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SPECIAL POLITICAL COMMITTEE  
25th meeting  
held on  
Thursday, 7 November 1985  
at 3 p.m.  
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 25th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. CESAR (Czechoslovakia)

CONTENTS

AGENDA ITEM 79: UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND WORKS AGENCY FOR PALESTINE REFUGEES IN THE NEAR EAST (continued)

- (a) REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONER-GENERAL (continued)
- (b) SPECIAL REPORT OF THE WORKING GROUP ON THE FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND WORKS AGENCY FOR PALESTINE REFUGEES IN THE NEAR EAST (continued)
- (c) LETTER DATED 27 MARCH 1985 FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE WORKING GROUP ON THE FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND WORKS AGENCY FOR PALESTINE REFUGEES IN THE NEAR EAST ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued)
- (d) NOTE BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL TRANSMITTING THE SPECIAL REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONER-GENERAL ON THE FINANCIAL SITUATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND WORKS AGENCY FOR PALESTINE REFUGEES IN THE NEAR EAST (continued)
- (e) LETTER DATED 30 MAY 1985 FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE ADVISORY COMMISSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND WORKS AGENCY FOR PALESTINE REFUGEES IN THE NEAR EAST ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued)
- (f) REPORT OF THE WORKING GROUP ON THE FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND WORKS AGENCY FOR PALESTINE REFUGEES IN THE NEAR EAST (continued)
- (g) REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS CONCILIATION COMMISSION FOR PALESTINE (continued)
- (h) REPORTS OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 79: UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND WORKS AGENCY FOR PALESTINE REFUGEES IN THE NEAR EAST (continued)

- (a) REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONER-GENERAL (continued) (A/40/13 and Add.1)
- (b) SPECIAL REPORT OF THE WORKING GROUP ON THE FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND WORKS AGENCY FOR PALESTINE REFUGEES IN THE NEAR EAST (continued) (A/40/207)
- (c) LETTER DATED 27 MARCH 1985 FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE WORKING GROUP ON THE FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND WORKS AGENCY FOR PALESTINE REFUGEES IN THE NEAR EAST ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued) (A/40/216)
- (d) NOTE BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL TRANSMITTING THE SPECIAL REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONER-GENERAL ON THE FINANCIAL SITUATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND WORKS AGENCY FOR PALESTINE REFUGEES IN THE NEAR EAST (continued) (A/40/299)
- (e) LETTER DATED 30 MAY 1985 FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE ADVISORY COMMISSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND WORKS AGENCY FOR PALESTINE REFUGEES IN THE NEAR EAST ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued) (A/40/350)
- (f) REPORT OF THE WORKING GROUP ON THE FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND WORKS AGENCY FOR PALESTINE REFUGEES IN THE NEAR EAST (continued) (A/40/736)
- (g) REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS CONCILIATION COMMISSION FOR PALESTINE (continued) (A/40/580)
- (h) REPORTS OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued) (A/40/543, 612-616, 756, 766)

1. Mr. SHARFI (Sudan) said that the report of the Commissioner-General (A/40/13 and Add.1) together with the reports of the Secretary-General (A/40/543, 612-616, 756, 766) demonstrated the inhumane treatment meted out to Palestinians, as a third generation of refugees received assistance from the United Nations Relief and Works Agency without any prospect of a radical solution to their problems. The number of refugees had risen from one half million in 1949 to more than 2 million as a direct result of policies of expulsion and eviction practised by the Israeli authorities. He expressed concern at the deterioration of conditions for refugees in the occupied territories as a result of such practices. Fundamental changes were required, including renunciation by Israel of its aggressive and expansionist policies and its acceptance of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people.

2. The international community, which had given its approval to the establishment of Israel, must bear responsibility for the actions of that entity. It must ensure the continued existence of UNRWA and its provision of essential services to refugees. To that end, a radical solution to the Agency's financial problems must be found.

(Mr. Sharfi, Sudan)

3. The continued operation of UNRWA represented a part of the high price which the international community continued to pay as a result of its inability to find a just and lasting solution to the question of the Palestinian people. The international community must recognize its responsibility to devise proposals and initiatives with a view to solving the Agency's financial crisis.

4. Ms. LUOSTARINEN (Finland) said that her delegation wished to emphasize that the continued existence and services of UNRWA could never diminish the need for a comprehensive, just and lasting political settlement in the Middle East; it had therefore noted recent new peace initiatives with interest. Her delegation was greatly concerned by the Agency's grave financial situation, which seriously endangered the whole future operation of the Agency. The austerity measures to reduce anticipated expenditures in 1985 had made it possible to continue the basic programmes but it was clear from the Commissioner-General's report that, without substantially increased contributions in 1986, there might be no alternative for the Commissioner-General but to reduce some of the Agency's key activities. In that connection it would be very discouraging if UNRWA was to be forced to reduce, in particular, the educational programmes to which all concerned had assigned the highest priority.

5. Her delegation supported the Commissioner-General's proposal to convene an informal meeting of interested Governments to discuss a rational approach to a solution of the Agency's chronic financial difficulties. It was essential that all Member States should express their support in a concrete way by responding to the urgent financial needs of the Agency. In that connection, her Government had decided, subject to parliamentary approval, to raise its annual contribution to UNRWA by 60 per cent to 4 million markkaa; Finland had also made an additional contribution of Fmk 1 million in June 1985 in response to the Commissioner-General's special appeals.

6. Her delegation had been concerned to note the operational difficulties faced by UNRWA, particularly in Lebanon; it was equally concerned about detentions and restrictions on the freedom of movement of UNRWA staff, especially in the Gaza area. Her Government deeply deplored those violations of the principle of the immunity of United Nations officials and installations and appealed to all parties to respect the neutral status of UNRWA staff.

7. Mr. AL HASSANI (Kuwait) said that the main problem which had to be faced was the implementation of General Assembly resolution 194 (III) concerning the right of the Palestine refugees to return to their homes and the right to compensation of those who did not desire to do so. The current situation was that the Palestinians were the victims of double jeopardy in so far as they were not permitted to return to their homes, in accordance with United Nations resolutions, while the remainder of their homeland under occupation was plagued by a two-dimensional campaign, namely: on the one hand, a growing demand by the Zionists to expel from their ancestral land those Arabs who were still in their homes under occupation and, on the other hand, increasing steps by the Zionists to usurp as much Arab land as possible until the ultimate Zionist goal of a complete Judaization of Arab Palestine had been achieved.

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(Mr. Al Hassani, Kuwait)

8. The first point related to the illusion that Palestine was the land of Jews and that no non-Jews should be allowed to stay there, even if they had been there for centuries. The Law of Return had given every Jew in the world, wherever he might be and simply by virtue of his Jewishness, the right to return to the land of Palestine, while denying that right to non-Jews, particularly the Palestinians, whose right to return to their ancestral land from which they had been evicted had been confirmed and reconfirmed by the United Nations year after year.

9. The consequence had been that people from every corner of the world were conducting themselves like the masters, while the Palestinians, who had been living in the land for centuries, were expected to be grateful that they were allowed to stay.

10. On the issue of the gradual and persistent Zionist usurpation of Arab land piece by piece, Jewish ownership had not exceeded 6 per cent of the land of Palestine in 1948. The land seized by the Zionists by force in 1948 and the land seized thereafter illegally by the occupiers of the West Bank, taken together, had currently made the Zionists the actual possessors of 85 per cent of the land of Palestine. A study on land alienation in the West Bank, conducted by Meron Benvenisti's West Bank Data project, had estimated the land seized by the occupiers in the West Bank during the 19 years of its occupation at 52 per cent. The Government of Israel had admitted that sometimes tricks and schemes had been needed and unconventional means used to purchase and redeem land.

11. Against the bleak background of total inaction on the part of the international community combined with hectic activity by the Zionist occupiers to expedite the final solution of seizing and annexing the rest of the land of Palestine, it might have been hoped that there would have been an active international effort against the Zionist activities. It was about time that the United Nations, which had played a major role in creating the problem, assumed more responsibility towards UNRWA, which was perceived by the victimized Palestinians as a symbol of the Organization's responsibility towards them. The least that the world Organization could do would be to guarantee permanent funding for UNRWA from its annual budget and stop toying with the feelings of the refugees. His delegation did not believe that it was the role of the United Nations simply to state every year that the General Assembly had noted with regret that the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine had been unable to find a means of achieving progress in the implementation of paragraph 11 of General Assembly resolution 194 (III). The time had come for the United Nations to live up to its commitments towards the Palestinian people, victimized not only by the continued Zionist aggression but also by the initial interference and subsequent total inaction of the United Nations. Otherwise the international community would be confronted with the completion of the grand Zionist design sooner than expected. If that should be allowed to happen, it would be a sad day for mankind's hope for an effective world organization which would fight for the rights of nations around the world and against the forces of aggression and evil.

12. Mr. TARAR (Pakistan) said that the documents before the Committee projected a pathetic picture of a further deterioration of the situation not only in regard to human conditions in the refugee camps but also to the operational circumstances of

(Mr. Tarar, Pakistan)

the Agency resulting from inadequate voluntary contributions and an increased refugee population caused by new incidents of violence and turmoil.

13. Notwithstanding the continued fighting and disturbed security conditions in both Lebanon and the occupied Arab territories, UNRWA had been dauntlessly carrying on its vital services in the field of relief operations as well as in health, education and training activities. The general education programme continued to strengthen in size and range and had become the largest functional UNRWA activity in 1984/85. In addition to its important educational work in its elementary and primary schools in Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic, Jordan, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, UNRWA continued to furnish vocational and technical education in its vocational training centres, notwithstanding arbitrary disruptions on the part of the Israeli authorities. The teacher training programme appeared to have continued in a satisfactory manner, although it did not seem to have shown any significant expansion, possibly owing to financial constraints. The report had also given details of the health services which UNRWA provided or sponsored and regarding the training of nurses and progress on various environmental and nutrition projects.

14. His delegation remained persuaded that UNRWA was of crucial importance for the survival and welfare of the Palestine refugees in all the areas of its operations. That fact gave greater poignancy to the Commissioner-General's appeal for adequate voluntary contributions by Member States to ensure the continued operational viability of the Agency. UNRWA faced an even more critical financial situation in 1985 than during the previous year. It appeared that, even with crippling cuts, the Agency had incurred a deficit during 1984 which had been carried forward to the current year. There was likely to be a cash shortfall of almost \$US 67 million in the Agency's cash expenditure of \$US 231.6 million in 1985. If the financial crisis of the Agency was not solved through enhanced voluntary contributions, Member States would have no alternative but to fund UNRWA from the regular budget of the United Nations. As it had been unable to restore their homeland to the Palestine refugees, the international community could not callously cause such conditions to prevail as would lead to the death and destruction of those victims of war and turmoil.

15. Pakistan had been anxious to increase its financial contribution to UNRWA but had been unable to do so because of the burden of more than 3 million Afghan refugees who had sought shelter on its soil. Pakistan had nevertheless decided, as a token of its continuing solidarity with the Palestinian people, to announce an increase of 50,000 rupees for 1986 bringing its total contribution to PRs 350,000 for that year. The fact that UNRWA had gradually become a regular institution underscored the great injustice done to the Palestinian people and demanded a just solution which would ensure the early return of the Palestine refugees to their homeland and the restoration of their inalienable rights to self-determination and independence.

16. Mrs. MARTIN (Canada), paid tribute to the sterling work done by the outgoing Commissioner-General of UNRWA, Mr. Rydbeck, and said that the passage of time did not make the situation in the Middle East any less tragic. Her country contributed to the work of UNRWA and other humanitarian efforts on behalf of Palestinians.

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(Mrs. Martin, Canada)

17. The Commissioner-General's report (A/40/13 and Add.1) warned that States would have to provide at least \$US 191 million if programme cuts with far-reaching repercussions were to be avoided. It would be useful for the UNRWA secretariat to draw up a list of UNRWA projects in order of medium-term priority, so that the least essential operations could be phased out first. In the run-up to the Pledging Conference for UNRWA, her delegation appealed to all States which had not yet done so to contribute generously. It would be most regrettable if basic services to the Palestinians were reduced, as well as the education programmes, which gave employment to many Palestinians. Her own country was prepared to maintain its level of contributions despite severe budgetary restrictions.

18. Congratulating the new Commissioner-General, Mr. Giacomelli, on his appointment, she called upon all parties to the Arab-Israeli dispute to make every possible effort to reach a just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

19. Mr. FREUDENSCHUSS (Austria) said that the Commissioner-General's report (A/40/13 and Add.1), while not denying the Agency's grave financial problems, gave an encouraging picture of the staff's dedication under extremely difficult conditions. His delegation deplored the kidnapping, intimidation and harassment of UNRWA staff by the Israeli occupation authorities. The Agency's financial situation gave cause for serious concern: the Advisory Commission of UNRWA had recommended that fund-raising missions should be sent to current or prospective donor countries and that a meeting of concerned Governments should be held early in 1986.

20. In addition to the pledge which Austria would make at the forthcoming Pledging Conference, his country would be making a special donation of 2,000 tons of flour in response to an urgent appeal by UNRWA. Austria had repeatedly called for the restoration of Lebanese sovereignty and independence, and had carried out a number of humanitarian projects in that country.

21. He expressed appreciation of the untiring efforts of the outgoing Commissioner-General, Mr. Rydbeck, and congratulated the new incumbent, Mr. Giacomelli, on his appointment.

22. Mr. VALERO (Chile) stressed the need for a just, comprehensive and lasting solution to the problem of the Palestine refugees and reiterated his Government's position supporting the right of all States in the region, including Israel, to exist within secure and internationally recognized borders and calling upon Israel to withdraw from the occupied territories. The right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, including the establishment of their own State, must be implemented.

23. UNRWA was beset with a number of problems: the extreme difficulty of carrying out its work in the field, the acute financial problems which jeopardized the implementation of current programmes and the refusal of certain countries to contribute to the financing of UNRWA. The countries which, on the one hand, supported the Palestinian cause and, on the other hand, refrained from providing financial assistance to the Agency sought to make use of that situation for political ends. The report of the Commissioner-General of UNRWA (A/40/13 and

(Mr. Valero, Chile)

Add.1) showed that the Agency, in spite of enormous problems, was carrying out its work with determination and in a spirit of self-sacrifice. The work of the Agency was a concrete example of the United Nations contribution to improving the lot of mankind. For that reason, the General Assembly must find a stable, permanent and secure basis for financing the Agency. Until that was achieved, consideration should be given to the possibility of covering part or all of the Agency's deficit through funds from the regular budget of the United Nations.

24. The continued viability of the Agency's programmes and activities, particularly with regard to rations, welfare and construction and maintenance, was being jeopardized. Furthermore, the Agency's educational programmes, which could not be further reduced, were encountering difficulties because of the increase in the school-age population, the inflation rate and the current conditions in Lebanon.

25. Chile would continue to contribute to the financing of UNRWA and urged the international community to support the Agency's work and refrain from politicizing that important question. In view of the crisis affecting the Agency, the Organization should take practical steps to provide UNRWA with the means to carry out its task as effectively as possible.

26. Mr. ALSHAWKANI (Yemen) said that 40 years had passed without a solution being found to the problems of the Palestine refugees, and asked how much more time would be needed before General Assembly resolutions designed to solve those problems were implemented. Israel bore full responsibility for the desperate situation of Palestinian refugees, and the United Nations must put an end to Israel's arbitrary acts of aggression, of which he cited examples, against the Palestinian and other Arab peoples. The report of the Commissioner-General (A/40/13 and Add.1) and the statement made by his successor provided many examples of arbitrary practices in the occupied territories, and demonstrated that it was Israel's aim to eliminate the Palestinian refugee camps entirely. Israeli practices had extended to interference with the operations of the Agency and detention of UNRWA staff, thus violating the privileges and immunities accorded to United Nations personnel, and also the fourth Geneva Convention.

27. The financial crisis faced by the Agency was giving rise to concern over its ability to carry out its mandate. The creation of UNRWA had been based on the recognition by the international community of its responsibility towards the Palestinian people, but it was clear that Israel had become determined to bring about the disappearance of the Agency. Secure sources of financing must be found in order to prevent any reduction in the services provided by the UNRWA, and responsibility for such financing rested with the international community. His country's delegation called for the incorporation of the Agency's budget into that of the United Nations as a whole and reaffirmed that any solution to the problem of the Palestinian people must ensure the realization of the legitimate right of the Arab people of Palestine to establish its own State on Palestinian national soil.

28. Mr. FALTZ (Luxembourg), speaking on behalf of the States members of the European Community and Spain and Portugal, paid tribute to the outgoing Commissioner-General, Mr. Rydbeck, and the dedicated staff of UNRWA and congratulated the new Commissioner-General, Mr. Giacomelli, on his appointment.

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(Mr. Faltz, Luxembourg)

29. The reports before the Committee concerning UNRWA's financial crisis gave a good indication of the history and extent of the problem. It was alarming to note that the Agency's income for 1985 was expected to fall short of requirements by \$US 67 million and that a similar situation was likely to occur in 1986. The Commissioner-General had had no choice but to cut planned expenditure by some \$US 50 million, but some of that expenditure could not be delayed forever and there was still a deficit of \$US 5 million in the current financial year. It was remarkable that, as yet, it had been possible to avoid a reduction in the Agency's main services.

30. The Working Group on the Financing of UNRWA had emphasized the need to guarantee the Agency's resources every year by means of a system of voluntary contributions and a more generous response to the Agency's appeals. UNRWA was supported by a relatively small number of countries. It was essential to increase the number of donor countries if it was to maintain its essential services. Under the terms of the Convention signed by the European Community and UNRWA for the period 1984-1986, the Community's contribution for 1985 amounted to some 31.5 million European currency units.

31. Conflict and tension in the areas where UNRWA operated, in the Beirut region and in South and North Lebanon, particularly in and around Tripoli, seriously hampered the Agency in the execution of its work. The continual threat hanging over the civilian population of Lebanon, particularly the Palestine refugees, was intolerable, and the parties who controlled the various regions of Lebanon should ensure that civilians were protected. The Commissioner-General's report (A/40/13 and Add.1) also gave disturbing accounts of the detention without charge of UNRWA staff and the destruction of refugees' homes. He appealed to all concerned to respect the inviolability of UNRWA equipment and premises, and called for the release of Mr. Alec Collett, a British subject who had disappeared on 25 March 1985 while working for UNRWA.

32. It was encouraging to note that the proportion of the Agency's resources needed for emergency relief was declining as education and health programmes gained way. In 1984/85, general education had been the Agency's main activity: the number of pupils had increased, and the General Assembly's appeal for study grants for Palestinian refugees had been favourably received.

33. Mr. ABOUASSI (Lebanon) said that the political nature of problems addressed by UNRWA made it essential to exercise caution in compiling reports on its activities. His delegation had in the past called for greater precision and justice in references to the situation of Palestine refugees in Lebanon and on Lebanese/Palestinian relations in general, and it believed that any discussion of the report of the Commissioner-General (A/40/13 and Add.1) should be based on objectivity. A preliminary reading of the report gave the impression that the Agency's financial difficulties and the serious situation of Palestinians in Lebanon were paramount among the problems faced by the Palestinian people, but he believed that the problems of Palestine refugees elsewhere, including the occupied territories, were in fact extremely severe.

34. Lebanon shared the concern of the Commissioner-General for the fate of the

(Mr. Abouassi, Lebanon)

Palestinians, but chose to disagree with his views on certain points. Paragraph 2 of the report had referred to attacks by the "Shiite Amal militia" on Shatila and Burj el-Barajneh camps in the Beirut area. It would have been more appropriate for the report to refer, as it had in paragraph 34, to the fact that both Lebanese and Palestinian residents of Lebanon had been frequent victims of violence. It was not acceptable to Lebanon that such incidents should be described as the actions of a hostile Lebanese group against an innocent group of refugees. The Lebanese had not instigated those incidents and had shown more concern than any other people for the fate of the Palestinians. The problem of violence in relation to the Palestinian presence in Lebanon also affected the whole Lebanese population. Since 1948, the Lebanese had opened their doors to hundreds of thousands of Palestinian refugees and had accorded to them rights and freedoms which had not been accessible in any other country. The Lebanese people continued to reaffirm their support for the Palestinian cause and to emphasize the need to find appropriate solutions. However, they were determined that conditions should not be allowed to revert to those prevailing before 1982, which had led to Israel's invasion of the country.

35. Despite the foregoing remarks, Lebanon remained concerned with the humanitarian aspects of the Palestinian problem and continued to believe that the best solution was to ensure the return of the Palestinian people to its homes and its territory by means of a just and peaceful settlement of the Middle East question. Until such a solution was found, the protection of Palestinians and all other residents of Lebanon was the legal responsibility of the Lebanese State and its security services. The best method of ensuring such protection was to secure assistance from the international community, and all other interested parties, to the Lebanese Government in order to enable it to extend its authority throughout its national territory. It was also necessary to ensure the implementation of Security Council resolutions relating to Lebanon particularly resolutions 425 (1978), 508 (1982) and 509 (1982), which called for Israel's withdrawal from all Lebanese territory and the deployment of UNIFIL along Lebanon's internationally recognized borders. Applying the principle "prevention is better than cure", Lebanon believed that respect for the laws of the host country would be the best guarantee of safety for the Palestinians.

36. With regard to the financial crisis affecting the Agency's operations, he said that the Lebanese Government was paying a portion of the Agency's expenses in Lebanon and was fully prepared to maintain contacts with UNRWA officials. It rejected in principle any reduction in the services provided to Palestine refugees, in view of the very negative consequences of such a reduction. However, it also agreed with the Commissioner-General that neither he nor UNRWA could be made to bear full responsibility for the Agency's difficulties and that the General Assembly was ultimately responsible for the fate of the Agency and the nature of its operations. It supported efforts to ensure stable sources of finance for UNRWA and also the Commissioner-General's proposal for a meeting to study practical means of achieving an appropriate solution to the Agency's financial problems. In the meantime, efforts should be maintained to make the international community more aware of the dangers that would ensue if UNRWA were not able to meet its financial commitments.

37. The Commissioner-General had referred in his report to difficulties faced by

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(Mr. Abouassi, Lebanon)

UNRWA in managing its operations and programmes in Lebanon, but it was necessary to point out that such difficulties were faced by the whole population of Lebanon in carrying out the simple operations of daily life, as a result of the destructive war which had been fought on its territory for over 10 years. As for occurrences of kidnapping, such incidents took place in all free societies. The particular dangers of the situation in Lebanon could best be remedied by the provision of assistance to the Lebanese Government in order that it might strengthen its security apparatus and extend the rule of law throughout the country. The Lebanese Government remained determined to ensure the release of Mr. Alec Collett and all others, whether of foreign or Lebanese nationality, who had been abducted.

38. With regard to direct problems between the Lebanese Government and UNRWA, there were, fortunately, no UNRWA staff members remaining in Lebanese prisons. Furthermore, instructions had been issued on 20 August 1985 by the Lebanese Government to its consular missions abroad to the effect that the validity of Palestinian travel documents should be extended for a further year from the date of renewal, without any need to refer to Beirut for approval.

39. The Lebanese delegation was confident that the new Commissioner-General would strive to ensure that UNRWA achieved the objectives for which it had been created. He could rely upon the full co-operation of the Lebanese Government in his exercise of the humanitarian functions entrusted to him.

40. Mr. DAAER (United Arab Emirates) expressed satisfaction at the commendable work of UNRWA in providing assistance to the Palestine refugees. The question of Palestine was primarily a political question involving a people which had been dispossessed in order to be replaced by Zionist settlers from all over the world. The report of the Commissioner-General of UNRWA (A/40/13 and Add.1) showed the continued deterioration of the living conditions of the Palestinians, which was due, in particular, to the harsh measures taken by the Israeli military occupation authorities. Furthermore, Israeli aggression, such as the recent raid against the PLO headquarters in Tunisia and the murder of thousands of Palestinians in south Lebanon, had caused untold suffering to Palestine refugees and had adversely affected the ability of UNRWA to carry out its tasks.

41. The report of the Commissioner-General showed, on the one hand, the determined efforts of the Agency to provide assistance to the refugees and, on the other hand, the constraints deliberately imposed by the Israeli authorities to impede the work of UNRWA. Palestine refugees in the occupied territories were defenceless against the acts of aggression carried out by Zionist settlers. Instead of protecting the refugees, the Israeli military authorities encouraged the settlers to commit further acts of violence against them. His Government called upon the international community, particularly those countries which supported Israel, to reject Israel's criminal policies against the Palestine refugees in the occupied territories and its plans to evict those refugees from the Gaza Strip and the West Bank.

42. The reduction in the services provided by UNRWA as a result of austerity measures was alarming. Those States, whose support enabled Israel to continue its illegal military occupation of the Palestinian territories had the clear

(Mr. Daaer, United Arab Emirates)

responsibility to provide assistance to the Agency and to the Palestinian people in general. He appealed to the international community to increase its contributions to UNRWA in order to enable it to carry out its programmes in 1986. Furthermore, consideration should be given to the possibility of defraying the Agency's expenses from the regular budget of the United Nations, so that the same problem would not arise every year.

43. He noted with satisfaction the determination of UNRWA to continue to carry out its humanitarian work in spite of the difficulties facing it. The Palestine refugees were clearly entitled to compensation for their property which had been confiscated by the Israeli authorities. Accordingly, Member States should force Israel to co-operate in order to make progress in the implementation of paragraph 11 of the General Assembly resolution 194 (III).

44. The refusal of the Israeli authorities to co-operate in the implementation of General Assembly resolution 39/99 K on the University of Jerusalem "Al-Quds" for Palestine Refugees demonstrated Israel's indifference to the educational needs of the Palestine refugees and was yet another attempt to deprive the Palestinians of their rights. The Israeli authorities deliberately provoked Arab students and teachers in order to have a pretext for shutting down educational institutions and impeding their functioning in the occupied territories. The report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Population of the Occupied Territories (A/40/702) provided ample information in that regard.

45. The General Assembly should adopt a resolution condemning Israel's policy of impeding the educational activities of Palestine refugees in Jerusalem and the other occupied territories. The international community had a legal and moral responsibility toward the Palestinian people. Until the problem of the Palestinian people was solved, the United Nations, which had contributed to the creation of that problem through the establishment of the State of Israel, must provide the necessary services to meet the needs of the Palestinian people.

46. Mr. SIDOROV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that the Arab people of Palestine were still a nation in exile after almost 40 years because the Israeli occupying forces continued to carry out their inhuman policies. The Palestinian problem was at the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict and must be solved in order to normalize the situation in that region. There was broad international agreement on the principles which should serve as a basis for settling the Palestinian question, the most important of which was the implementation of the inalienable national rights of the Palestinian people, including its right to establish its own State.

47. The parties guilty of dispossessing the Palestinians were well known. The ruling circles in Israel, in accordance with their chauvinist ideology, continued to violate the national rights of the Arab people of Palestine, ignore Security Council resolutions aimed at halting Israeli aggression and conduct an expansionist policy based on terror and economic subjugation. Israel stopped at nothing in its cynical and barbarous attempts to perpetuate the results of its aggression and prevent the establishment of an independent Palestinian State. The United States, which provided all-round support to Israel and impeded a real settlement in the Middle East, was also responsible for the failure to solve the Palestinian problem.

(Mr. Sidorov, USSR)

48. The Middle East problem could not be solved by seeking a separate deal with both sides; the collective effort of all parties was required. There had been wide-ranging support for the proposal to convene an International Peace Conference on the Middle East under the auspices of the United Nations.

49. The USSR had never been merely a passive observer in the Middle East question. Its detailed proposals for the resolution of the Middle East problem stressed the need to guarantee the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and to allow it to return to their homes or receive adequate compensation for its losses.

50. His delegation shared the general concern at the detention of UNRWA staff, damage to Agency property and the refusal to pay compensation, which all demonstrated Israel's contempt for the authority of the United Nations.

51. His delegation considered that the responsibility for the financing of UNRWA lay with the Israeli aggressors and their supporters. The USSR participated in humanitarian programmes organized by United Nations specialized agencies and gave some assistance in the maintenance of the Agency's international staff, in addition to its bilateral assistance to the Palestinian and other Arab peoples.

The meeting rose at 5.30 p.m.