists had expelled the Palestinians from their homeland and deprived them of their sovereignty and political rights. Now they were paying them the supreme insult of ignoring them. In short, the Israel proposal was not a proposal to solve the refugee problem, but to bury it.

58. Mr. AZOUNI (Saudi Arabia) said it was clear that, whatever they might say in the United Nations, the Israel authorities had no intention of repatriating the Palestine refugees. In a statement reported in a Toronto newspaper, the Israel representative himself had said that the 90,000 refugees from the part of Syria now occupied by Israel should be settled in other parts of Syria, and that Israel did not wish to repatriate them. It did not wish to re-admit the refugees from the west bank either, as it regarded refugees wishing to return there as a fifth column.

59. Mr. COMAY (Israel) said that he had never made the remarks attributed to him by the Saudi Arabian representative.

60. The CHAIRMAN said that the Secretariat had taken note of the Jordanian representative's request that the letter dated 29 June 1967 from the representative of Jordan to the Secretary-General (see para. 51 above) should be circulated.

*The meeting rose at 1.25 p.m.*