



## General Assembly

Distr.  
GENERAL

A/C.5/52/2  
24 September 1997

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Fifty-second session  
FIFTH COMMITTEE  
Agenda item 153

### HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

Respect for the privileges and immunities of officials  
of the United Nations and the specialized agencies and  
related organizations

Report submitted by the Secretary-General on behalf of and  
with the approval of the members of the Administrative  
Committee on Coordination

#### I. INTRODUCTION

1. At its fifty-first session, the General Assembly adopted resolution 51/227 of 3 April 1997, in which it took note of the report submitted by the Secretary-General on behalf of the members of the Administrative Committee on Coordination on the above subject (A/C.5/51/3); expressed its deep appreciation to United Nations personnel, including those engaged in peacekeeping and humanitarian operations and locally recruited staff, for their efforts to contribute to achieving peace and security and to alleviating the suffering of the people living in areas of conflict; deplored the risks confronting United Nations personnel, including those engaged in peacekeeping and humanitarian operations and locally recruited staff; requested the Secretary-General to submit a report on this issue to the General Assembly at its fifty-second session and also requested the Secretary-General to pay special attention to Member States' restrictions, which might impede the ability of officials to carry out their functions.

2. The present report, containing updated information about respect for the privileges and immunities of officials as well as their security and safety, is submitted in response to General Assembly resolution 51/227. It is presented on behalf of and with the approval of the members of the Administrative Committee on Coordination and is based upon the information provided by United Nations programmes, funds, offices and missions as well as the specialized agencies and related organizations. A list of the organs and organizations that were



requested to provide information is contained in annex IV to the present report. The report covers the period from 1 July 1996 to 30 June 1997.

## II. SECURITY AND SAFETY OF OFFICIALS

3. In fulfilment of the responsibilities assigned by Member States to the organizations of the United Nations system, staff members continue to carry out their duties in situations which require them to take grave personal risks on a daily basis. During the reporting period, 22 civilian staff members of different United Nations organizations and agencies lost their lives in the performance of their duties (see annex II). Forty-seven others were held hostage. Throughout the reporting period, staff members in the performance of their functions have been subjected to attack, injury, abuse, harassment and rape. Details may be found in the information provided by various organizations included in annex III. In view of the deteriorating security situation it became necessary to relocate or even evacuate dependants and/or staff from six countries, including Burundi, the Central African Republic, all locations in then Zaire (Democratic Republic of the Congo), the Republic of the Congo, Sierra Leone and Tajikistan.

4. In an effort to make further improvements in staff security and security management in the field, the United Nations Security Coordinator convened an ad hoc inter-agency meeting on security in Rome from 6 to 8 May 1997. The meeting was devoted to the review of security matters that continue to be of concern to the organizations of the United Nations system. Issues included, inter alia, the preparation of security information for staff, security of locally recruited staff, cooperation with non-governmental organizations, coordination with peacekeeping and other field missions, security training, stress management, hostage crisis management, transportation of cash, residential security measures and financial implications of security measures.

5. It must be emphasized once again that the primary responsibility for the security and protection of staff members, their spouse and dependants and property and of the organizations' property rests with the host Government. This responsibility flows from every Government's normal and inherent function of maintaining order and protecting persons and property within its jurisdiction. In the case of international organizations and their officials and property, the Government is considered to have a special responsibility under the Charter of the United Nations or its agreements with individual organizations. Under Article 105 of the Charter, the United Nations is entitled to enjoy such privileges and immunities as are necessary for the fulfilment of its purposes. The other organizations in the United Nations family and their staff enjoy similar privileges and immunities under their respective constitutional instruments. Officials of the organizations are entitled under the same provisions to enjoy such privileges and immunities as are necessary for the independent exercise of their functions. Further, within the territory of any country that has acceded to the Conventions on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations<sup>1</sup> and of the Specialized Agencies,<sup>2</sup> staff members of the organizations "shall be given, together with their spouses and relatives dependent on them, the same repatriation facilities in time of international crisis as diplomatic envoys".<sup>3</sup> The Conventions further stipulate that the

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premises of the organizations are "inviolable" and that their property, wherever located and by whomever held, shall be immune from "any ... form of interference".<sup>4</sup>

### III. ARREST AND DETENTION OF OFFICIALS

6. The arrest or detention of staff members continued to be a major issue through the reporting period. This was the case in particular for Rwanda, where numerous locally recruited United Nations staff members continue to be detained. In an effort to expedite the resolution of these cases, the United Nations system in Rwanda has engaged the services of a Rwandan attorney to pursue the legal interests of the detainees during the investigation and trial phases. The dossiers have been completed and are awaiting transfer to the judicial authorities of Rwanda. Conversations are under way with the Government of Rwanda to bring these cases to the attention of the judicial bodies as soon as possible.

7. Detailed information regarding the staff of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), as provided by the Agency, is included in annex III.

### IV. TAXATION OF OFFICIALS

8. The issue of taxation of officials is included in the submissions provided by UNRWA and the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) (see annex III).

### V. RESTRICTIONS ON OFFICIAL AND PRIVATE TRAVEL OF OFFICIALS OF THE UNITED NATIONS, THE SPECIALIZED AGENCIES AND RELATED ORGANIZATIONS

9. Restrictions imposed by the United States authorities on the private travel of staff members and their dependants who are nationals of particular countries remained in force.

10. Information concerning travel restrictions on UNRWA personnel is provided in annex III to the present report.

### VI. OBSERVATIONS

11. While personnel working for the United Nations system have faced security problems throughout the history of the Organization, events over the past year have exposed them to extreme violence, danger and personal risk on an unprecedented scale. Of particular concern is the fact that, since 1 July 1996, 22 staff members have lost their lives. Of these deaths, 11 occurred in Rwanda.

12. While it is heartening to note that there has been a decrease in the number of staff members under arrest and detention from 70 in 1996 to 55 in the present

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reporting period, it is also of particular concern that 33 of those individuals are being detained in Rwanda.

13. Statistics regarding the death or arrest and detention of staff members do not reflect the full picture since they do not include those staff members who were attacked, harassed, injured, beaten or raped. Nor do the numbers measure the loss, trauma and emotional stress suffered by the families.

14. The Secretary-General firmly believes that the Conventions on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations and of the Specialized Agencies constitute a critical element in the protection of staff members and their dependants from arrest and detention. Therefore, the Secretary-General invites States that have not become a party to the Conventions to give consideration to ratifying or acceding to them. The Secretary-General also invites Member States that have not done so to become a party to the Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel.<sup>5</sup>

15. The Secretary-General wishes to recall the presidential statement of 12 March 1997<sup>6</sup> by the President of the Security Council, expressing the grave concern of the Council at attacks on United Nations and associated personnel, including murder, threats, hostage-taking, shooting at vehicles and aircraft, the laying of mines, looting and other hostile acts, and emphasizing the unacceptability of such acts which sometimes had been carried out with the deliberate goal of disrupting negotiations and international peacekeeping activities and hampering humanitarian access. Reaffirming the inviolability of United Nations premises and the importance of ensuring the safety of United Nations and associated personnel, the Council emphasized, in that context, that the host country and others concerned must take all appropriate steps to ensure the safety and security of United Nations personnel and premises. The Council expressed support for all efforts aimed at promoting and protecting the safety of United Nations and associated personnel, recalling in that context the Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel, adopted by the General Assembly on 9 December 1994. The Council furthermore recalled resolution 868 (1993) of 29 September 1993, by which it had deemed attacks on United Nations and associated personnel to be interference with the exercise of its responsibilities and stated that it would consider appropriate measures in response.

16. Providing effective security for United Nations personnel is a serious challenge which requires a partnership between Member States and the organizations of the United Nations system to ensure that all possible measures are taken for the protection of staff. With the unstinting help of the international community at every level, significant improvements can be made without which United Nations personnel will continue to be at risk.

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup> See General Assembly resolution 22 A (I).

<sup>2</sup> See General Assembly resolution 179 (II).

<sup>3</sup> General Assembly resolution 22 A (I), art. V, sect. 18 (f); see also resolution 179 (II), art. VI, sect. 19 (e).

<sup>4</sup> General Assembly resolution 22 A (I), art. II, sect. 3, and resolution 179 (II), art. III, sect. 5.

<sup>5</sup> General assembly resolution 49/59, annex.

<sup>6</sup> S/PRST/1997/13.

ANNEX I

Consolidated list of staff members under arrest and detention or missing and with respect to whom the United Nations and the specialized agencies and related organizations have been unable to exercise fully their right to protection\*

<u>Name</u>	<u>Agency</u>	<u>Place and date of incident</u>
Abdala Daker Hayatli	UNRWA	Missing in the Syrian Arab Republic since 20 April 1980.
Issedine Hussein Abu Khreish	"	Detained in the Syrian Arab Republic since 11 September 1980.
Mahmoud Hussein Ahmad	"	Missing in Lebanon since 22 March 1983. Reportedly detained by militias or unknown elements.
Mohammad Ali Sabbah	"	Missing in Lebanon since 22 March 1983. Reportedly detained by militias or unknown elements.
Alec Collett	"	Detained in Lebanon by militias or unknown elements since 25 March 1985.
Mohammad Mustafa El-Hajj Ali	"	Missing in Lebanon since 28 November 1986. Reportedly detained by militias or unknown elements.
Kassu Asgedon	WFP	Detained in Ethiopia since 4 September 1991.
Andualem Zeleke	ECA	Detained in Ethiopia since 25 June 1993.
Alfredo Afonso	WFP	Detained in Angola since July 1994.
Alfred Rusigariye	UNAMIR	Detained in Kigali since 22 September 1994.
Elizier Cyimanizanye	UNICEF	Detained in Kigali since 28 October 1994.
Deo Idanumbira	UNDP	Missing in Rwanda since 1 November 1994.
Benoit Ndejeje	"	Detained in Kigali since 11 November 1994.

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\* The consolidated list contains in chronological order the names of staff members who remained under detention or missing as at 30 June 1997. The list, however, is not intended to provide information on all cases of staff members who have been arrested or detained or have been missing in the past or on the cases where staff members have lost their lives in the performance of official duties.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Agency</u>	<u>Place and date of incident</u>
Jean-Marc Ulimubenshi	UNHCR	Detained in Butare, Rwanda, since 15 November 1994.
Athanase Habimana	"	Detained in Butare, Rwanda, since December 1994.
Jean Bosco Rwagaju	"	Detained in Gitarama, Rwanda, since January 1995.
Jean Chrisostome Muvunyi	"	Detained in Gikongoro, Rwanda, since 9 January 1995.
Charles Ngendahimana	"	Detained in Butare, Rwanda, since 10 January 1995.
Alfred Nsinga	UNAMIR	Detained in Kigali since 8 February 1995.
Mathieu Nsengiyaremye	UNHCR	Detained in Cyangugu, Rwanda, since 12 February 1995.
Luc Birushya	UNDP	Detained in Kigali since 13 March 1995.
Athanase Ngendahimana	"	Detained in Kigali since 25 March 1995.
Joseph Nsabimana	UNHCR	Detained in Nyanza, Rwanda, since 25 March 1995.
François Semanzi	"	Detained in Butare, Rwanda, since April 1995.
Aloys Byugura	UNICEF	Detained in Kigali since 4 April 1995.
Prosper Gahamanyi	UNDP	Detained in Kigali since 12 April 1995.
Clotilde Ndagijimana	UNICEF	Detained in Butare, Rwanda, since 14 April 1995.
Augustin Rukeribuga	UNHCR	Detained in Butare, Rwanda, since 23 April 1995.
Dismas Gahamanyi	WFP	Detained in Kigali since 2 June 1995.
Theodore Niyitegeka	"	Detained in Kigali since 2 June 1995.
Fulgence Rukindo	Human Rights Field Office in Rwanda	Detained in Kibuye, Rwanda, since 17 June 1995.
Boniface Rutagungira	UNICEF	Detained in Kigali since 20 June 1995.
Manasse Mugabo	UNAMIR	Missing in Rwanda since 19 August 1995.
Joseph Munyambonera	UNHCR	Detained in Kigali since 19 October 1995.
Khaled Umar El Hamameh	UNRWA	Detained in the Gaza Strip by the Palestinian Authority since 1 November 1995.

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<u>Name</u>	<u>Agency</u>	<u>Place and date of incident</u>
Al Hakim Hasan Mahdi	UNRWA	Detained in the West Bank by the Palestinian Authority since 25 November 1995.
Andre Uwizeyimana	UNHCR	Detained in Butare, Rwanda, since 29 December 1995.
Mahmoud Saqer El Zatma	UNRWA	Detained in the Gaza Strip by the Palestinian Authority since 3 February 1996.
Boaz Imanivuganamwisi	UNAMIR	Detained in Kigali since 19 February 1996.
Maher Mohamed Salem	UNRWA	Detained in the Gaza Strip by the Palestinian Authority since 14 March 1996.
Tareq Soboh Abu El Hussain	"	Detained in the Gaza Strip by the Palestinian Authority since 16 March 1996.
Bernard Nshinyumukiza	UNAMIR	Detained in Kigali since 19 March 1996.
Raed Subhi El Zaqzouq	UNRWA	Detained in the Gaza Strip by the Palestinian Authority since 29 March 1996.
David Bukeyeneza	UNICEF	Detained in Kigali since 4 April 1996.
Emmanuel Twagirayezu	"	Detained in Kigali since 28 April 1996.
Francois Nsabimana	UNHCR	Detained in Rwanda since May 1996.
Husni Mohammad Ahmad Borini	UNRWA	Detained in the West Bank since 21 May 1996.
Benoit Twagirumukiza	WFP	Detained in Gitarama, Rwanda, since 6 June 1996.
Hasan Ibrahim al Hmouz	UNRWA	Detained in the West Bank since 17 June 1996.
Israel Nkulikiyimana	UNICEF	Detained in Kigali since 7 August 1996.
Jean Marie Bagaragaza	UNHCR	Detained in Rwanda since October 1996.
Victor Niyomubyeyi	"	Detained in Rwanda since October 1996.
Tareq Ahmad Mohamed Ziiad	UNRWA	Detained in the West Bank since 7 October 1996.
Theodomir Nkaka	UNHCR	Detained in Rwanda since March 1997.
J. Baptiste Sibomana	Human Rights Field Office in Rwanda	Detained in Rwanda since March 1997.
Adnan Omar Mansi	UNRWA	Detained in Jordan since 28 May 1997.

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<u>Name</u>	<u>Agency</u>	<u>Place and date of incident</u>
Mahmoud Allan	UNRWA	Detained in the West Bank by the Palestinian Authority since 7 June 1997.
Wael Ibrahim Iswed	"	Detained in Jordan since 12 June 1997.
Berhane Gebremedhin	UNHCR	Detained in Ethiopia since 24 June 1997.

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## ANNEX II

List of staff members who have lost their lives since 1 July 1996

Name	Nationality	Agency	Place/date of incident	Cause of death
Mohamed Ali Sheik Said	Somalia	UNESCO	Mogadishu 28 October 1996	Gunshot wounds
Roger Manirakiza	Burundi	UNICEF	Bubonga, Burundi 29 October 1996	Gunshot wounds
Germain Lugano Barega	Zaire	UNHCR	Goma, Democratic Republic of the Congo 1 November 1996	Gunshot wounds
Augustin Semwaga	Rwanda	UNDP	Kigali 4 November 1996	Gunshot wounds
Veneranda Uwimana	Rwanda	"	Kigali 6 November 1996	Gunshot wounds
Seleshi Jembere	Ethiopia	UNICEF	Comoros 23 November 1996	Victim of Ethiopian Airlines hijacking and crash
Therese Ndongko	Cameroon	ECA	Comoros 23 November 1996	Victim of Ethiopian Airlines hijacking and crash
Jorge Leitao	Angola	WFP	Ngomguembo, Angola 11 December 1996	Gunshot wounds
Tomas Oujada	El Salvador	UNOPS	Nueva Concepción, El Salvador 13 January 1997	Gunshot wounds
Graham Turnbull	United Kingdom	High Commissioner for Human Rights	Karengara, Rwanda 4 February 1997	Gunshot wounds
Sastra Chim Chan	Cambodia	"	Karengara, Rwanda 4 February 1997	Gunshot wounds
Jean Bosco Munyaneza	Rwanda	"	Karengara, Rwanda 4 February 1997	Gunshot wounds
Agrippin Ngabo	Rwanda	"	Karengara, Rwanda 4 February 1997	Gunshot wounds
Aimable Nsengiyumvu	Rwanda	"	Karengara, Rwanda 4 February 1997	Gunshot wounds
Alphonse Ngoga	Rwanda	UNDP	Kigali 14 February 1997	Gunshot wounds
Iurie Caraganciu	Moldova	World Bank	Chisinau, Republic of Moldova 14 February 1997	Killed during robbery

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Name	Nationality	Agency	Place/date of incident	Cause of death
Elizabeth Assey	Tanzania	International Tribunal for Rwanda	Arusha, United Republic of Tanzania 24 February 1997	Killed during robbery
John Reignat	Sierra Leone	Department of Humanitarian Affairs*	Makeni, Sierra Leone 7 May 1997	Gunshot wounds
Didace Nkezagera	Rwanda	WFP	Ruhengeri, Rwanda 14 June 1997	Gunshot wounds
Jean de Dieu Murwanashyaka	Rwanda	"	Ruhengeri, Rwanda 17 June 1997	Gunshot wounds
Felicien Bucyekabili	Rwanda	High Commissioner for Human Rights	Ruhengeri, Rwanda 19 June 1997	Gunshot wounds
Sayeeef Uddin Mahmud	Bangladesh	WHO	Siddhirganj, Bangladesh 17 July 1997	Gunshot wounds

\* Superseded by the Office of the Emergency Relief Coordinator as of 12 September 1997.

ANNEX III

Information submitted by individual organizations and United Nations subsidiary organs and offices or joint subsidiary organs for inclusion in the present report

A. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

1. A national consultant recruited by FAO in Rwanda was reportedly arrested in Kigali in August 1996 but inquiries have failed to determine his whereabouts and, indeed, whether the reports of the arrest were accurate. On 12 September 1996, the Office of the Designated Official in Rwanda sent a note verbale to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation to inquire about this case. At the time of the submission of the present report (June 1997), no official reply had been received.

B. United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon

2. In the previous report (A/C.5/51/3, annex III, paras. 6-7), UNIFIL reported the case of a local staff member who had been sentenced by a local court to a fine and two months' imprisonment for a traffic accident which had occurred on 26 August 1992 and which the United Nations insurance agent had settled on behalf of UNIFIL. The judgement was obtained in Tyre district court ex parte. At the time of the accident the staff member was driving a United Nations vehicle on duty, and thus was performing an act in the course of his official duties within the meaning of immunity from legal process under the 1946 Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations. The Government of Lebanon, while recognizing the immunity of the staff member, has failed to take any action with regard to the court's decision. The Legal Adviser has continued to pursue the case with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and has requested them to nullify or to set aside the decision. The latest request was sent to the Ministry on 17 June 1997.

3. The situation in southern Lebanon continues to be tense and volatile, as demonstrated by daily hostilities between the parties to the conflict. The safety and security of civilian personnel travelling or performing their duties in the UNIFIL area of operations is affected accordingly. While there have been no cases of arrest and detention of civilian personnel during the reporting period, it is noteworthy that recently there have been cases of detention of military members of the Force for the first time in many years. In addition, the safety of personnel living in northern Israel is endangered by occasional rocket or mortar fire from across the international border.

4. UNIFIL continues to make every effort to ensure the security and protection of its staff.

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C. United Nations Children's Fund

5. UNICEF has had numerous difficulties with the authorities in the eastern zone of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, especially in Goma. They have failed to provide adequate security, the lack of which resulted in the sexual assault of an international staff member and the armed robbery of another. The authorities remain largely indifferent to United Nations requests for improved security. Beyond that, the abuse aimed at all United Nations staff who tried to support the refugees who fled towards Kisangani is well known and has affected UNICEF along with other organizations.

6. In Angola, the lack of adequate security during the reporting period was brought into sharp focus for UNICEF by the murder of a UNICEF national driver during a carjacking.

7. In Kenya, UNICEF has been subjected to constant threats by former staff members who were beneficiaries of agreed termination or who had been summarily dismissed for breach of the staff regulations and rules. As a result, UNICEF was forced to reassign two international staff members from Nairobi because of repeated threats against their lives.

8. In Afghanistan, UNICEF staff have been repeatedly subjected to abusive behaviour by the Taliban authorities, including:

(a) Detention of a female UNICEF national staff member and her father in Herat as she attempted to board a United Nations aircraft in order to travel on mission for UNICEF. The authorities charged her with "travelling with a man other than her husband". It took the full efforts of the United Nations system to gain their release after nearly four weeks;

(b) Threats of bodily harm against the head of office in Jalalabad from local Taliban officials when, on instructions from UNICEF headquarters, he declined to provide some education programme materials without guarantees that they would benefit girl students. Ultimately, UNICEF provided the equipment to avoid reprisals against office staff;

(c) Detention and beating of a male National Officer, a medical doctor, who was providing services in a clinic in Kandahar which had been approved by the local authorities. Detained at the same time were three women health providers from a cooperating NGO, all of whom had had the approval of the authorities to be in the clinic. The false allegations made by the arresting officials were that the woman had not been properly veiled. One of the women was detained for 56 days; the UNICEF National Officer and the other two women were detained for five days;

(d) Detention of some male UNICEF national staff members for a brief period on various specious grounds of "non-Islamic" behaviour.

9. In summary, UNICEF has continued to experience attacks against its staff that should have been prevented by the Government in question.

D. United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine  
Refugees in the Near East

Arrest and detention of UNRWA staff

10. There was an overall decrease in the number of staff members arrested and detained during the reporting period. In the Gaza Strip, a total of 18 staff members were arrested and detained by the Palestinian Authority, compared with 93 during the previous reporting period. All but one were detained for relatively short periods. One staff member was arrested and detained by the Israeli authorities upon entering the Gaza Strip. By the end of the reporting period, none of these staff members remained under detention.

11. In the West Bank, a total of 9 staff members were arrested and detained by the Palestinian Authority, compared with 13 in the preceding reporting period. One remained detained at the end of the reporting period. There was an increase in the number of staff members arrested and detained by the Israeli authorities from three in the preceding period to five in the current reporting period. One remained detained at the end of the reporting period.

12. There was an increase over the preceding reporting period in the number of staff members arrested and detained in Jordan, the Syrian Arab Republic and Lebanon. Six staff members were detained and subsequently released in Jordan, while two others remained under detention. Two staff members were detained and then released in the Syrian Arab Republic. One staff member was detained and then released in Lebanon. A total of 44 staff members were arrested and detained throughout the areas of operations during the reporting period, compared with 111 during the preceding period. Of those, 40 were released without charge or trial after relatively short periods of detention, while four remained under detention as at 30 June 1997. That compared with 27 staff members under detention as at 30 June 1996.

13. Regarding UNRWA's right to functional protection of its staff members who are arrested or detained, the Agency has not always been provided with adequate and timely information from the relevant authorities as to the reasons for the arrest and detention of the staff members. In the absence of sufficient information, UNRWA was unable to ascertain whether the staff members' official functions were involved, bearing in mind the rights and duties flowing from the Charter of the United Nations, the 1946 Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations and the relevant staff regulations and rules of UNRWA.

14. In the Gaza Strip, the Agency experienced considerable difficulties in obtaining access to detained staff and was able to visit only three staff members detained by the Palestinian Authority. Access to staff members held by the Palestinian Authority other than at Gaza Central Prison was not possible, despite frequent representations to the relevant authorities. In the West Bank, UNRWA obtained access to all staff members detained by the Israeli authorities and the Palestinian Authority. In Lebanon, access was not obtained owing to the short duration of detention. Despite continued requests to the Government, UNRWA remained unable to visit staff members detained in the Syrian Arab Republic. No recent visits were made by UNRWA to detained staff members in Jordan.

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#### Security and safety of UNRWA staff

15. The treatment and state of health of staff members under detention continued to be of concern to UNRWA, at least in part owing to the lack of access to detained staff members, as indicated above. In the Gaza Strip, there was a considerable decrease in the number of detained staff members who complained of mistreatment by the Palestinian Authority. Mistreatment of other staff was not an issue apart from three incidents of harassment of staff members by preventive security officers of the Palestinian Authority. In the West Bank, there were no complaints by staff members under detention or otherwise of mistreatment by either the Israeli authorities or the Palestinian Authority. In Jordan, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic, there were no complaints by staff members under detention or otherwise of mistreatment by government authorities.

#### Travel restrictions

16. The procedures described in previous reports imposed by the Israeli authorities to regulate entry to and exit from the West Bank and Gaza Strip continued, and further measures were imposed during the reporting period. They constituted a serious constraint on the ability of UNRWA's staff to carry out their responsibilities, imposed a cumbersome administrative burden and resulted in substantial additional costs to UNRWA. These procedures included: continuation of systems of permits required by local staff to travel between the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, Israel/Jerusalem and the Allenby Bridge; restrictions on the days of the week and hours of the day certain local staff could travel; restrictions on the modes of transportation of local staff; pre-notification of staff members crossing the Allenby Bridge; checkpoint controls, including searches; curfews and the closure of the West Bank and Gaza Strip following security incidents during holidays, sometimes for lengthy periods and accompanied by cancellation of permits. As a result, movement of UNRWA's local staff and vehicles in and out of the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, Israel/Jerusalem and from the Allenby Bridge was considerably impeded and frequently prevented. In view of the extent of UNRWA's operations and the large number of local staff it employs, restrictions on movement are a major and costly obstacle to the fulfilment of UNRWA's mandate in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. Significant amounts of time were spent by UNRWA in submitting and then following up applications for new permits for local staff each time existing ones were cancelled. During times of closure, additional costs were incurred to maintain international drivers to ensure sufficient available transport and to provide for extra travel time and expenses for local staff.

17. On 14 July 1996, UNRWA staff began receiving the reissued permits, that had been cancelled by the Israeli authorities at the time of the full closure of the Gaza Strip and West Bank in February 1996. Clashes in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank in September 1996 following the opening of a tunnel extension in the proximity of Al Aqsa Mosque in the Old City of Jerusalem resulted in the closure of the Gaza Strip and in the full and internal closure of the West Bank, thus preventing staff from attending the field office in East Jerusalem for over two weeks and from travelling within the West Bank. Simultaneous clashes near the Erez checkpoint prevented all staff from entering or exiting the Gaza Strip for three days. During the international closure of Ramallah from 11 to 17 December 1996, local staff could not reach the area office or other UNRWA facilities. Full closure of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank was imposed from

21 March to 30 April 1997 following a suicide bombing in Tel Aviv, and all permits were cancelled. Closures of the Gaza Strip were later imposed on Israeli public holidays in May and June 1997. As at the end of the reporting period, a number of permit requests remained outstanding, some for as long as a year.

18. Curfews imposed by Israeli security forces in the West Bank on occasion during the reporting period prevented some UNRWA teachers and their students from reaching UNRWA schools.

19. International staff members holding Jerusalem, West Bank or Gaza identity cards continued to be refused service visas and required permits for travel between the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and Israel/Jerusalem. A number of those staff members were refused permits by the Israeli authorities, with the result that they had to be redeployed by UNRWA, contrary to its management priorities. UNRWA considers, as a matter of principle, that all its international staff should be accorded equal treatment.

20. The restrictions on movement of area staff in and out of the Gaza Strip necessitated UNRWA to continue using five international staff members as drivers to enable it to operate sufficient transport facilities between the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, between the Gaza Strip and the Allenby Bridge and between the Gaza Strip and Ben Gurion airport. The annual budgeted cost of one international driver is \$90,200 as compared to \$7,400 for an area driver. Additionally, UNRWA remained severely limited in the number of vehicles it could use to allow international staff to cross the Allenby Bridge.

21. There continued to be lengthy delays and search procedures at the Allenby Bridge for area staff and international staff with local residency upon entry from Jordan. Such staff were also prevented from travelling in UNRWA courier vehicles inside the confines of the Bridge complex. In late May 1997, a further measure imposed by the Israeli authorities restricted the days of the week and hours of the day that area staff could cross the Allenby Bridge from Jordan to the West Bank in transit to the Gaza Strip. Agency staff were required by the Israeli authorities to pay exit fees at the Allenby Bridge and Rafah Terminal, unlike staff members of at least some other United Nations organizations. UNRWA considers the payment of such fees to be contrary to the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations.

22. Internal and external search procedures of UNRWA vehicles exiting the Gaza Strip at the Erez checkpoint, except those transporting diplomatic staff, continued during the reporting period. The Agency had agreed in March 1996 to permit the survey of UNRWA vehicles as a pragmatic, temporary and exceptional measure only. Moreover, despite the establishment of a special VIP/international organizations lane at the Erez checkpoint and UNRWA's agreement to a magnetic card system which was proposed to expedite crossings, the search procedures continued to result in time-consuming delays for UNRWA staff and, on occasion, damage to UNRWA vehicles.

23. As a result of the procedures and restrictions described above, it was an ongoing challenge for UNRWA to maintain effective functioning of its headquarters in Gaza and effective communications with its headquarters in Amman.

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ANNEX IV

List of United Nations programmes, funds, offices and missions,  
specialized agencies and related organizations that were requested  
to provide information for the present report

Economic Commission for Africa	ECA
Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean	ECLAC
Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific	ESCAP
Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia	ESCWA
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	FAO
International Atomic Energy Agency	IAEA
International Civil Aviation Organization	ICAO
International Fund for Agricultural Development	IFAD
International Labour Organization	ILO
International Monetary Fund	IMF
International Maritime Organization	IMO
International Trade Centre	ITC
International Telecommunication Union	ITU
United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights/ Centre for Human Rights	CHR
United Nations Conference on Trade and Development	UNCTAD
United Nations Disengagement Observer Force	UNDOF
United Nations Development Programme	UNDP
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization	UNESCO
United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus	UNFICYP
United Nations Population Fund	UNFPA
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees	UNHCR
United Nations Children's Fund	UNICEF

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United Nations Industrial Development Organization	UNIDO
United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon	UNIFIL
United Nations Office at Geneva	UNOG
United Nations Office at Nairobi	UNON
United Nations Office for Project Services	UNOPS
United Nations Office at Vienna	UNOV
United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East	UNRWA
United Nations Truce Supervision Organization	UNTSO
United Nations University	UNU
United Nations Volunteers	UNV
Universal Postal Union	UPU
World Food Programme	WFP
World Health Organization	WHO
World Intellectual Property Organization	WIPO
World Meteorological Organization	WMO
World Bank	

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