

ECONOMIC
AND
SOCIAL COUNCIL

CONSEIL
ECONOMIQUE
ET SOCIAL

E/C.2/125
25 August 1948
ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

COMMITTEE ON ARRANGEMENTS FOR CONSULTATION
WITH NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS

(Council NGO Committee)

LIST OF COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED FROM
NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS
GRANTED CATEGORY (b) OR (c) CONSULTATIVE STATUS

Note:

This list is submitted in accordance with the provisions of Chapter IV, paragraph 4, of the report of the Committee on Arrangements for Consultation with Non-Governmental Organisations, approved by the Council on 21 June 1946. (Resolution 2/3 of 21 June 1946; Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1st year, 2nd Session, pages 360 to 365).

WORLD JEWISH CONGRESS

In a communication, dated 20 August 1948 and addressed to the President of the Economic and Social Council, the above organisation enters a protest against the postponement of discussion in the Council of the question relating to the position of Jews in Arab countries.

Attention is drawn to the following Draft Resolution which the Council NGO Committee recommended to the Council in Part I of its Report (E/940, page 3):

"THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

TAKES NOTE of the Report of the Council NGO Committee prepared in response to Council Resolution No. 133 (VI) H of 11 March 1948, regarding "Communications from the World Jewish Congress".

DECIDES that it has at the present time no competence to judge and hence to recommend any useful action on the statement by the World Jewish Congress,

RECOGNISES, however, that the unsettled conditions in Palestine may affect the observance of fundamental human rights in Palestine and some other areas, and

EXPRESSES the hope that governments and authorities concerned will not cease to exert whatever efforts are necessary to safeguard the fundamental human rights of individuals and groups of different faiths."

Having emphasised the immediate gravity of a situation in which the lives, safety, human rights and fundamental freedom of thousands of Jewish citizens and many Jews of

foreign nationality in a number of Arab States, members of the United Nations; are imperilled, the World Jewish Congress gives particulars of its appeal to the Economic and Social Council.

As far back as 19 January 1948, the World Jewish Congress submitted to the Economic and Social Council a Memorandum calling attention to the fact that "Jews residing in the Near and Middle East are in extreme and imminent danger due to the open defiance by Arab States of the decision (by the United Nations General Assembly) to partition Palestine", and to acts of discrimination and violence against Jews in Aleppo (Syria), certain towns of Iran, the Bahrein Island and Aden, resulting in the loss of many lives, synagogues, property and homes.

On 16 February 1948, the World Jewish Congress submitted a second Memorandum to the Committee for Consultation with Non-Governmental Organisations (Economic and Social Council) urging the Council to appoint, under Art. 62 of the United Nations Charter, a Committee to investigate the situation of the Jews in the Arab countries and to ascertain the measures taken or proposed by their Governments to prevent attacks against the Jews, and for the redress of wrongs and damage suffered by them.

In addition to these written statements, representatives of the World Jewish Congress have had the opportunity of being heard by the Committee for Consultation with Non-Governmental Organisations in explanation of the Memorandum referred to and on the submission that the attacks upon the Jews in the Arab countries mentioned were acts of persecution and discrimination against a racial and religious group and constituted violations of Articles 1 (3), 13(b) and 55(c) of the United Nations Charter, the Resolution of the General Assembly of 14 November 1946 and the Draft International Covenant on Human Rights.

The World Jewish Congress then draws the attention of the Council to the fact that recently the situation of the Jews in certain Arab countries has deteriorated, especially in Egypt where a series of acts of violence, amounting to terrorism, involving the loss of many lives, of persecutory and discriminatory measures, mass arrests and imprisonment in concentration camps, without charge or trial, the destruction, confiscation and plunder of property and similar outrages, in violation of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of hundreds of Jewish nationals and residents. These outrages have been committed, it is alleged, with the connivance and, sometimes, with the authority or approval of the Government concerned. Certainly, no governmental action has been taken to prevent attacks upon the Jews and no punitive measures have been taken against their perpetrators.

The World Jewish Congress feels it to be its duty to enumerate a number of these. For example, the strict news censorship imposed by the Egyptian Government has concealed from the outside world the facts of many anti-Jewish excesses in that country. But in addition to information which has

reached the World Jewish Congress, a series of reports, notably by reliable newspaper correspondents, published in a number of foreign countries, has brought to light facts disclosing the gravity of the situation of the Jews in Egypt and the dangers to which they are exposed.

Since the middle of May, 800-1000 Jews have been arrested by the Egyptian authorities, and have been imprisoned in concentration camps, chiefly that of Huckersterp, 12 kms. from Heliopolis. No charges have been made against these people, except that they are suspected of Zionist sympathies. They are confined in extremely bad conditions and no opportunity of hearing or defence has been given to any of them by the Egyptian authorities.

Property and funds of great value, belonging to Jews, have been arbitrarily "sequestered" by the Egyptian Government without explanation or legal process. Jews, both of Egyptian and other nationality, are similarly refused permits to leave Egypt and are thus forcibly detained to endure the harassments of legal and physical persecution and discrimination.

During June and July, two pogroms against Jews in Cairo took place. 150 Jews were murdered or "disappeared" and of the hundreds of Jews wounded, 120 were brought to the Jewish hospital and to private places. Jews living in the vicinity of the Royal Palace were forced to evacuate their homes within 48 hours and scores of Jews were removed to concentration camps and Jewish houses were searched.

The World Jewish Congress emphasises that it is concerned with the Egyptian Government's violation of their obligation under the United Nations Charter, to promote and encourage respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all. The facts stated above are in contradiction of the declarations made, on 21 June, to the Committee for Consultation with Non-Governmental Organisations, by the representative of Egypt, who stated that "Egypt has never shown any discrimination against the members of any other race or religion" (Annex I of Part I of Report of the Council's Committee for Consultation with Non-Governmental Organisations (E/940). The World Jewish Congress is obliged to repudiate any suggestion on the part of the Egyptian Government that the acts of anti-Jewish violence and discrimination in Egypt are justified by events in Palestine.

Finally, the World Jewish Congress states that it seeks the concern of the United Nations on behalf of the members of a racial and religious group whose human rights and fundamental freedoms are being violated.

It is most earnestly urged that the Economic and Social Council may reconsider its decision to postpone discussion of the matters referred to in Part I of the Report of its Committee of Consultation of Non-Governmental Organisations (E/940) and that the Council will, at the

earliest opportunity, take up such action as it is competent to take, and as may be appropriate, to deal, as a matter of urgency, with the critical problems described in the Memoranda already submitted and in the present letter. The World Jewish Congress points out that postponement of this subject to the next session of the Council would mean that more than 12 months will have elapsed since the serious position of the Jews in Arab countries was first brought to the Council's attention and without discussion of the problem by the Council.