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

Letter dated 25 May 1979 from the Permanent Representative of Jordan  
to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

With reference to my communication to Your Excellency dated 23 May 1979 concerning the Palestinian refugees, the Arab Group has asked me to request you to circulate that communication as an official document of the General Assembly under item 50 of the preliminary list.

(Signed) Hazem NUSEIBEH  
Ambassador  
Permanent Representative

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\* A/34/50.

ANNEX

Letter dated 23 May 1979 from the Permanent Representative of Jordan  
to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to bring to your urgent attention, on the instructions of my Government, and at the behest and on behalf of the Arab States members of the League of Arab States, the very ominous situation which is expected to arise within the next few weeks in consequence of the failure of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East to shoulder its full responsibilities towards the Palestinian refugees, as mandated by the General Assembly.

The impending crisis stems from a communication addressed to His Excellency Mr. Hassan Ibrahim, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, in his capacity as Minister of Reconstruction and Development, by Mr. Thomas McElhiney, the outgoing Commissioner-General of UNRWA, and dated 6 April 1979. Reference is made in this communication to an earlier letter, dated 6 February 1979, in which the Commissioner-General had reported on his meeting with the representatives of the Syrian Arab Republic and the Palestinian Liberation Organization in Damascus on 18 January 1979.

The Commissioner-General's latest letter of 6 April 1979 informs His Excellency the Minister of Development and Reconstruction that the budgeted expenditures were estimated to total \$162.7 million, while expected revenues were estimated at \$126.2 million. This, Mr. McElhiney added, would leave the Agency with a deficit amounting to \$36.5 million. The Commissioner-General, in annexes to his letter, proposes the following course of action as a solution to the deficit:

1. A list of priorities earmarked for elimination if adequate revenues were not forthcoming. Foremost among those earmarked for elimination is the three-year preparatory cycle of education. This involves throwing out of class-rooms close to 80,000 young boys and girls and the termination of the services of close to 3,000 teachers, predominantly Palestinian refugees themselves.
2. The reduction of the flour component of the basic ration from 10 kgs to 5 kgs. It should be recalled here that only half the registered refugees have been receiving this subsistence assistance, while the other half, which includes 500,000 children, receive no assistance whatsoever.
3. The elimination of other educational services to the refugees within the Agency's programmes.

The Government of Jordan, in conjunction with all the other Arab States, particularly the host Governments, deems it its duty to warn that the contemplated eliminations and reductions would lead to very serious repercussions amongst the

Palestinian refugee population and would impinge on public security and order and political stability, as well as accentuate the unspeakable human tragedy which the refugees and, in particular, the refugee camp residents, have had to endure.

The Government of Jordan, which has been host to hundreds of thousands of refugees for three decades, and to whose over-all survival it has been contributing close to \$30 million per annum, in addition to making available all avenues of gainful employment, takes a very serious view of the failure of the international community to shoulder its responsibilities towards the Palestinian refugees, whose calamity and dispersal the United Nations itself had brought about in the first place.

It is indeed a sad reflection upon the United Nations and those Powers which claim to uphold its principles and Charter, that whereas thousands of millions of dollars are being lavishly and undiscerningly showered upon the Israeli aggressors and usurpers, the victimized and dispossessed are being denied a \$30 million allocation for such elemental needs as basic subsistence and preparatory education.

The national income of the Palestinian people would have been in the thousands of millions of dollars had not the United Nations unlawfully sealed their fate on 29 November 1947. And even within the context of General Assembly resolution 181 (II) of that date and the subsequent resolution 194 (III) on the right to repatriation or compensation, the United Nations remains derelict in putting those resolutions into effect.

The conclusion is, regretfully, inescapable that the deficit anticipated and outlined in the outgoing Commissioner-General's report is a political and not a financial decision. One major country alone allocates \$250 million specifically to uproot those Palestinians who are still in their homeland and to resettle alien immigrants from countries to which they belong and in which they possess both homes and homelands.

It is equally telling that even within frameworks of so-called complete peace, between two countries, more allocations are being squandered by the United Nations for redundant peace-keeping forces than the total allocations earmarked for the one and three quarter million dispossessed Palestinian refugees.

Surely, it is incumbent upon the United Nations, in light of the aforementioned, to rectify its scale of priorities, to bring it in closer proximity to its avowed and basic human values, inspired by its Charter and all values and resolutions which derive therefrom. If political ineffectiveness could be attributable to understandable political divisiveness, delinquency in matters pertaining to elemental humanitarian imperatives is outright inexcusable and profoundly erodes whatever faith the masses of humanity still hold in the efficacy and even good faith of the world Organization.

It is the earnest hope of my Government that the worn-out, perennial and inhumane tampering with the elemental needs of the Palestinian refugees by

apparently politically-contrived, insensitive or complacent Members which claim to espouse human rights, a more equitable new economic order and other verbal expressions of self-righteousness shall cease. There are limits to what a small and not too well-endowed country like Jordan can endure. Destabilizing Jordan by inflicting additional punishment upon its hapless refugees and depriving tens of thousands of their youth of preparatory education would be a serious indictment of the United Nations, its acknowledged responsibilities and the moral fabric upon which it stands.

It is the most earnest hope of the Jordan Government that the status quo of last-minute, ad hoc and reluctant palliative measures would be replaced at long last, by normalcy and predictability in budgeting Agency programmes.

It is the trusting hope of my Government that Your Excellency would take the initiative in dealing drastically with an urgent and almost imminent crisis by means other than the reluctant ambivalence which has characterized the sordid record of assistance to the Palestinian refugees, pending their redemption. This would be in fulfilment of your powers and prerogatives as the distinguished Secretary-General of the United Nations.

Inasmuch as this is a communication which I have been instructed to present to you, Mr. Secretary-General, I leave it to Your Excellency's judgement to, amongst other measures, circulate this letter as an official document to all Member States under item 50 of the preliminary list.

(Signed) Hazem NUSEIBEH  
Ambassador  
Permanent Representative

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