



**SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 8th MEETING**

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The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 81: QUESTION OF THE COMPOSITION OF THE RELEVANT ORGANS OF THE UNITED NATIONS

AGENDA ITEM 80: QUESTION OF THE MALAGASY ISLANDS OF GLORIEUSES, JUAN DE NOVA, EUROPA AND BASSAS DA INDIA

1. The CHAIRMAN suggested that the Committee should postpone consideration of both items and recommend that the General Assembly should include them in the provisional agenda of its forty-third session.

2. It was so decided.

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

(a) REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONER-GENERAL (A/42/13 and Add.1)

(b) REPORT OF THE WORKING GROUP ON THE FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND WORKS AGENCY FOR PALESTINE REFUGEES IN THE NEAR EAST (A/42/633)

(c) REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS CONCILIATION COMMISSION FOR PALESTINE (A/42/515)

(d) REPORTS OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/42/309, 445, 446, 480, 481, 482, 505, 507)

3. The CHAIRMAN drew the Committee's attention to letters pertaining to the item from the representatives of Japan, the United Arab Emirates and Kuwait (A/42/131, 177 and 178).

4. Mr. GIACOMELLI (Commissioner-General, United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East) said that, in the period covered by his report, the finances of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) had been strengthened overall, owing to stringent austerity measures, careful planning, and generous contributions. However, while revenues had been adequate to fund core programmes, they were insufficient to cover UNRWA's increasingly urgent construction needs. Fifty million dollars were needed in the next three to five years. More than 75 per cent of the projects were for new school buildings and other educational facilities.

5. UNRWA had been able to survive years of austerity only by drawing on its working capital. It needed more than \$13 million each month to meet its fixed obligations, mainly the salaries of more than 17,000 area staff employees, almost all of whom were refugees themselves. It now had only a little more than one month's reserves.

6. UNRWA's proposed budget for 1988 totalled \$216.5 million, an increase of 6 per cent over its latest estimate for 1987. The increase resulted from inflation and from additional expenses related to the natural growth of the registered

(Mr. Giacomelli, UNRWA)

refugee population. In preparing its budget, UNRWA faced two unknowns: first, uncertainty over the level of voluntary contributions; second, levels of remuneration for the area staff. Those salaries, which accounted for more than 70 per cent of expenditures, were liable to increase if salaries paid by host governments increased.

7. In Lebanon, where thousands of Palestine refugees faced extreme hardship, UNRWA was experiencing continued problems. A special appeal for \$20.6 million of emergency assistance had been launched in February 1987. Of the \$15.3 million pledged, \$8.8 million in cash and \$0.7 million in goods had been received. Basic food rations and other emergency supplies had been distributed. UNRWA had been forced to double its international staff.

8. One of its most urgent tasks currently was to help the many refugee families who were facing the winter with no roof over their heads. As a result of physical damage to the besieged Beirut camps, nearly 10,000 residents remained displaced. UNRWA was proposing to make cash grants to those refugee families without adequate shelter. In order to do so, it would need the total amount requested in February.

9. UNRWA would continue to offer its support to joint relief efforts for both Palestinians and Lebanese, such as those carried out by the World Food Programme, the United Nations Children's Fund and the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator. In the occupied territories, especially Gaza, the situation confronting refugees was especially acute. Despite some improvements, much remained to be done to provide paved roads, sewage and waste water disposal to the camps. However, increased support was being given to the Agency's efforts in the form of special contributions from a number of Governments, as well as the European Community, the United Nations Development Programme and non-governmental organizations.

10. Since talks between the Governments of Egypt and Israel had not yet resolved the problem of refugees stranded in the Sinai since Israel's withdrawal, UNRWA continued to provide essential services to 789 families, straining the limited resources of its Gaza field office.

11. Thanking the members of the Committee for their political and financial support, he made a special request for funds to finance construction and emergency operations in Lebanon, as well as payment of previous pledges.

12. Mr. BERGH JOHANSEN (Norway) speaking in his capacity as Rapporteur of the Working Group on the Financing of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the the Near East introduced the Group's report (A/42/633).

13. Throughout 1987 the Working Group had followed with concern the difficulties experienced by the Agency and, in particular, the serious financial situation it continued to face.

(Mr. Bergh Johansen, Norway)

14. He drew attention to the current financial situation of UNRWA as presented by the Comptroller. The Working Group had noted that the outlook for 1988 was uncertain. Both the regular budget and the construction budget for 1988 required special fund-raising efforts from UNRWA and generous responses from donors. The budget was also affected by the fact that it was expressed in United States dollars, and was thus highly sensitive to changes in exchange rates.

15. The Working Group was pleased to note that the Agency has been able to show a small excess of income over expenditure in 1986. It expressed its appreciation to contributing Governments for making that possible. However, it regretted that insufficient special contributions had been pledged to fund the Agency's construction programme, and shared the Commissioner-General's concerns about the continued postponement of construction work and the effects of deteriorating facilities on services.

16. The Working Group recognized the special efforts made by the Commissioner-General in involving donor Governments more closely with the Agency and its operations, and appreciated the positive responses by Governments. Those efforts must continue and be intensified. Moreover, as had been pointed out by the Comptroller, factors over which UNRWA had no control, such as changes in currency exchange rates and inflation as reflected in salaries paid to comparable staff employed by host Governments, could seriously affect the Agency's financial situation. It strongly urged all Governments to make increased and prompt contributions.

17. Mr. SALAH (Jordan) said that, despite the positive development in UNRWA's financial situation, the Agency's financial difficulties had not yet ended and the plight of the Palestine refugees had not only been perpetuated since 1948 but was in a state of continuous exacerbation.

18. There were still shortcomings in the services which UNRWA provided. The educational and health services provided by UNRWA covered only 40 per cent of the true need of the Palestine refugees. This was because the employees of the Agency were working in difficult conditions, particularly in Lebanon, the West Bank and Gaza. His delegation offered its condolences to those families which had had members killed or injured in the service of UNRWA.

19. Whereas the amount UNRWA spent on educating a single Palestine refugee pupil did not exceed \$15 per year, the actual amount required to ensure the appropriate level of education was many times that figure. That was despite the fact that education occupied the first in the list of priorities set by the Agency. The Agency's educational programme covered only about 50 per cent of the children at the elementary and preparatory stages of education. The Arab host countries therefore had to provide not only for the remainder of the children at those stages of education but also for the secondary education of all the children of the refugees. Moreover, even those covered by the Agency's programme were not receiving a proper education. The increase in the numbers of pupils was not accompanied by a corresponding increase in the number of teachers and classrooms. The crowding in the classrooms had negatively affected the quality of the education

(Mr. Salah, Jordan)

received. There were no proper school buildings; most of them were rented and contained no basic facilities such as classrooms, laboratories and libraries. Only 4 per cent of the young refugees were undergoing vocational training, as opposed to 30 per cent of young people in Jordan and 50 per cent in Israel. In view of the desperate need for construction and the shortage of financial resources for that purpose, the Jordanian Government, together with the local community, and utilizing additional donations from Canada, Japan, the Federal Republic of Germany, Italy and some governmental and non-governmental organizations had offered academic scholarships to refugee children. However, it should be noted that the level of education and its effectiveness could not be measured only by numbers of teachers and buildings but must be accompanied by a corresponding structure at the individual, familial and societal levels in order to provide stability and security for the educational system.

20. The standard of health services provided by UNRWA was no better than that of its education programme. The Agency's clinics received five times more patients than similar medical centres in Jordan; many of the communities of refugees had no health clinics at all; many aspects of medical treatment were not covered by the Agency; there were shortages of certain medicaments; and the equipment of the clinics was not properly maintained. However, he welcomed the Agency's efforts to raise the standard of medical services offered, particularly in the West Bank. However, most of the gains made there were modest in comparison to the actual pressing need of the refugees in that field.

21. The Agency's relief programme was also in poor shape. Since 1982 it no longer covered Palestine refugees registered in its areas of operation outside Lebanon. Food rations were provided to only a limited number of refugees. The criteria governing eligibility for assistance no longer reflected actual conditions, such as widespread unemployment. Consequently, only a fraction of those who qualified as special hardship cases (SHC) were actually receiving assistance.

22. His delegation did not wish to blame the administration of UNRWA for shortcomings in the services provided, because it was well aware that the main reasons for that state of affairs were its reliance on voluntary contributions and the failure of those contributions to keep pace with the growing needs of the Palestine refugees. In fact, the standard of the services provided by the Agency was actually declining, and the scale of the requirements of the Palestinian refugees tended to be deliberately understated in the Agency's reports.

23. Commenting on the proposed three-year medium-term plan for the period 1988-1990, his delegation wished to point out: that the plan put forth by the Commissioner-General was not really an integrated plan but rather was a presentation of policies and a strategy for implementing UNRWA's budget for the coming three years; that the plan was based upon the Agency's budget estimate made in 1985 when UNRWA was at the peak of its financial crisis; that estimates of the yearly increase in the Agency's budget for the plan's three years ranged between 4 and 5 per cent, with the majority going to assessments as increases in salaries and bonuses; and that the plan relied on the status quo as a basis for assessing the needs of refugees and thus was deficient in describing their true needs. For

(Mr. Salah, Jordan)

example, the anticipated increase in the number of teachers was not in conformity with the expected increases in the numbers of pupils.

24. Support of UNRWA was an investment in peace-keeping and in accordance with the Jordanian conviction that the United Nations had a direct humanitarian, political and moral responsibility to the Palestine refugees. However, the primary responsibility lay with Israel, the country which had not only created that plight but was also responsible for maintaining and exacerbating it. With a view to alleviating the plight of Palestine refugees, Jordan had allocated \$150 million for their humanitarian needs in 1986.

25. The situation in Lebanon had imposed enormous demands on UNRWA. He welcomed the Commissioner-General's statement that the core of the refugee problem lay in the fact that Israel still occupied Arab territories and prevented Palestine refugees from returning, in defiance of paragraph 11 of General Assembly resolution 194 (III). Now a third generation of Palestine refugees was still awaiting return to the homes from which they had been exiled. Israel pursued a policy of oppression against the Palestine refugees with a view to liquidating the refugee problem. His delegation was concerned about Israeli plans to eliminate Palestine refugee camps by various means. Another source for concern was the deteriorating economic conditions of the refugees under occupation in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. The refugees' condition in the Gaza Strip had reached an unacceptable level. More than 500,000 persons, one third of whom were refugees, lived in an area of 370 square kilometres. There was an alarming shortage of housing, increasing unemployment, risk of drinking and irrigation water contamination and increasing salination problems because of Israeli utilization of ground water for Israeli settlements. He called attention to Israel's persistent disregard of the United Nations request to establish University of Jerusalem "Al-Quds" for Palestine. That non-compliance was proof of the extent of Israel's obstinacy and extremism towards the rights to education and culture of the Palestinian Arab people. In that connection, his delegation wished to thank Canadian, Japanese and other agencies that had provided educational grants for Palestine refugees in Jordan.

26. The problem of the Palestine refugees was essentially the question of Palestine. UNRWA had become a fundamental part of the life and existence of Palestine refugees. UNRWA's activities played an important role in serving the humanitarian and economic needs of the refugees. Thus, UNRWA should be maintained until the problem of the Palestinian refugees was resolved. The ensuring of the necessary finances for its activities was an international responsibility. However, the Agency's budget should be developed in such a way as to take into consideration the actual needs of the refugees every year. If gaining the necessary finances by means of voluntary contributions proved to be insufficient, a stable and permanent source of financing should be created in order to resolve the Palestinian refugee question in accordance with United Nations resolutions.

27. Mr. MANSOUR (Observer, Palestine Liberation Organization) said that 40 years earlier the international community had assumed the responsibility for finding a solution to the situation in Palestine. Subsequently, a refugee problem had arisen

(Mr. Mansour, Observer, PLO)

as a result of Zionist and imperialist aggression, in the form of State-sponsored and individual acts of terrorism. The number of Palestine refugees currently exceeded 2 million and continued to increase. Moreover, the Israeli Deputy Defence Minister had called for the expulsion of Palestinians from the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip to Jordan as the only solution to the Palestinian problem and had suggested that the United States and other Western countries had a bounden duty to finance it. He and other Israeli leaders, who had made similar racist statements, had not been dismissed, possibly because they expressed the thoughts of Messrs. Shamir and Rabin. Their knowledge of politics was limited to the ways of eliminating the Palestinian people.

28. The extermination of Palestine refugees throughout Lebanon was a constant Israeli strategy. Early in September an Israeli air attack against a refugee camp had caused the deaths of 50 civilians, including women and children. The timing and nature of the attack had been conceived to inflict the most casualties, resulting in a premeditated massacre. The Israeli leaders had consistently refused to comply with and implement General Assembly resolution 194 (III) and other relevant United Nations resolutions. Their objective was the destruction of the refugee camps and the forced integration of the refugees within their host countries.

29. The situation in the occupied Gaza Strip had deteriorated since 1986. Hundreds of shelters in the camps had been destroyed under the pretext of improving the quality of life. Since the beginning of October, dozens of Palestinians had been killed or injured during uprisings, and hundreds had been detained. The entire area had been converted into a massive concentration camp by the Israeli occupation forces, which thus attempted to promote the Zionist myth of the non-existence of the Palestinian people and to deny its inalienable national rights, including the right to return; the right to self-determination without external interference; and the right to establish an independent State on Palestinian national soil under the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), its sole legitimate representative. The mechanism for achieving a just solution encompassing those rights was the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 38/58 C, and subsequent resolutions. The clear guidelines for the Conference were the best, if not the only prerequisite for the settlement of the conflict. The independent participation of the PLO on an equal footing with other participants and with equal rights was a sine qua non for the success of the Conference.

30. The United Nations had to intensify its efforts to remove the obstacles to the process of achieving a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East posed by the United States of America and Israel. The PLO would continue to co-operate fully with it in order to reach a solution to the Palestine question and the Arab-Israel conflict. For its part, the Palestinian people would pursue its struggle to attain its inalienable national rights under the leadership of the PLO. It was a mistake to believe that the PLO could be bypassed through quislings or economic bribes. The Palestinians were more firmly opposed than ever to imperialists, Zionists and their agents, and their unity under the PLO had never been stronger.

(Mr. Mansour, Observer, PLO)

31. At its meeting in October, the Central Council of the PLO had appealed to all Arab and international humanitarian agencies to intensify their efforts to end the aggression against the besieged Palestinian camps in Lebanon, to lift the siege and to allow the Palestinians to reconstruct their shelters, schools and hospitals and to return to a normal life. The Council had called for the immediate and total implementation of the agreement reached in Saida in September. It had considered the agreement as a new beginning in Lebanese-Palestinian relations based on brotherhood and co-operation. In that regard, he praised the role played by UNRWA and the position taken by its Commissioner-General that any linking of humanitarian assistance to the settlement of the political controversy was unacceptable. The PLO would continue to co-operate with UNRWA so that the Agency could carry out its mandate concerning the camps in Lebanon. Moreover, it was working with all parties concerned to close the chapter of the camps in Lebanon.

32. Certain sections of the report of the Commissioner-General (A/42/13), particularly paragraphs 1 to 6, showed an improvement over the 1986 report. However, the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories was alarming. It was thus essential that the international community should be informed about who was responsible and what should be done.

33. The Commissioner-General's report (A/42/13, para. 16) seemed to lay the blame for violence on the Palestinian people, whereas the policies and practices of the occupying Power were really responsible. Moreover, it was a right of peoples to resist occupation by all available methods.

34. Again, paragraph 17 of the report stated that reduced employment opportunities for refugees had contributed to a deterioration in their economic situation, whereas the main contributor to that deterioration was the colonial economic policies of the occupying Power.

35. He reiterated the PLO's position concerning the demolition of refugee camps and shelters in the occupied territories and opposed any naive acceptance of so-called "voluntary moves". Families moved because of fear, pressure and intimidation and the objective of Israeli occupation was to erase the refugee camps, the daily physical reminder of the Palestinian question.

36. The PLO also reiterated its condemnation of the continued obstruction of UNRWA's work by the occupying Power and the latter's refusal to pay compensation for the damage suffered by the Agency during the invasion of Lebanon in June 1982 and other damage caused by Israeli military activities before that date.

37. The PLO called upon UNRWA to continue at least to provide all its services in Lebanon and the occupied Palestinian territories in view of the increasing hardships of the refugees in those areas. It took note with appreciation that the training centre at Sibilin had been reopened in September 1987 and hoped that it would soon reach full capacity.

38. It asked UNRWA to continue to issue individual cards for Palestinians eligible to receive them and regretted that some host Governments were not co-operating with



(Mr. Mansour, Observer, PLO)

the Agency in implementing General Assembly resolutions. It regretted to note that the reports of the Secretary-General and the Commissioner-General had failed to refer to Israel as the occupying Power and requested that that should be done in future.

39. The PLO reiterated its condemnation of Israel for not co-operating with the Secretary-General in the endeavours to complete the functional feasibility study on the proposed University of Jerusalem "Al-Quds" for Palestine refugees (A/42/309).

40. Although the only solution to the refugee problem lay in the return of the Palestinians to their homes and property in Palestine, the PLO supported the efforts made by the Secretary-General, the Commissioner-General and the Working Group on the Financing of UNRWA to secure a stable financial situation for the Agency. While those who had first created the problem of the refugees should bear the responsibility for their action, those who were helping to perpetuate their misery were doubly responsible. Nevertheless, the PLO appealed to all to solve the financial problems of UNRWA.

41. Mr. ABDEL-GHEIT (Egypt) said that, despite commendable efforts, the question of Palestine, which was the core of the conflict in the Middle East, was still without a just solution restoring the legitimate national rights, including the right to self-determination, of the Palestinian people. Egypt would stand by the side of the Palestinian people, supporting their just demands, nursing their wounds, and would participate with them in their legitimate struggle to achieve their goals. During the current year, tragic attacks on the Palestinian people had impelled Egypt to assume increasing responsibility in that sphere. The attention of the world was to be called to the necessity of confronting its responsibility and stopping the massacres to which the Palestine refugees had been subject during the first months of 1987.

42. His delegation paid tribute to the Agency's staff in Lebanon. They were truly unsung heroes dedicated to discharging UNRWA's mission under extremely difficult and dangerous conditions. He expressed his condolences to the families of those heroes who had lost their lives in the course of duty.

43. The international community rejected and called for an immediate end to the actions of the occupying Israeli authorities which hindered the Agency's achieving its humanitarian mission. Closing schools, interrupting studies in universities and mistreating Palestinian youth would only increase the Palestinian people's resolve to oppose the occupying authorities. The lack of change in the conditions in the Gaza Strip was a disgrace to mankind. All Powers should move to stop the sufferings of the Palestinians in Gaza. In that connection, the Egyptian delegation expressed its appreciation for the efforts being made to improve the standard of living and economic conditions in that area.

44. Egypt supported the list of priorities set by the Agency in its three-year medium-term plan. In that connection, Egypt was of the opinion that the issue of vocational training for young refugees should receive particular attention, but not at the expense of other educational activities.

(Mr. Aboul-Gheit, Egypt)

45. The Egyptian delegation sympathized with the Commissioner-General's request that technical staff who were financed from the regular United Nations budget should not be reduced, particularly in view of the unsettled circumstances in the field.

46. What was needed was a true effort towards achieving a comprehensive, just settlement with a view to restoring to the Palestinian people its universally recognized rights. The best means of accomplishing that goal was through convening an International Peace Conference on the Middle East. Until such a settlement was attained, however, the Palestine refugees would remain the responsibility of the international community, as represented in the United Nations.

47. Mr. FOULSEN (Denmark), speaking on behalf of the Twelve States members of the European Community, expressed their concern at the difficulties being faced by UNRWA in its attempts to take supplies to the refugee camps in Lebanon. They endorsed the Secretary-General's appeal made on 12 February 1987 for a cease-fire around the camps and had issued a statement strongly urging the parties involved to ensure that the civilian population received a regular supply of food, clothing and medicine. They had also taken an immediate decision on emergency aid to the refugees and had confirmed the Community's readiness to grant further aid. They also had profound sympathy for the Lebanese people caught up in that violence.

48. The Twelve took a serious view of the continued unjustified destruction of refugee shelters and the violation of the privileges and immunities of the Agency and its premises by the authorities of the occupying Power in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and expressed deep sympathy to the families of the seven staff members killed during the period under review. They reiterated their appeal for news of the whereabouts of Mr. Alec Collett, who had been abducted in 1985 when working for UNRWA.

49. They were pleased to learn that the financial situation of UNRWA had improved during the past year but noted that funding for the construction programme remained insufficient. In July 1987, the Community had signed a new Convention with the Agency covering the period 1987-1989, under which it agreed to increase its cash contribution to the Agency's education programme by 20 per cent. Together with its contributions to the teaching programme, the total value of the Community's aid to UNRWA in the current year was expected to reach some \$42 million.

50. It was encouraging that, in April 1987, the League of Arab States had called upon its members to increase the level of their contributions to that of 1981. Financial support for the Agency was a commitment assumed logically by all those who voted in favour of the relevant resolutions. While fully appreciating the valuable services provided by the host Governments for the Palestine refugees, the Twelve remained concerned at the narrow funding base for UNRWA, with a number of Western countries providing nearly 90 per cent of the total budget.

51. At the end of 1986, the Community had decided to give tariff-free access for all manufactured products exported to the Community by the occupied territories, as

(Mr. Poulsen, Denmark)

well as preferential access for some agricultural products, and hoped that that measure would help to improve the difficult economic situation in the territories.

52. While the Twelve were actively engaged in the search for peace, they remained committed to UNRWA's continued activities and encouraged other Member States to join in the political and financial support of the Agency.

53. Ms. MIAO (China) said that the grim situation in south Lebanon in the past year had been a cause of great concern for the international community. In spite of the harsh conditions, however, UNRWA personnel had carried out their duties in a spirit of selflessness and devotion. It was very unfortunate that there had been further casualties among the UNRWA personnel during the past year. Since its establishment, UNRWA had provided various relief services which had alleviated to a certain extent the plight of the refugees.

54. There was still a dangerous situation in southern Lebanon which constantly threatened the safety and survival of the refugees. Because of the refusal of the Israeli authorities to dismantle their "security zone" in southern Lebanon, the Lebanese Government was still unable to re-establish its sovereignty in that area. At the same time, in the occupied Arab territories the Israeli occupying authorities were continuing their "settlement" policy, forcing the local Arab people to leave their native land and become new refugees. There had also been frequent attacks against the refugee camps, which had not only endangered the lives of the refugees themselves but had also threatened the safety of UNRWA personnel and disrupted their normal work.

55. She hoped that the parties concerned would continue to co-operate with the Agency in order to alleviate the sufferings of the refugees. In order to ensure the survival of the Palestinian people and put an end to the suffering of the Palestine refugees, the international community should support the struggle of the Palestinian and other Arab peoples to recover the occupied territories and regain their national rights. An important means of attaining that objective was to promote the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East. China reiterated its resolute determination to support the cause of the Palestinian people until its ultimate victory.

56. She expressed satisfaction at the continued efforts of the Commissioner-General to raise funds for the Agency. It was hoped that the international community would provide greater and more effective assistance to the Palestinian people. China would continue to make its contributions through bilateral channels and UNRWA.

57. Mr. RAMIN (Israel), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, expressed regret that the representative of Jordan had treated the problem of the Palestine refugees as if it existed in a vacuum and had claimed that Israel was responsible for that problem. He should remember that the refugee problem had been created as a result of Arab aggression against the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, in violation of the Charter and General Assembly resolution 194 (III). He should also remember that hundreds of thousands of Jewish refugees had also left

(Mr. Ramin, Israel)

their homes in various Arab lands, leaving behind their property, thus there had been an exchange of population. The problem of the Palestine refugees should be treated in that context.

58. He should also have remembered that a large number of the Palestinians who had fled had done so on the advice of their own leaders, such as the Mufti of Jerusalem who, as reported in the Cairo daily Akhbar al-Yawm of 12 October 1963, had on 15 May 1945 appealed to Palestinian Arabs to leave Haifa and other cities because the Arab armies were about to enter and oust the Jewish gangs from Palestine. The Jordanian newspaper Falastin had said on 19 February 1949 that the Arab States which had encouraged the Palestinians to leave their homes temporarily in order not to impede the invading Arab armies, had failed to keep their promises to the refugees.

59. The representative of Jordan had also claimed that the Arab refugees had the unconditional right to return, on the basis of the obsolete and distorted version of General Assembly resolution 194 (III), paragraph 11. Nothing in international law could oblige a sovereign State to permit the entry of a specific group of persons without a directly negotiated agreement. Article 2 (1) of the Charter said that the Organization was based on the principle of the sovereign equality of all its Members which therefore all had equal rights.

60. Jordan was a well-known supporter of Security Council resolution 242 (1967) and should remember that the solution to the refugee problem was only one aspect of a peace package. As early as 1951, the report of the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine had stated that the refugee problem, although urgent from the humanitarian and political point of view, could not be separated from the rest of the peace negotiations. The representative of Jordan had not mentioned how the Arab States had themselves perpetuated the problem, using it as a weapon against Israel. The New York Herald Tribune of 18 August 1968 had reported a former head of UNRWA in Jordan as saying that the Arab States did not want to solve the refugee problem but preferred to keep it as an affront to the United Nations. King Hussein himself had said in a speech at Amman on 15 June 1966 that he rejected the policy of keeping refugees within the boundaries of their camps in order to transform the problem into one of international financial assistance, expressed in traditional speeches every year.

61. He left the Committee to reflect on those quotations and draw their own conclusions.

62. Mr. BURAYZAT (Jordan), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the representative of Israel had tried to deny that country's responsibility for the problem of the Palestine refugees by accusing Arab leaders of inciting the Palestinian people to flee their land in 1948. It was clear however that the Zionists had deliberately caused the flight of the Palestinians by carrying out deliberate massacres of Arab civilians in 1948. In his book The Evasive Peace, Dr. John H. Davis, a former Commissioner-General of UNRWA, had spoken of the beginning of the flight of Palestinian Arabs as early as January 1948. The League of Arab States had decided to come to the aid of the Palestinians several months

(Mr. Burayzat, Jordan)

later, in April 1948. The flight of the Palestinian Arabs had become a stampede after the massacre of the Arab inhabitants of Deir Yassin by Zionist gangs in April 1948. By May of that year, 250,000 Palestinian refugees had fled the Jewish occupied territory.

63. The Palestine refugees were not immigrants requesting visas to go to Israel. They had been forced illegally by Israel to leave their land and had the right to return. Jordan had never exploited the misery of the Palestinian people and had always felt that promoting the self-improvement of the Palestine refugees was consistent with its national commitment to the Palestinian people. In that regard, he stressed the need to guarantee the political and national rights of the Palestinian people and ensure their economic and social security.

64. Mr. RAMIN (Israel), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that he did not believe that all of the Palestine refugees had left their land in response to calls from Arab leaders. A tragic situation had come about owing to the fighting, and the resulting fear and suspicion. According to the issue of the Jordanian daily newspaper Al-Urdunn dated 9 April 1953, Arab leaders had been responsible for the flight of the Palestine refugees because they had spread false rumors about Israeli atrocities in order to instil terror in the hearts of the Arabs in Palestine until they had fled, leaving their homes and property to the enemy. With regard to the persons displaced in 1967, he pointed out that his Government had permitted 72,000 such persons to return to their homes. Nevertheless, Israel also had to bear in mind the fact that terrorist organizations exploited the refugee situation in order to spread fear and cause violence.

65. Mr. HILMI (Iraq), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the representative of the Zionist entity had used statistics in order to conceal his lies and distort historical facts. No reasonable person could believe that people had fled their homeland without a valid reason. Israeli racism was a well-known phenomenon with regard to Arabs and Sephardi Jews. Jews had been among the most wealthy and privileged people in Iraq. They had been appreciated and respected. Israel had sought to attract Jews from all countries and even paid Jews to emigrate to Israel.

66. Mr. MANSOUR (Observer, Palestine Liberation Organization), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, wondered why a State Member of the United Nations continued to refuse to comply with the expressed will of the international community calling for the return of the Palestine refugees to their homeland. The Zionist leaders were facing a real dilemma: it could not demand world support based on moral grounds and then refuse to accept the world's moral judgement. If Israel wanted to gain the support of the international community, it should abide by the decisions of the international community. If Israel wanted a peaceful solution, it should not oppose the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East with the participation of all parties concerned in order to address the problem of the Palestinian people. Nothing was preventing Israel from allowing the refugees to return to their homes. If Israel was sincere about seeking a solution to the conflict, it would stop trying to eliminate physically the Palestinians in the occupied territories.

/...

67. Mr. FATTAS (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the Palestinian problem was rooted in Israel's ongoing aggression against the Palestinian people. The Palestinians had had to flee their homes because of the massacres perpetrated against them by the Zionists. David Ben-Gurion had stated that the Zionists needed to establish a foothold with a powerful army and then occupy the rest of the Palestinian territory. He and his successors had used military force in order to seize the entire territory of Palestine and drive the Palestinian people into exile.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.