



Wednesday, 24 November 1954,  
at 10.45 a.m.

**New York**

**CONTENTS**

	<i>Page</i>
Agenda item 18: Report of the Director of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East ( <i>continued</i> ).....	145

**Chairman: Mr. Thor THORS (Iceland).**

**AGENDA ITEM 18**

**Report of the Director of the United Nations  
Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees  
in the Near East (A/2717, A/2717/Add.1,  
A/AC.76/L.15) (*continued*)**

1. Mr. WADSWORTH (United States of America) hoped that the joint draft resolution (A/AC.76/L.15), whose primary objective was to prolong the mandate of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for a period of five years would receive the Committee's support.
2. The resolutions which the General Assembly had adopted on the question since 1948, which were referred to in the preamble of the draft resolution, gave the Agency adequate terms of reference. In addition, the report of the Director of the Agency (A/2717) and the special report of the Director and the Advisory Commission (A/2717/Add.1) underscored the problems confronting the Agency and would be an excellent guide for future work. The third paragraph of the preamble of the draft resolution noted that repatriation or compensation of the refugees had not been effected and that the situation of the refugees continued to be a matter of grave concern.
3. As regards the right to repatriation, he wished to urge upon the Arab and other delegations his delegation's conviction that the eventual solution of the refugee problem lay in a new and stronger economy for the Arab countries, coming to regard many of their refugee brothers as permanent members of the community and co-sharers in the Near East's future. At the same time, his delegation was still convinced that Israel ought to satisfy one of the two rights of the refugees: repatriation or compensation. In any event, the United States Government, as the Secretary of State had stated on 1 June 1953, felt that most of the refugees could best be integrated into the life of the Arab countries.
4. Accordingly, the General Assembly should request the Governments of the area to continue to co-operate with the Director of the Agency in seeking and carrying out projects capable of supporting substantial numbers of refugees. That was sound economic sense for both the Arab States and the refugees, and also for the contributors. He recalled his earlier statement (29th meeting) wherein he indicated the importance which his Government attached to the early start of

such projects as those in Sinai and the Jordan Valley. The authors of the joint draft resolution felt that the Director of the Agency was empowered to conduct any programme desired by the host countries, for which he could obtain financial support. Accordingly, they had thought it unnecessary to consider an amendment to the Agency's terms of reference to permit it to engage in general development programmes undertaken by the countries of the region, as the Director and the Advisory Commission recommended in their special report.

5. The United States delegation supported the provisions of the draft resolution concerning the rehabilitation fund. It also approved the Agency's budget for the fiscal year ending 30 June 1955. In connexion with the rehabilitation budget, he was glad to note the progress which had been made in the Agency's educational programmes. As regards assistance, he was fully aware of the sad plight of the border villagers, but he did not believe that the immediate solution of that problem was within the Agency's terms of reference. In that connexion, the study which the Director of the Agency was to make on the assistance which should be given to other categories of claimants for relief would certainly be very useful; but it must be made clear that in agreeing to the study the contributory States were not committing themselves to any increase in their aid. Furthermore, the United States thought that any re-definition of the refugees eligible for relief should be contingent on the establishment of an effective system of control, in order to ensure that the registration rolls should include only refugees proved to be genuinely entitled to relief. Every effort should be made not to exceed the present number of relief recipients.

6. In the past, the General Assembly had approved a provisional figure for the following fiscal year. Unfortunately, the figure had often been exceeded. The new procedure contemplated in paragraphs 7 and 8 of the operative part of the draft resolution should make it easier to prepare the budget and to obtain the necessary contributions for the Agency. It was of the utmost importance that the General Assembly should launch a fresh appeal to the Governments of Member and non-member States to contribute to the support of the Agency.

7. Mr. ARDALAN (Iran) thanked the Director of the Agency and the Advisory Commission for having emphasized certain truths in their reports, while maintaining an attitude of laudable impartiality. The work of the Agency and the Advisory Commission deserved the highest praise. His delegation wished to congratulate the host countries, which, despite many difficulties, were helping to alleviate the sufferings of the refugees.

8. The reports under consideration stressed the importance of a solution of the refugee problem to the stability, well-being and development of the host countries and the entire Near East. Iran viewed the tragic plight of the refugees with sorrow and concern, in view

of the moral and religious ties which bound the Iranian nation to those unfortunate outcasts. More than any other region, the Near East needed peace and harmony. Moreover, the United Nations was in duty bound to work out the appropriate solution, in conformity with the resolutions which had already been adopted on the question and with the legitimate interests of the refugees.

9. As regards relief, the report of the Director of the Agency clearly indicated the steps taken. It appeared that assistance, which was gradually to have been brought to an end, must be continued, and even increased; the Director expressly stated that relief and assistance to the refugees were still an essential part of the Agency's work and were of vital importance. There appeared to be no possibility of reducing the Agency's relief budget, which, incidentally, averaged the small sum of \$27 per refugee per annum. His delegation fully supported the comments made by the observer of Jordan (29th meeting) on the plight of the group designated as economic refugees.

10. While it was a matter for satisfaction that certain categories of refugees were receiving full rations, it must be observed with regret that the representatives of the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) had stated, on the basis of two nutritional surveys, that many children between six months and two years of age were suffering from chronic intestinal disorders due to a diet deficient in proteins. It was gratifying to note that the proportion of refugees living in tents had been reduced to 32 per cent in March 1954, as compared with 87 per cent in March 1951. It was to be hoped that the completion of the current programme and the adoption of the next budget would enable the Agency to construct adequate shelter for all the refugees. The work of the Agency and WHO in the field of insect and malaria control was highly meritorious and praiseworthy; but unfortunately certain important needs had still not been met. The question of clothing was a serious problem for the Agency and was difficult to solve with the means available. In view of the conditions under which the refugees had lived so far, their clothing had worn out little by little; and despite the generosity of voluntary organizations adequate replacements were impossible.

11. As regards rehabilitation, the Director of the Agency had emphasized in his annual report that one of the greatest obstacles to the attainment of the goal envisaged by the General Assembly was the absence of a solution along the lines of the Assembly's resolutions regarding repatriation and compensation. If that was so, it was because the negative attitude of the Government of Israel had remained unchanged. The Iranian delegation whole-heartedly endorsed the United States representative's statement that all Member States must ensure respect for the rights of the refugees. It hoped that the Israel Government would submit positive proposals in that connexion, and had been happy to learn that that Government had expressed a willingness to discuss the question of compensation to refugees.

12. Under the programme adopted at the General Assembly's sixth session (resolution 513 (VI)), the relief budget was to have been reduced or even closed in June 1954, as a result of action to ensure the rehabilitation of refugees. As no major change had been made in the relief programme, it could only be concluded that no appreciable progress had been made in

the carrying out of the rehabilitation programme. The report stated that it would not be known for a few months whether the Sinai and Yarmuk-Jordan Valley development projects were physically feasible. Moreover, the execution of those projects would provide a living for 150,000 or 200,000 persons only, and it would be years before even that number could be considered fully self-supporting.

13. The Director of the Agency had explained (28th meeting) the principal reason for the delays. The refugees considered that the execution of the projects might prejudice their rights to repatriation or compensation. True, the General Assembly had denied that, but that assurance had not sufficed to make the refugees change their attitude. The Governments of the host countries could not without difficulty resist the wishes of the refugees, especially as the rehabilitation of the refugees in the host countries raised very delicate problems. It was for that reason that the Director of the Agency had asked the General Assembly to note the difficulties encountered and to consider future possibilities. Such possibilities were mentioned in the recommendations of the Director of the Agency and in those of the Advisory Commission.

14. The Iranian delegation fully supported those recommendations. It favoured the extension of the Agency's mandate for a period of five years and thought that close contact between the Conciliation Commission for Palestine and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East would be advantageous to all parties. The execution of new projects would undoubtedly facilitate rehabilitation and create better economic conditions. Greater flexibility in the use of the rehabilitation fund would enable the Director of the Agency to take part in general development programmes of the countries of the area. The Iranian delegation would vote for the joint draft resolution (A/AC.76/L.15) because it embodied all the recommendations made by the Director of the Agency and by the Advisory Commission.

15. Mr. DEJANY (Saudi Arabia) wished to join with the other delegations which had already paid tribute to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency, its Director and Deputy Director and its staff, to the Advisory Commission, to the specialized agencies and to all religious and other organizations which had contributed directly or through the Agency to the alleviation of the sufferings of the Palestine Arab refugees.

16. There were no Palestine Arab refugees on relief in Saudi Arabia. Of the several thousand refugees who had come to the country, some had found employment and the others were winning their livelihood by trading. But Saudi Arabia had not ceased to feel concern for the fate of 900,000 Arab refugees still living in other countries of the Near East. The King of Saudi Arabia had ordered the distribution of a sum of more than £150,000 sterling to the refugees in Jordan, Gaza, Lebanon and Syria, and in addition the Government of Saudi Arabia contributed to the relief programme through the Agency and the Arab League.

17. The Director of the Agency had said in his statement that the refugee population was increasing at the rate of approximately 3 per cent per year; thus 175,000 children had been born in the camps and other improvised shelters in conditions of untold misery, deprivation and extreme injustice. They owed that brutal entry into life to a people who had a short

memory of history; had it not been for the inhuman attitude of the Jews in Israel those children would have enjoyed the comfort and security of the home established for them over the centuries in their native land by the toil of their ancestors. The Director's report showed that three-fourths of the refugees were women and children under fifteen years of age — innocent victims whose homes and property were in some cases enjoyed and exploited by the Jews of Israel, and in others, offered to tempt Jews in other lands to abandon their present homes and go to Israel.

18. The Director's report could not be expected to give a complete picture of the distressing situation of the refugees, but it did provide enough information to give some idea of the situation. Words could never be adequate to convey a true picture of the sufferings of those people. He read from Rabbi Morris Lazon's report on a visit to one of the refugee camps in Lebanon the previous winter. Rabbi Lazon's report had been published in the *Jewish News-Letter* of 7 December 1953. The author described his visit, which had been made on a rainy day: he had seen torn tents with no floors, a few soaked pieces of filthy cloth, no stoves and houses without roofs. In such places hundreds of thousands of human beings were living in utter misery. He had seen women wearing soaked sacking, and crying for their children; he had heard many shouting that they could not sleep. The author had seen nothing like it since 1921, when he had visited the Joint Distribution Committee camps on the border between Poland and Russia: there, however, there had been some shelter from heat and cold whereas in the camp in Lebanon there had been nothing. It should not be forgotten that those refugees had had a relatively high standard of living before the catastrophe that had stripped them of all their property. Before 1948 the per capita income in Palestine had been approximately \$150 a year. Most of the Palestinian Arabs had been farmers, and they held staunchly to their land. But the Zionists had procured by illegitimate means the Arab land which they had failed to procure by legitimate means. In 1948, the Jews had owned less than 10 per cent of the land they now occupied. The Israel Prime Minister himself had said in 1949 that if the State of Israel had not been established it would have taken the Jews, at the previous tempo of modern Jewish colonization, 800 years to acquire the land they now possessed. Between 1940 and 1942, according to the statistics for 1943 published by the Palestinian Government, the Jews had acquired from the Arabs 154,998 dunums of land at a cost of £14,395,422 sterling (about 57 million). At that rate, if the Jews in Israel were to pay for the 19 million dunums which they had seized they would owe the Arab landowners £2,000 million sterling. Thus the Arab refugees who had been robbed of their property by Israel and were living on international charity were not paupers but respectable people with comparatively ample means. They were the victims, not of a despot, but of the unjust policies of Israel. Their homes, lands and property were still in existence and could easily be identified.

19. His delegation noted with regret — though not with surprise — that the Director's annual report showed an increase in the number of refugees during the preceding year. It noted the Director's statement that the works projects had not produced the desired results and had not removed refugees from dependence on relief, any more than did the small trading that had

sprung up in the camps or the seasonal and casual employment that many refugees had found.

20. His delegation had repeatedly pointed out that the only just and lasting solution to the Arab refugee problem was their repatriation and compensation; some had hoped that the works projects might prove an outlet for those refugees who did not wish to be repatriated, and employment for others, but those hopes and expectations had not materialized.

21. The Director of the Agency had pointed out, as his predecessors had done, that the refugees' longing to return to their homes dominated their attitude and that it would be a serious mistake to underestimate the strength of that feeling. At the same time, however, he had expressed surprise, in paragraph 34 of his annual report, that the refugees had not yet fully accepted the fact that it was in their interest, and in particular in the interest of their children, to participate in and to welcome rehabilitation projects. Surprise at such an attitude on the part of the refugees was understandable; but it had to be admitted that despite all the sufferings they had undergone, that attitude had never been shaken, and that proved that it was unquestionably sincere and deserved admiration and respect. Thus it was particularly regrettable that it should have been insinuated in certain quarters that the feelings of the refugees were perhaps not as sincere as they appeared and that they had been urged on the refugees for political ends. It would be naive to assert that so many people were willing to endure so much hardship to serve the alleged political ends of others, or that so many people did not know what was in their best interests. The continued determination of the refugees showed that those who professed to know their feelings were mistaken and incapable of comprehending the strength of the attachment of those people to their homes. However that might be, it was futile to believe that the question of the Arab refugees could be solved by the development of the economies of the Arab States. In that connexion, Mr. Dejany regarded the first part of the statement just made by the United States representative as unfortunate and disappointing. The Arab refugees had had ample time to consider carefully all the arguments that had been poured into their ears, and they knew better than anyone else what they wanted. One must say with candour that the tragedy which had befallen the Arabs of Palestine since the First World War was due to the unsought advice of the Western Powers. It was no wonder that the refugees were no longer willing to take such advice.

22. The determination of the refugees to return home and to reject resettlement elsewhere naturally bore some influence on the attitude of the host countries. The Director of the Agency pointed out in paragraph 35 of his annual report that the Governments of the host countries were aware of the feelings of the refugees and did not want to take or approve actions which the refugees might consider prejudicial to their rights — particularly those rights relating to repatriation and compensation. Moreover, it was natural, as the Director had pointed out in his report, that the host countries had also to bear in mind the interests of their own indigenous population.

23. In regard to the meagreness of the natural resources made available by the host countries for long-term development projects, a point referred to in paragraph 32 of the Director's report, the responsibility of the Governments of those countries to their own people

should not be overlooked. Meagreness of natural resources was a major characteristic of the countries in the Middle East. The Director had pointed out in paragraph 38 of his report that only Iraq, which was the richest in natural resources, would have succeeded by 1975 in bringing under cultivation more land than was required to maintain its population at the present standard of living. If this was true in regard to Iraq, the situation in the less fortunate Arab States was grave indeed, since they were all endeavouring to raise standards of living. But even if there was an increase in the resources available for long-term development projects in the countries of the area, the opposition of the refugees would still remain the determining factor; and from all indications any expectation of a change of heart on their part was groundless.

24. There was another significant factor which should be borne in mind in weighing the merits of the resettlement plan. The Director stated in paragraph 31 of his annual report that when the two major projects were completed they would, as presently contemplated, provide a living for an estimated 150,000 to 200,000 persons only, and that it would be some years before that number could be considered fully self-supporting. But it should be kept in mind that, with a population increase at the annual rate of 25,000—the figure reported by the Director—the major projects would barely take care of the number of refugees resulting from that natural increase. In paragraph 36 of his report, the Director had stated that, aside from the two large-scale projects at present contemplated, there appeared to be no practical possibilities for major rehabilitation projects in the areas where most of the refugees were now living. In paragraph 9 of the special report, the Director said that no other major projects were at present under consideration.

25. Turning to the Yarmuk-Jordan Valley development, Mr. Dejany pointed out that the political problems which, according to the Advisory Commission and the special report of the Director, now existed had been non-existent when the programme had first been planned. The problems had been brought about by Israel's alleged riparian rights over the waters of the Yarmuk, although the river's sources, tributaries and entire bed lay in Syrian and Jordanian land. It was amazing how Israel was able to get away with the Arab's entire land and property without interference from anyone, and at the same time advance fantastic claims to the waters of the Yarmuk—claims which had hindered and might obstruct projects intended to help in the settlement of Arabs whose homes had been seized by Israel. Legal principles should be invoked, not only when it was in Israel's favour, but also when it was not, as in the case of repatriation and compensation. There should be a fair observance of the maxim, "He who seeks equity must act with equity".

26. It was not possible to sum up the Agency's operations in the field of works projects with any sense of optimism; the experience of the past must be kept in mind. But even if the Agency's efforts in the future came to be entirely successful, after five years the majority of the refugees would find themselves in the same position as they were in now.

27. He had already pointed out at the eighth session (29th meeting) that the Director's report made no mention of efforts to settle the refugee question along the lines laid down by the General Assembly, that is, by repatriation and compensation. He therefore noted

with satisfaction that the Director and the Advisory Commission had stressed that aspect of the problem during the current year and had indicated in paragraph 6 of the special report that absence of a solution on that basis constituted "a very important obstacle to a basic settlement". The passage of time seemed to confirm more and more that an equitable solution to the problem of the Palestinian Arab refugees could be found only along the lines laid down by the General Assembly. The right of the Arab refugees to return to their homes and regain possession of their lands had been unjustly confused with other questions. That right was independent of any solution that might be found to the other problems outstanding between the Arab refugees and Israel or between Israel and the Arab States, for at no time in modern history had the entire civilian population of a country been expelled from their homes and barred from returning to them after the war had ended.

28. Attempts had been made by those who had usurped the property of the Arab refugees to lend their wrongful act some semblance of humanity. They had sought to justify it on the grounds that it was necessary to provide living space for the Jewish refugees, victims of the nazis and the fascists. That pretext had been rejected even by many Jews, as could be seen from an editorial in the *Jewish News-Letter* of 26 November 1951, which indicated that the Jews would have been the first to cry out against the cruelty of an order prohibiting Arab refugees to return to their homes after the danger had passed; that no excuses, not even the dire need of the homeless Jews, could justify refusal to readmit them to the lands in which they had lived for centuries. Arab property had not been taken to meet the dire need of homeless Jews even if such seizure could be justified. The custodian of absentees' property had himself strongly denounced a large part of the Jewish population for the theft of absentee property. *Haaretz* of 26 July 1949 attributed the theft and despoliation to the masses and the intelligentsia who enriched themselves from the property and the Israel Minister of Finance had declared in the Knesset that the custodian could not be held responsible for the fate of the missing property but could only try to function within the *de facto* situation existing as a consequence of the seizures made by the Jewish people.

29. The Israel Press had indicated that Jewish settlements had misappropriated so many thousands of acres of Arab land that they had failed to harvest the land for two and three years; they had even refused to permit the custodian to cultivate it, alleging that it was their property and that no one else would be permitted to work it. Moreover, much of that land was still not being cultivated; the custodian took charge only of what was left and did not attempt to get back what had been looted or misappropriated.

30. Clearly, the sole purpose of the Israel authorities in distributing land to all comers, regardless of need, was to show at a later date that the land could not possibly be restored to the Arabs because it was occupied by Jewish refugees—and thus confront the world with another *fait accompli*. But enjoyment of Arab property was not being limited to needy Jewish immigrants; for all the Jews in displaced persons' camps and all those who wanted to immigrate to Israel had already done so, and still much of the Arab property was going to waste. In those circumstances it was ab-

surd to attempt to resettle the Arabs on foreign soil while their own land awaited them. It was even more absurd to seek enough relief to keep those people barely alive when most of them could live adequately on the income of their properties. It was equally unreasonable to wait the completion of the works projects before taking action with a view to repatriation. The Conciliation Commission or, better still, the Agency should take immediate steps to determine the number and identity of the refugees who still wished to be repatriated; that would greatly facilitate the task of rehabilitation by repatriation or resettlement, as well as the payment of compensation to those who decided not to return.

31. At the eighth session of the General Assembly he had stressed that it would be highly desirable for the Agency to resettle some of the refugees on their former lands and others in the area occupied by Israel beyond the boundaries laid down under the partition plan.

32. The two reports indicated that the Agency, in conformity with paragraph 20 of resolution 302 (IV), had consulted with the Conciliation Commission with regard to the repatriation and compensation of the refugees. But it was not clear what measures the Conciliation Commission had taken as a result of those consultations; it would appear from paragraph 6 of the special report that the Conciliation Commission had not been very active in the matter. The Director and the Advisory Commission very commendably noted Israel's negative attitude in regard to the question and referred it again to the Assembly's attention. However, as the Director had stressed in his statement to the Committee (28th meeting), progress in the achievement of the Agency's tasks was being hampered by the Conciliation Commission's failure to take constructive action to facilitate the repatriation, resettlement and economic and social rehabilitation of the refugees and the payment of compensation, in accordance with its instructions under paragraph 11 of General Assembly resolution 194 (III). Similarly, the problem of protecting the property of refugees, which had been entrusted to the Conciliation Commission in paragraph 2 of Assembly resolution 394 (V), and which was directly connected with the problem of their repatriation had received practically no attention from the Conciliation Commission. The Commission's last progress report (A/2629 and Corr.1) dated 4 January 1954, contained no information of any activity by the Commission with regard to repatriation. It, however, contained a reply from Mr. Eban to a question from the Commission concerning the disposal of property in Israel belonging to Palestine Arab refugees. The Commission had raised the matter in response to a note from the Arab States stating that Israel was disposing of Arab property and was using the proceeds to finance settlement of Jewish refugees, a matter which the Arab States considered as extremely important and seriously detrimental to the refugees' rights and interests. Mr. Eban had replied, first, that such disposal had been authorized by the Government of Israel and effected in accordance with the provisions of the Absentees' Property Law (No. 5710) of 1950; secondly, that under that law the property had become vested in the custodian of absentees' property and had been transferred to the Development Authority set up under a special law; thirdly, that the funds realized in consideration for the property had been treated in accord-

ance with the provisions of section 4 (d) of the Absentees' Property Law; and finally, that the policy of the Government of Israel was to ensure the integration of those refugees who were legally authorized to enter Israel. The Commission had merely included that vague reply in its report; it had apparently made no attempt to examine the provisions of the laws mentioned or their application. That attitude was all the more surprising in view of the fact that the Commission itself had reminded Mr. Eban of its responsibilities in connexion with the property rights of the refugees.

33. Mr. Dejany did not intend to criticize the laws in question, although they had been bitterly criticized by many Israelis for their harsh and unjust provisions. He would limit himself to a few quotations, one of which he took from a *New York Times* dispatch dated 1 August 1950, which referred to the Development Authority as the machinery set up by the Israel Government for the liquidation of property in Israel belonging to absentee Arabs. It stated that the sales were expected to net Israel large sums of money, including foreign exchange to help the nation out of its financial difficulties. That revealed the real objectives of the Development Authority Law. As for the Absentees' Property Law, the custodian was, under its provisions, selling Arab property and turning the proceeds over to the Development Authority for use in absorbing new immigrants. The newspaper *Haaretz* had explained in January 1953 that that step had been necessary in view of the Government's urgent financial need. It was really inconceivable that such a situation could continue without action by the Conciliation Commission, despite the replies supplied to its questions by Mr. Eban. They in themselves ought to have stimulated the Commission to pursue the matter further, if only to ascertain the nature of those laws and to report on their effect on the task entrusted to it with regard to the protection of the rights, property and interests of the refugees. It was difficult to conceive how those rights could be subjected to so much abuse and racial discrimination under the unjust Israel laws, while the Commission took no action or notice of it. In view of Israel's reliance for their unjust actions on these laws, and the wide criticism which they received especially from Israelis and Jews, the Commission was bound at least to investigate and report to the Assembly.

34. Mr. Dejany referred to a recent article by the editor of the Israel newspaper *Maarib* which had described Israel's unfair methods towards the Arab refugees and their property. The article told how the Israel Government could prevent the Arabs from reaching their land, even if they lived in Israel, by declaring the area a security zone to which access was given only to Jews. Then the Jews would take over the Arab lands and all the political parties in the Knesset could acquire a stake in the "plunder". Then a law would be passed confirming ownership of the lands by their relatives and friends, with a compensation at the rate prevalent in 1950, which was one-fourth of the current rate.

35. As for the manner in which much of the refugees' property was administered, Mr. Dejany pointed out that according to the Israel custodian's own statement, 35 to 40 per cent of the custodian's rent revenue went for repairs, 25 per cent for taxes, 12 to 13 per cent for administrative expenses and 10 to 12 per cent for development of various areas. Thus the entire national wealth of the Arabs of Palestine had become almost

unproductive, although the same property had provided adequate means of livelihood for its 1,250,000 Arabs, with an annual per capita income of \$150.

36. It was well known that the Israel Government was using every possible method to obstruct the repatriation of the Arab refugees or the restoration of their property. One such method had been the total destruction of Arab villages; the Journal of the Greek Catholic Church in Israel in its January 1954 issue had published the names of the 161 villages which had been razed to the ground by Israel. He also recalled the tragic destruction the previous winter of the village of Kufr Burum, in western Galilee, whose entire population of 670 was Catholic. The oppressive and discriminatory measures which Israel had adopted towards its Arab minority to encourage their final departure from their native country were also known, and a Jewish publication had gone so far as to say that the Arabs in Israel had lived in ghettos such as Jews had never lived in under Tzarist régime in the twentieth century. As a result of international Zionist control and influence, most of the international information media had been silenced on the racial, discriminatory and aggressive laws enacted in Israel, in contrast to the full coverage given to cases involving the mildest forms of discriminatory and aggressive measures against Jews in other parts of the world. Finally, and above all, there was silence on the part of those voices which made themselves heard in the United Nations in every case of discrimination, injustice and oppression, except where they were perpetrated by the Jews in Israel against their Arab victims. None of those facts could alter the truth no matter how long truth was suppressed; nor did passage of time or alteration and improvement on the property wrongfully taken from its Arab owners ripen into a valid title in favour of the Jewish usurpers or their successors, regardless of any laws which might be passed by Israel and regardless of the inaction of the United Nations.

37. He believed that the existing situation was largely due to the fact that there had been little or no reaction by the United Nations to the laws and policies to which he had referred. But even if the Conciliation Commission doubted its authority to intervene with the Government of Israel with regard to the adoption or execution of those laws, its responsibility to report such developments to the General Assembly could not be questioned. If the true nature of the development had been known to Governments, many of them would probably have been more restrained in the expression of their sympathy towards Israel, materially or otherwise. It was still not too late for the Conciliation Commission to act. The Director had recommended the continued collaboration between the Agency and the Conciliation Commission; if that collaboration was to be fruitful, the Conciliation Commission should renew its efforts and revive its activities.

38. He hoped that a large number of States would continue to defend the legitimate rights of the refugees, and that more of them would condemn discrimination and injustice, whoever might be the perpetrators or the victims. In that connexion, he wished to thank the Governments of Burma, Ceylon, India, Indonesia and Pakistan, which the previous summer, at the conference of their Foreign Ministers held at Colombo, had expressed their deep concern over the sufferings of the Arab refugees and their sympathy with the Arabs of Palestine, and had urged the United Nations to expedite

the rehabilitation of the Arab refugees in their original homes.

39. He described the deplorable material situation of the Arab refugees and how for seven years they had been living on a bare existence ration, at the rate of seven cents a day which paid for the food, shelter, education, medical care and other needs including the cost of administering the whole operation. He appealed to the Committee to recommend a rise in the food ration, in order to combat the serious undernourishment which was appearing, particularly among children. He recalled Associate Justice William O. Douglas' interview with a British nurse at one of the camps where children about to die from undernourishment were given intravenous injections. The nurse had stated that the lives of 200 children were saved in that manner in that camp every month. It was indeed miraculous how mothers could bear and nurse children with less than seven cents' worth of nutrition a day.

40. He said it was tragic that charity should be requested to keep those proud people barely alive, while their homes and wealth were exploited to provide added comfort and security for another people. Israel's double standard was amazing and disgusting if their attitude towards the Arab refugees was compared to the view expressed in a memorandum by their Foreign Minister to the British Foreign Office in connexion with German reparations to the Jews. The memorandum stated that the Government of Israel could not reconcile itself to the enjoyment by Germany of the fruit of its rapine and murder while the victims of an unholy German régime were denied all comfort and redress. No statement could more appropriately describe another relationship, the one existing between Israel and its victims, the Arab refugees.

41. According to the report of the Director and the Advisory Commission, the Agency was providing partial relief to some of the inhabitants of the villages along the demarcation line who had lost their lands and means of livelihood, but not their homes. But the major part of the refugee's allowance was used for food; very little was spent on shelter. It followed that many of the inhabitants of those villages were in the same degree of want as the other refugees. Such economic refugees must be given full rations, and the Agency should endeavour to secure their complete rehabilitation; resources from the rehabilitation fund could very justifiably be used for that purpose. The rehabilitation of those people was the more justified because it was not obstructed by any of the other factors which had prevented the rehabilitation of the other refugees, and because those people were still in and around their own villages and numbered around 100,000. He hoped that the children in those villages, who were not receiving rations, would be treated in the same way as the other refugee children.

42. In conclusion, he noted with satisfaction that the Director and the Advisory Commission agreed that it would be desirable to extend the distribution of clothing and to supplement it with cotton cloth, particularly for children's clothes.

43. The CHAIRMAN announced that the list of speakers in the general debate was closed.

44. Mr. AL-JAMALI (Iraq) suggested that Mr. Tannous, the representative of the refugees, should be invited to speak before the Committee. His delegation was prepared to submit a formal proposal to that effect to the Committee at its next meeting.

45. Mr. COMAY (Israel) pointed out the question of extending an invitation to Mr. Tannous raised a number of points which required consideration by the Committee. There were several refugee organizations, and it might be wondered which one Mr. Tannous actually represented; the expression "representative of the refugees" was vague. However that might be, he

hoped that the written communication which the representative of Iraq had said he would address to the Chairman, would be as explicit as possible. The Israel delegation, for its part, was not yet able to state its position.

The meeting rose at 12.50 p.m.