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

Letter dated 31 May 1979 from the Permanent Representative of
the United Arab Emirates to the United Nations addressed to
the Secretary-General

In my capacity as Chairman of the Arab Group during the month of May, I have the honour to refer to the letter addressed to you by His Excellency the Permanent Representative of Jordan on 23 May 1979 (A/34/281, annex) regarding the contemplated elimination of educational services and reduction of rations for the Palestinian refugees by the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).

The Arab Group fully endorsed the contents of that letter and concurs with the warning expressed in it concerning the serious and tragic consequences that will arise if such eliminations and reductions are carried out.

The Arab Group wished also to state the following:

Attempts have been made by spokesmen of certain States and circles with a view to reducing and shrinking the responsibility of the world community towards the well-being and the welfare of the Palestinian refugees, and to transferring it to the Arab States, especially the oil-producing countries among them. We perceive these attempts as part of a calculated scheme to absolve the United Nations from its responsibility towards the Palestinian refugees. The final objective of this scheme is to liquidate the refugee problem in full disregard of the numerous resolutions of the United Nations pertaining to their inalienable rights, including their right to repatriation.

We, on our part, reject such attempts and refuse to acquiesce with their intention.

* A/34/50.

It is needless for me to pinpoint the magnitude of the aid given by many of our States to the Palestinians. The record on this matter is well known to every person. We do not shrink from our responsibilities towards them. Yet, we are deeply convinced that, until their inalienable rights are achieved, the over-all responsibility for the Palestinian refugees lies with the international community and, accordingly, with the United Nations, which created their problems.

If full or special responsibility towards them should be assigned to any, it should be assigned to Israel, which forced them, by massacres, atrocities and expulsion, to leave their homes and farms. It should be assigned to those States which refuse to accept the appointment of a custodian to collect the income derived from the refugees' properties left behind, which runs in the thousands of millions of dollars. It should be assigned to those States which pay lip service to the implementation of paragraph 11 of General Assembly resolution 194 (III), which demands their repatriation. It should be assigned to those States that voted against General Assembly resolution 3236 (XXIX), which endorses their inalienable rights. It should be assigned to those States which sabotage and block the adoption of the recommendations suggested by the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. It should be assigned by those States, without whose military, economic, financial and diplomatic assistance Israel would have not been able to disregard the many resolutions adopted by the United Nations for the solution of the Palestinian problem.

It is incumbent upon the United Nations, in the light of the foregoing, to refuse to be a party to any scheme aiming at the gradual relinquishment of its full responsibility towards the Palestinian refugees. It is more imperative upon the United Nations to seek and to adopt a formula by which allocation of funds to cover the needs of those refugees, pending their redemption, could be established on a stable and continuous basis and without being subject to the whims and manoeuvres of any donor.

It is the trusting hope of the Arab Group that Your Excellency will take the necessary measures to deal with the present situation arising from the contemplated elimination and reduction and to prevent their implementation.

I have the honour to request the circulation of this letter as an official document of the General Assembly under item 50 of the preliminary list.

(Signed) Ali HUMAIDAN
Permanent Representative
of the United Arab Emirates
Chairman of the Arab Group
