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

Palestine refugees in the Gaza Strip

Report of the Secretary-General

1. The present report is submitted to the General Assembly in pursuance of its resolution 36/146 A of 16 December 1981 concerning Palestine refugees in the Gaza Strip. In that resolution, the Assembly called once more upon Israel to desist from removal and resettlement of Palestine refugees and destruction of their shelters and requested the Secretary-General, after consulting with the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), to report to it at its thirty-seventh session on Israel's compliance with the resolution.
2. By a note verbale dated 1 March 1982, addressed to the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations, the Secretary-General drew attention to his reporting responsibility under paragraph 2 of General Assembly resolution 36/146 A and requested the Government of Israel to communicate to him, as soon as possible, any information on the implementation of the relevant provisions of the resolution.
3. In a note verbale dated 27 August 1982 the Permanent Representative of Israel replied that the position of the Government of Israel on the matters dealt with in resolution 36/146 A had been set out in successive annual replies, submitted to the Secretary-General in recent years. The report of the Secretary-General issued on 30 September 1981 (A/36/559) contained the latest of those replies dated 20 August 1981.

\* A/37/150.

4. The following information concerning Israel's compliance with General Assembly resolution 36/146 A is based on reports received from the Commissioner-General of UNRWA.

5. In the year under review, the Agency has repeatedly requested the Israeli occupying authorities to facilitate the prompt rehousing of the refugee families whose shelters they had demolished on punitive grounds in 1981 (A/36/559, para. 5). In the absence of a response from the occupying authorities and having regard to the onset of winter, the Agency constructed replacement shelters for those families from the Jabalia and Bureij camps whose shelters had been demolished. Subsequently, the Israeli Minister of Defence informed the Agency that, on humanitarian grounds, instructions had been given to resettle the aforesaid families within the framework of a housing project in the Gaza Strip. However, the families whose shelters were demolished in 1979 and 1980 have not yet been rehoused, nor has the Agency been compensated for the demolition of these shelters.

6. Reference has been made in earlier reports to the demolition by the Israeli occupying authorities of 7,729 shelter rooms for refugees in the Beach, Jabalia and Rafah camps in July-August 1971, affecting 2,554 refugee families comprising 15,855 persons. The Agency has continued its efforts to secure from the Israeli occupying authorities adequate housing facilities for the refugees still considered to be inadequately housed. A survey jointly made in 1973 by the Agency and the Israeli authorities established that 440 families were still inadequately housed and 266 were in serious hardship. As related in paragraph 7 of the report to the thirty-fourth session (A/34/517), the 266 cases of serious hardship were finally resolved by the middle of 1979, after continued efforts over several years by the Agency.

7. The Agency has updated the survey it had previously carried out of the status of the 440 families regarded as inadequately housed as referred to in paragraph 7 of the report to the thirty-sixth session (A/36/559), and has determined their status as follows:

129 families are still inadequately housed;

92 are hardship cases;

162 are adequately housed;

25 have purchased houses and moved;

23 have left the Gaza Strip;

9 no longer exist, the last member of the family having died.

The Israeli occupying authorities in the Gaza Strip take the position that they have no further obligations in regard to these families. The Agency is taking up with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Israel the cases of those families considered to be in hardship or inadequately housed.

8. In the year under review, according to information available to the Commissioner-General, 358 refugee families from the camps (and 35 other families from outside the camps) moved into homes built on land they purchased in one or another housing project established by the Israeli occupying authorities. It will be recalled that refugee families moving into these housing projects are required by the occupying authorities to demolish their shelters in the camps. During the reporting period, a total of 314 shelter rooms were thus demolished. While the refugees' new accommodation is admittedly superior to the shelters in which they had been living, the pressure on housing still remains, partly because of the precondition referred to above that shelters in the camps be demolished prior to the acquisition of new housing in the housing projects.
9. The Israeli occupying authorities have to date allocated a total of 2,866 plots of land in the Gaza Strip for housing projects for refugees. On 919 of these, houses have been built by and are occupied by 1,143 families comprising 6,936 persons (this figure includes 1,077 refugee families - 6,545 persons - on 862 plots); houses are under construction on 736 plots, and the remaining 1,211 plots are still vacant, although it is understood that the majority of them have already been purchased by refugees.
10. The three new housing projects in Beit, Lahia and Nazleh (near Jabalia camp) and Tal El-Sultan (near Rafah camp) are still under development. To date, 132, 73 and 232 new houses respectively have been constructed and are occupied in the three projects. Construction of more new houses is under way.
11. With the re-establishment of the border between Egypt and the Gaza Strip, following the return of the Sinai to Egypt in April 1982, 515 shelter rooms housing 173 families (1,060 persons) have been demolished to date by, or upon the order of, the Israeli occupying authorities in the Gaza Strip in order to make way for a security zone and a border fence. The occupying authorities have paid compensation to all the families concerned, and they have all taken advantage of the Israeli offer of plots of land in a housing project. A further consequence of the re-establishment of the border is that some 7,000 refugees living in the Syrian Arab Republic, most of whom had built or purchased houses in a housing project started there in the 1970s by the occupying authorities, no longer have access to Agency services in Rafah.

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