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UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND WORKS AGENCY FOR PALESTINE REFUGEES IN THE NEAR EAST

~~Palestine refugees in the Palestinian~~ territory
~~occupied by Israel~~ since 1967

~~Report of the Secretary-General~~

1. The preaent report is submitted to the General Assembly in pursuance of its resolution 44/47 E of 8 Decombsr 1989, the operative paragraphs of which read an follows:

"The General Assembly,

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"1. Strongly reiterates its demand that Israel desist from the removal and resettlement of Palestine refugees in the Palestinian territory occupied by Israel since 1967 and from the destruction of their shelters;

"2. Requests the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East to address the acute situation of the Palestine refugees in the Palestinian territory occupied by Israel since 1967 and accordingly to extend all the services of the Agency to those refugees;

"3. Requests the Secretary-General, in co-operation with the Commlasioner-General, to resume issuing identification cards to all Palestine refugees And their descendantta in the occupied Palestinian territory,

* A/45/150 and Corr.1.

irrespective of whether or not they are recipients of rations and services of the Agency)

"4. **Requests** the Secretary-General, after consulting with the **Commissioner-General**, to report to the General Assembly, before the opening of its forty **fifth** session, on the implementation of the present **resolution** and in particular on **Israel's** compliance with paragraph 1 above."

2. On 28 February 1990, the **Secretary-General** addressed a note **verbale** to the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations, in which he **drew** attention to his **reporting** responsibility under the resolution and **requested** the Permanent Representative to inform him of any steps his Government had taken or envisaged taking in implementation of the relevant provisions of the resolution.

3. In a note **verbale** dated 29 June 1990, the Permanent Representative of Israel replied as follows:

"Israel's position *on* this resolution has been set forth in successive annual replies submitted to the Secretary-General in recent years. The report of the Secretary-General A/44/600 dated 6 October 1989, contained the latest of these replies. In addition, **Israel's representative** to the Special **Political** Committee reiterated Israel's **position** during his **statement** dated 27 October 1989 (A/SPC/44/SR.8).

"This resolution is unbalanced and distorted in that its sponsors intentionally ignore the improved living conditions in the **Gaza District since 1967**. Resolution 44/47 E does not mention the considerable increase of pupils attending school in the **Gaza District since 1967**, nor does it mention the significant drop in the **illiteracy** rate among inhabitants in the Gaza District; since that **year**. Furthermore, it **does not mention** the **extensive development** of medical care or the improvement of environmental services - including water supply, sewage and refuse (sic) disposal. By **conveniently** omitting these **facts**, the sponsors of **resolution 44/47 E** continue in their approach to **perpetuate** the refugee problem and the refugees' living conditions in **Gaza**.

"Nothing **can be more** indicative of this approach than this resolution's condemnation of refugee rehabilitation projects. Since 1967, Israel **has** initiated **community development** projects in the **Gaza District** enabling some 20,000 **families**, approximately 150,000 persons to leave the refugee camps on a voluntary **basis** and relocate to nearby **residential** areas. This **figure represents over one third of the total refugee population in Gaza**. Israel's **vital** role in planning and implementing **such housing projects** has been **recognized by both the Secretary-General and the High Commissioner of UNHCR** in their respective reports (A/40/613 and A/40/13).

"Furthermore, the resolution's request of the Secretary-General to **resume** issuing identity cards irrespective of **the refugees'** need for them is yet **another indication of the resolutions' patent political bias**.

"Notwithstanding subversive efforts to the contrary, Israel is determined to **pursue** the **humanitarian** task of improving the **living conditions** of the refugees through projects such as the **refugee** housing programs. Israel will welcome all assistance on behalf of the international **community intended** to improve the **refugees'** living conditions."

4. The following information **concerning** Israel's compliance with **General Assembly resolution 44/47 E** is based on reports from the Commissioner-General of UNRWA.

5. In the **Gaza Strip** as well as **the West Bank**, refugee shelters have been demolished and sealed on punitive grounds by the Israeli authorities. The matter is **dealt** with in detail in the Commissioner-General's annual report to the General Assembly. **1/**

6. The **Agency** is following up with the Israeli authorities the rehousing of refugees who remain affected by the **demolitions** in 1971 in the **Gaza Strip**. Paragraph 6 of last year's report (**A/44/608**) referred to the status of 87 families categorised **as** living in hardship conditions. The situation on 30 June 1990 remains the **same**; of these 87 families, 13 continue to **live** in conditions of hardship, 19 remain unsatisfactorily **housed**, 37 are satisfactorily housed, and 18 had previously purchased houses in projects sponsored by the Israeli authorities. The situation of the 13 families living in conditions of hardship has been checked **several** times **during** the reporting period. **Despite repeated** assurances by the Israeli authorities that **they** will be rehoused, very little **progress** has been made. The authorities have assured the Agency that a solution has been developed and would be implemented as **soon** as possible.

7. During the reporting period, the Commissioner-General obtained the following information **relating** to refugee shelters demolished by the Israeli authorities in the **Gaza Strip** on the grounds that they had been built without proper authority on State land **outside** camp boundaries:

(a) In paragraph 7 (a) of last year's report (**A/44/608**), it was **stated** that the Israeli authorities told several families living on the **northern** perimeter of **Jabalia Camp** to remove some of their **shelter** extensions and that **these** families had **taken** the matter to the High Court of Israel, **which** had ruled against them. No **demolitions** have taken place so far, although the shelters have been isolated by **bulldozing** of sand around their **premises**. The Israeli **authorities are** understood to have had discussions with **some** members of this **group**;

(b) Of the 35 families whose **shelters** on the perimeter of Beach Camp were **demolished** in 1983 (see **A/41/564, para. 7 (b)**), 18 families **have** received plots of land at Sheikh Radwan or the **Bait Lnhya** housing projects. One family bought a **vacant** shelter in Beach Camp; three families have moved **in** with relatives in **Jabalia Camp**. One family **has** moved in temporarily with a **relative** in Beach Camp; two families have moved in with relatives living on the **site** of the demolished shelters. The remaining 10 families **are** living in temporary **shelters** built by **themselves** on or near the **same** site. One family out of **these** 13 special hardship cases has moved to Jabalia Camp to **live** with a son. The Israeli **authorities** have **stated** that they would be **willing** to consider allocating land in a **housing** project

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for ~~the~~ families who have not been rehoused, but that it would **not** be at **Sheikh Radwan** which ~~is~~ the project nearest the sits.

(c) **Four** privately-built **rooms** located beyond the perimeter of **Rafah Camp** were demolished.

8. Paragraph 8 of **last** year's report (A/44/608) referred to some refugee families in Block **Q** at the **Rafah** camp in the **Gaza Strip** who, at the instance of the Israeli authorities, had agreed to relocate to ~~the~~ Tel-es-Sultan housing project. As at 30 June 1990, 45 families had moved to T&l-es-Sultan. Some families, however, still **remain** in their sheltera, of which **13** are isolated by sand ramparts.

9. During the reporting period, no **new** plots of land in housing projects in the **Gaaa Strip** were allocated by the Israeli authorities for refugees living in camps. No new movements took place from camps to housing projects. Thirty-two plots of land have been allocated to families who were chosen to be the first families to return **from** the so-called Canada Camp, **Rafah - Sinai**, and to be settled in the Tel-es-Sultan housing project. During the reporting period, 32 heads of families crossed the Egyptian-Israeli border to the **Gaza Strip** in order to supervise the construction of the houses in Tel-es-Sultan. In addition, 31 refugee families comprising 151 persons have returned from the so-called Canada Camp to the **Gaza Strip**. Accommodation was provided by their relatives,

10. The Israeli authorities, according to information available to the Commissioner-General, have to date allocated approximately 3,914 plots of land in the **Gaza Strip** for housing projects. A total of 2,605 plots have been built on by 3,714 refugee **families** comprising 22,946 persons, buildings on 236 plots are under construction, 936 plots are still vacant and 137 **have** been built on by non-refugee families. In addition, 3,034 refugee families, consisting **of** 18,823 **persons**, have moved into 2,666 **completed** housing units consisting of 5,893 rooms,

11. Refugee **familie**, are continuing to purchase plots of land at **subsidized** rates **for** the **construction** of houses in the projects developed by the Israeli authorities in ~~the~~ **Beit Lahiya, Nazleh** and Tel-es-Sultan areas. The **construction** of multi-storey apartment- blocks in **Sheikh Radwan**, sponsored by the Israeli authorities and **offered** for sale upon completion. as **reported** last year (A/44/608, **para. 12**), continues, but the process has slowed down considerably due to the **prevailing situation**.

12. With regard to the request addressed to the **Commissioner-General** in paragraph 2 of **resolution 44/47 E**, the Commissioner-General advises that since 1988 and in addition to its normal **services**, the Agency has **been** providing emergency **food**, medical and other assistance to ~~those~~ in need in the occupied territory. The Agency has also **begun** a **longer-term** programme to upgrade infrastructure, especially in the camps, and to improve economic and social conditions. These programmes are discussed in detail in ~~the~~ recent reports of the **Commissioner-General. 2/**

13. The Secretary **General** **regrets** that he is unable at present to comply with the request addressed to him in **paragraph 3** of the resolution. Under an arrangement that has been followed for 40 years, all **refugee** families registered with UNRWA are

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in possession of registration cards issued by the Agency. While these cards indicate the number of family member-a and whether they are eligible for services, they are not identification cards and have a much more limited purpose. The Commissioner-General of IJNRWA has pointed out that the Agency issues a registration card reflecting data about the refugee family concerned, which La entered on the registration roll at the time of registration. While the need for documentation, such as is required in the resolution, is appreciated, the Commissioner-General does not have the means to issue identity cards as such. He will, however, keep the situation under review to see whether appropriate documentation regarding the registration status of individual members of refugee families could be issued.

Notes

1/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 13 (A/45/13), chap. VII, sect. B.

2/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-third Session, Supplement No. 13 (A/43/13), chap. II, sect. B; ibid., Forty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 13 (A/44/13), chap. VI, sects. C and D, and ibid., Forty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 13, (A/45/13), chap. VI, sects. C and D.