



UN/DA COLLECTION

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 13th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. EL-CHOUFI (Syrian Arab Republic)

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AGENDA ITEM 50: UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND WORKS AGENCY FOR PALESTINE REFUGEES IN
THE NEAR EAST (continued)

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Distr. GENERAL
A/SPC/34/SR.13
29 October 1979

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 50: UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND WORKS AGENCY FOR PALESTINE REFUGEES IN THE NEAR EAST (continued) (A/34/13, A/34/480, A/34/517, A/34/518, A/34/549, A/34/567; A/SPC/34/L.3-L.9)

1. The CHAIRMAN announced that the Committee had received six draft resolutions on the item under consideration, which had been circulated as documents A/SPC/34/L.3 through L.8. It had also received document A/SPC/34/L.9, containing the statement by the Secretary-General on the administrative and financial implications of draft resolution A/SPC/34/L.6. He called upon the representative of Pakistan to introduce draft resolution A/SPC/34/L.8.

2. Mr. MAHMOOD (Pakistan), introducing draft resolution A/SPC/34/L.8, on behalf of the co-sponsors, explained that the purpose of the resolution was finally to ensure the implementation of General Assembly resolution 194 (III), in particular paragraph 11, which established the right of the Palestinian refugees to return to their homes. At its previous session, the General Assembly had adopted a similar resolution, resolution 33/112 E, by a vast majority. However, Israel had disregarded the appeal it contained and had contained systematically to shift refugees around in the Gaza Strip and to resettle them away from their homes. The real purpose of Israel's action was to disperse them and thus evade the issue of their right to return in clear violation of General Assembly resolutions.

3. He appealed to Member States to see through Israel's game and to support the draft resolution.

4. Mr. ELGARIANI (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that his delegation had carefully studied the report of the Commissioner-General of UNRWA, (A/34/13) and wished to pay tribute to the humanitarian efforts of the Commissioners-General and their staff. The report, and the Commissioner-General's statement, revealed the magnitude of the financial crisis facing the Agency and its effect on the services provided to the Palestinian people.

5. The alternatives open to the Commissioner-General - either to reduce services or to continue services until funds had been exhausted and then to terminate services - were equally dangerous. Present services did not even meet the minimum human needs of the Palestinians, and, to abandon them entirely at a time when Israel was conducting a war of extermination against the Palestinians in southern Lebanon and in the occupied territories, would be extremely dangerous.

6. His delegation therefore shared the concerns expressed by the Commissioner-General with regard to the financial prospects for 1980, as described in paragraphs 19 through 21 of the report. In particular, it hoped that UNRWA could avoid having to cut educational services, or in any case that it could continue to provide basic education, in order to prevent the situation from becoming irreversible.

7. The United Nations must assume full responsibility for the Palestine problem, together with the countries that had brought about the tragedy of the refugees

(Mr. Elgariani, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

namely, those that had conspired with world Zionists. As a member of the international community, his country had decided to increase its contribution, in particular to UNRWA's educational services, in the hope that the obstacles facing the Agency could be overcome. As a matter of principle, his country fully supported the Palestinian people in their efforts to recover their national rights.

8. A radical solution must be found to the problem of the Palestinian people and a global solution must be found to the financial difficulties of UNRWA. The services of the Agency were very necessary but the need for them merely reflected the larger problem, which went beyond humanitarian, social and financial considerations to the basic political issue: the right of the Palestinian people to return to their homeland and to self-determination.

9. He requested that in future the report should include more details about the principal causes of the refugee problem, those responsible for it, and those who had despoiled the land of the Palestinians and had sought to eliminate the entire people.

10. The Palestinian people had not been born dispersed, they had become dispersed, and their dispersion had been planned by the colonialist forces of the world under the eyes of the United Nations. The United Nations was therefore partially responsible for the crimes committed against the Palestinians. The Zionists had not only massacred them but were now persecuting them in other countries, for example, in southern Lebanon, as described in paragraphs 112 through 114 of the Commissioner-General's report.

11. The United Nations was clearly aware of the global dimensions of the problem and had adopted innumerable resolutions with a view to solving it. The solution was spelled out in United Nations resolutions; the Organization must now enact measures to implement them. The United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights embodied rights which the Palestinian people must be permitted to enjoy. Under the banner of the Palestine Liberation Organization, they must be permitted to exercise those rights.

12. Mr. RODRIGUEZ (Cuba) observed that the problem of the Palestine refugees had been with the United Nations since 1948 and that, although UNRWA had been created in the hope that its services would soon prove unnecessary, it could not be discontinued because as time had passed the situation of the Palestine refugees had grown worse. UNRWA's continuing humanitarian aid to the Palestinian people was supported by the entire international community, including his own country. However, it was clear that only a just political solution to the Palestine question could end the refugees' tragic situation.

13. Some delegations had deliberately ignored the political dimension of the problem, but the situation of the refugees was the direct result of the uprooting of the Palestinian people, which was in turn the main cause of the Arab-Israeli conflict. In that connexion, he wished to draw attention to paragraph 101 of the Final Declaration of the Sixth Summit Conference of Heads of State or Government held in Havana, which condemned continuing Israeli aggression and expansionism, perpetrated with United States support, and Israel's refusal to recognize the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

/...

(Mr. Rodriguez, Cuba)

14. His delegation believes that Israel and the United States, which refused to resolve the political aspects of the Palestine question, were directly responsible for solving UNRWA's problems. They should bear the cost of providing aid to the refugees. The representative of the United States had expressed his concern at UNRWA's financial situation, yet UNRWA had been created to alleviate a problem which the United State had helped to create. Israel, for its part, refused to co-operate with UNRWA and to implement United Nations resolutions recognizing the rights of the Palestinian refugees to return to their homes and to be paid compensation.

15. The sole solution to the refugee problem lay in Israel's total and unconditional withdrawal from all the occupied territories and in respect for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to return to their homeland, to self-determination and to the creation of an independent State. His country, for its part, would continue to provide bilateral aid to the Palestinian people through its sole, legitimate representative, the PLO, until the just cause of the Palestinian people finally triumphed.

16. Mr. OUANES (Tunisia) said that the report of the Commissioner-General revealed how essential the services of UNRWA were as well as the enormous difficulties the Agency faced. The budget for 1980, showed a deficit of approximately \$56.8 million, and unless new contributions were forthcoming, the Agency would be obliged either to reduce its services drastically or to continue until its resources were exhausted and then to cease operations. With the exception of eight years when the Agency had had adequate income to carry out all its operations, it had always faced similar problems, and the Commissioners-General, notwithstanding their competence, dedication and talents, had been unable to solve them. The international community must shoulder that responsibility because it was responsible for the tragedy of the Palestinian people. A reduction in UNRWA's services would be irreversible and would have serious political implications. As pointed out in paragraph 21 of the report, the Palestinians would undoubtedly view any such reduction of operations as a move by the international community to abandon them.

17. As the report indicated (paragraph 24), certain cuts could be restored, but once an essential part of the organization was dismantled, the damage could be irreparable and the consequences could be so grave, particularly with regard to the education system, that the Agency might no longer be able to carry out its programmes. His delegation was confident that the Commissioner-General could avoid having to make reductions in the educational services, which were especially important for thousands of young Palestinians.

18. Such an intolerable financial situation was no cause for complacency: the prestige of the United Nations would be undermined if UNRWA was allowed to go bankrupt. In order to forestall that disaster, the Palestinian people in the occupied territories must be liberated and those living elsewhere must be allowed to return to their homes. The basic problem was political: as everyone knew, there could be no peace in the region until the Palestinian people exercised their sacred right to return and their right to self-determination.

(Mr. Ouanes, Tunisia)

19. The international community had recognized the rights of the Palestinians in countless General Assembly resolutions adopted over the years. Those resolutions, together with the Charter, could serve as a basis for an over-all settlement of the problem.

20. However, until a just and lasting settlement had been achieved, the services of UNRWA were indispensable and constituted a moral obligation for the international community. Tunisia therefore supported the appeal of the Commissioner-General and other delegations to all Member States to show their solidarity by helping the Agency to overcome its current financial difficulties.

21. Although he would not reply in detail to the cynical remarks made at the previous meeting concerning the living conditions of Arabs in the occupied territories, he wished to point out that, while life might well go on, the Palestinians were being deprived of their dignity, of their legitimate national rights and of their land. His delegation strongly believed that the problems of a people uprooted from their lands, and driven into exile could only be solved through the explicit recognition, in good faith, of the basic rights of the Palestinian people and of their right to establish an independent State. That was the price that must be paid for a just and lasting peace in the region.

22. Mr. NEVES (Portugal) said that throughout history, there had been tragic displacements of populations from their homelands due to wars or oppression and persecution. During the present century, many countries had witnessed the deep suffering and misery which resulted from political upheavals, or from policies which forced people to abandon their homes and lands and search for shelter in foreign countries, thus becoming refugees.

23. However, refugee problems were political in origin, and should therefore have political solutions. Portugal believed that a solution to the refugee question could only be achieved by a comprehensive settlement in the Middle East which would take into account the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to self-determination. But as long as that solution was not forthcoming, the problem must be dealt with on a humanitarian basis, and all efforts must be made to meet the urgent needs of the Palestine refugees.

24. UNRWA had been carrying out essential and remarkable work, in spite of its difficulties, and its operations must be continued. The report of the Commissioner-General gave an impressive account of that work in the various fields of the Agency's activities. The developments in southern Lebanon, and the disturbances which had occurred in the occupied territories, had added to UNRWA's difficulties and to the sufferings of the Palestine refugees. His delegation deplored that situation, and appealed to all concerned to co-operate more fully with UNRWA in the future. The drama of the Palestinian people had lasted too long, and no effort should be spared to end their bitter exile and achieve a just and lasting peace in the area. Meanwhile, assistance to the Palestinian refugees must continue, and his delegation would therefore vote in favour of the resolutions before the Committee.

25. Mr. MWILA (Zambia) said that for about three decades, UNRWA had carried out its important humanitarian task with admirable skill and dedication, sometimes under adverse and severe conditions. The Commissioner-General's report, together with the report of the Working Group on the Financing of UNRWA, provided vivid testimony of the enormity of the task and of the efforts being made to alleviate human misery and distress.

26. The Agency and its mandate were inextricably linked with the over-all political situation in the Middle East, and would continue to be interrelated until a just and lasting settlement, acceptable to all parties involved, could be achieved. Until the efforts of the international community to bring peace to the area bore fruit, it was therefore imperative that the Agency should be allowed to continue its work in a manner acceptable to all concerned.

27. There was justification for the concern expressed over the years about the critical financial situation of UNRWA. The fact that the Agency would begin the year 1980 with a deficit of almost \$52 million indicated that the time had come to reconsider the entire financial basis of UNRWA, including reconsolidation of the headquarters within the area of its operations as soon as practicable.

28. The Agency was now operating on such a scale that it was impossible for a small number of countries to bear the whole financial burden. Some countries had not been generous enough, in spite of the fact that they had contributed to the causes of the problem, and it was the duty of all Member States to respond to the Commissioner-General's appeal and contribute generously to UNRWA's funds. His delegation paid tribute to countries in the area, such as Lebanon, which rendered assistance to the refugees.

29. The problem before the Committee was similar to that being experienced in his own country, as reported by the Secretary-General in document A/34/407. For 1977 alone, the costs borne by Zambia as a result of the refugee problem arising from the situation in Zimbabwe amounted to \$3 million. The constant increase in the casualty rate in the war of independence was forcing Zambia to spend more on refugees, including medical services. Many hundreds of Zimbabweans had been murdered by Rhodesian forces in refugee centres in the neighbouring frontline States of Angola, Botswana and Mozambique. In all, there were over 90,000 refugees in Zambia, including those from Namibia. Airborne and ground attacks by the forces of the illegal Rhodesian régime on Zimbabwean refugee centres supported by UNHCR was further aggravating the plight of the refugees. Most were accommodated in tents and there were serious potential health hazards, as well as an urgent need for supplementary food, water supplies, salt, soap, clothing, blankets, shoes, medicines, domestic utensils, agricultural tools and machinery, seed fertilizer and access roads. Those needs had to be met by Zambia and other member States, in conjunction with the UNHCR and other international agencies.

30. The core of the conflict in the Middle East was the continued denial of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. It was an indisputable fact that Palestinians were entitled both to a State of their own and to the full realization of self-determination and independence. The seizure of foreign lands by force was not admissible in international law, and Israel should withdraw forthwith from all

(Mr. Mwila, Zambia)

Arab lands which it had occupied by force since 1967, and co-operate with the United Nations in the implementation of the relevant General Assembly and Security Council resolutions. They provided a realistic framework for bringing about a just and lasting peace in the Middle East. Israel must accept that Palestinian refugees had an inalienable right to return to their homeland.

31. Mr. TORON (Observer, League of Arab States) said that the Palestinians were the only people to be assigned to a relief agency because the world has an uneasy conscience about their displacement, which had resulted from the aggression of Israel, an imperialist instrument. The books and memoirs of Israeli leaders such as Menahem Begin and Rabin had admitted to the commission of the crimes of Deir Yassin, Lydda and Ramle and to the expulsion of the refugees from their homes and it was an affront to human conscience that the Israeli Prime Minister, the perpetrator of the massacre of Deir Yassin, should share a Nobel Peace Prize.

32. The Palestinians, through their resistance, had asserted their national identity. They carried both a gun and an olive branch and they refused to be considered as mere refugees without the right to self-determination and to the establishment of an independent State. The Arab States and, in particular, Lebanon, had shared in the sufferings of the refugees whose lost lands could not be bought merely with dollars and bags of flour, as Israel was endeavouring to do with the help of funds and weapons from the West and by distorting the facts of history. The Jewish Agency was not a relief agency but an instrument designed to deprive others of their lands in the expectation that the rest of the world would pay the price for their crime.

33. Contributions to UNRWA's budget represented only a small part of the obligation of those States which had helped create the Palestinian tragedy, since money could not solve the political problem of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. Until the international community could reach a just and lasting solution to the problem, by ensuring the implementation of the relevant United Nations resolutions the international community, particularly those States which were supporting and financing Israeli aggression should help to meet the deficit in UNRWA's budget and find ways of ensuring the continuity of its services. The international solution lay in implementing the Palestinians' right of return to their homeland, as stated in the United Nations resolutions which Israel refused to implement. UNRWA's activities, which had been necessary by Israel's expulsion of the refugees, must continue until the refugees could return; under international law, therefore, the responsibility for the refugee problem rested with Israel.

34. As the internationally recognized spokesman of the Palestinian people, the Palestine Liberation Organization alone had the right to express their will. Denial of that fact would only lead to further conflict and to greater insistence by the injured party on the recovery of its natural rights. It was ridiculous to attempt to place responsibility for the plight of the refugees on the Arab States which were hosting them when the real culprit was Israel. The real issue was not the one and a half dollars in aid provided by the Agency to each refugee but the political problem of a people deprived of its homeland, refusing to be absorbed elsewhere and struggling to preserve its independent national identity. Since the offices of UNRWA could not function effectively outside the area of their operations, the Agency should return to the area in which the refugees were located.

35. Mr. PELAEZ (Peru) said that his delegation supported the efforts of the international community to solve the problems afflicting peoples who were victims of injustice, and was grateful for the humanitarian work of UNRWA in alleviating the tragedy of the Palestinian people. As the Commissioner-General stated in paragraph 7 of his report (A/34/13), the refugee problem had dimensions which went far beyond the purely humanitarian. The origins of the Palestinian problem should be borne in mind; the noble efforts of a relief and works agency could never replace the right of a people to live freely in its homeland. It was more urgent than ever before that the political search for a just and lasting solution of the Middle East problem should be based on the principles of Israel's withdrawal from the Arab territories occupied in 1967, the full implementation of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and respect for the sovereignty of all States of the region.

36. His delegation was gravely concerned that the situation in the Middle East might now be further complicated because of UNRWA's budgetary deficit, by a cutback in its basic services to refugees. There should be a stronger United Nations presence in the area of UNRWA's operations, as an indication of support for the cause of the Palestinian people, and the headquarters should therefore be re-established in Beirut. The financial constraints on his own country had made it impossible to support UNRWA as it would have wished, but in view of the Agency's critical financial position Peru would try to contribute as far as possible. He would appeal to countries with greater resources to increase their contributions instead of committing further expenditure to the arms race, in order to relieve the suffering of the Palestinian people and help remove a particularly sore point in international relations.

37. Mr. DABO (Guinea) said that the item under consideration was of great urgency. The humanitarian efforts of UNRWA, with its limited resources, to relieve the sufferings of an uprooted people had achieved only modest results. The Palestinian people had increased in numbers and could not be kept much longer in camps, even if provided with essential services. The United Nations should consider the refugee problem from a new angle. He fully agreed with the report of the Commissioner-General (para. 7) that the refugee problem had dimensions far beyond the purely humanitarian. The political significance of the mass displacement of human beings, particularly when the right of return and right to restoration of their property were acknowledged by the international community, was obvious. However, the report also emphasized that the Agency's mandate was concerned with only a part of the problem, the provision of services to Palestine refugees in need pending a general settlement in the Near East.

38. It had been said that the Camp David agreements were a step towards a solution of the Palestinian problem. But the report of the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine (A/34/549) stated that the Commission had previously responded to requests by the General Assembly to find a means of achieving progress in the implementation of paragraph 11 of Assembly resolution 194 (III) and, after examining various ways in which it might be possible to intensify its efforts with any prospect of advancing matters, had come to the conclusion that all the ways envisaged presupposed substantial changes in the situation. The events which had occurred in the area since the Commission's earlier reports had further complicated an already very complex situation, and the circumstances which had so far limited the Commission's possibilities of action had remained essentially unchanged.

(Mr. Dabo, Guinea)

39. With regard to the financial management of UNRWA, his delegation could not help noting that what the United Nations had painstakingly built up was being systematically demolished. An urgent appeal was now being launched to prevent UNRWA from going bankrupt. Yet the Secretary-General's report on population and refugees displaced since 1967 (A/34/518) called for Israel to take immediate steps for the return of all the displaced inhabitants. In resolution 33/112 F of 18 December 1978, the Assembly reaffirmed the right of the displaced inhabitants to return to their homes in the territories occupied by Israel since 1967, and declared that any attempt to restrict the right of return was inadmissible. The Assembly also deplored the continued refusal of the Israeli authorities to take steps for their return.

40. In reply, the Israeli Government had stated that Israel was maintaining its liberal policies in the areas concerned, and continuing the policy of "open bridges" across the Jordan, which had been inaugurated immediately after the Six-Day War, and had not been suspended even during the Yom Kippur War of 1973. It allowed freedom of movement of people and goods in both directions across the cease-fire line. Arab residents of the areas concerned, including refugees, had been enabled to visit Arab countries, while citizens of those countries had been able to visit the areas in question, and Israel as well. About a million people had taken advantage of the policy during 1978 alone. Between June 1975 and March 1979, there had been 372,414 visitors from Jordan, 93,480 from Kuwait, 52,244 from Saudi Arabia, 11,503 from Lebanon, 8,329 from Libya, 7,408 from Qatar, 7,313 from Abu Dhabi, 2,750 from Algeria and 1,186 from Iraq. However, the Government of Israel had been guided by certain security considerations, and had had to take into account repeated attempts by the PLO to exploit the "open bridges" policy for criminal purposes.

41. But the resolution in question did not refer to visiting relatives from Jordan, Kuwait or Saudi Arabia, but to all refugees displaced from their homeland since 1967. Such efforts to deceive the Commission were doomed to failure. According to the report of the Secretary-General (A/34/518), only 9,400 registered refugees were known by the Agency to have returned to the occupied territories. As for his own country's aid to the heroic Palestinian people, it was governed by a bilateral agreement with the PLO.

42. The international community demanded an end to the persecution of refugees in Lebanon and the criminal attacks on that country, and to the systematic destruction of UNRWA's buildings. Israel and its supporters must hear the voice of reason.

43. Mr. TUBMAN (Liberia) commended the endeavours that had been made by the staff of UNRWA to bring hope to many innocent people who, due to political situations which they did not cause and could not control, had been condemned to seemingly interminable destitution and suffering. The Agency had been able to make worthy and lasting contributions in the field of education, thereby equipping young Palestinians for the time when their people would finally be able to exercise their right to self-determination and the establishment of a homeland of their own.

(Mr. Tubman, Liberia)

44. In view of the increasing needs of the Palestinian refugees and the decreasing resources of the Agency, UNRWA's financial plight had never been more desperate. He shared the deep concern expressed by the Commissioner-General in his report that, in the absence of adequate income, the budgetary deficit could only be eliminated by reductions in services which would aggravate the suffering of large numbers of refugees who had no other source of assistance.

45. His Government had consistently supported the humanitarian operations of UNRWA and had endorsed various recommendations that Member States should manifest their political and verbal support for UNRWA by making generous contributions. His Government had annually pledged and voluntarily contributed \$5,000 to UNRWA and intended to increase that amount in the near future despite his country's modest financial means.

46. While there was a great deal of logic in the argument that the problem of the Palestinian refugees was a political issue and that the plight of the refugees would continue until a political solution was found, the situation called for compassion rather than logic and the occasion did not warrant political discourses on the Middle East problem at a time when hunger and destitution were threatening so many human beings for whom, through UNRWA, the United Nations had assumed a solemn obligation.

47. Governments should not lose sight of the basic nature of the problem: namely the growing dimensions of human suffering against the background of the worsening financial situation of the Agency. All members of the international community must share the financial burden since the budgetary deficit threatening UNRWA would jeopardize the Agency's ability to provide essential services to the refugees and would have an adverse impact on their lives, especially when the level of services already being provided was inadequate. Humanitarian endeavours to ensure a minimum standard of living for the Palestinian refugees should be the overriding consideration until a political solution could be found to the situation in the Middle East. Therefore, his delegation wished to endorse draft resolution A/SPC/34/L.3 submitted by the United States. He hoped that countries which were already contributing to the Agency would make additional financial efforts and that those countries which had not so far participated in the financing of the Agency's programme would decide to do so as a matter of urgency.

48. Mr. DORON (Israel) said that he wished to make a number of comments on the draft resolutions before the Committee.

49. Draft resolution A/SPC/34/L.5 claimed special rights and privileges for the Palestine refugees on the grounds that, 30 years previously, they had lost their lands and means of livelihood. That was a very curious argument. The resolution emphasized the alleged poverty of the refugees, but the issue was political rather than humanitarian. Over the past 30 years, the Arab countries had not allowed other countries to absorb and integrate the Palestine refugees, or allowed the refugees to improve their own situation. Now, however, they were calling on the entire world to provide for Palestinian needs.

(Mr. Doron, Israel)

50. The resolution claimed that less than 1 per 1,000 of Palestine refugee students had access to higher education, including vocational training, but that figure was still higher than in other developing countries. In other developing countries, lack of education was not even the Government's fault while the Arab attitude was directly to blame for the Palestinians' education problems. His delegation agreed that young people everywhere should have access to higher education and vocational training, but there was no justification for a draft resolution which gave Palestinian young people priority over others.

51. Draft resolution A/SPC/34/L.7 was totally out of touch with the real situation and was pure propaganda. By a note verbale dated 6 March 1979 addressed to the Permanent Representative of Israel, the Secretary-General had drawn attention to his reporting responsibility under paragraph 4 of General Assembly resolution 33/112 F and had requested the Government of Israel to forward to him, as soon as possible, any relevant information on the implementation of the respective provisions of that resolution. The draft resolution was in fact modelled closely on General Assembly resolution 33/112 F.

52. On 12 September 1979, the Permanent Representative of Israel had responded to the Secretary-General's request by a note verbale, the text of which was reproduced in paragraph 3 of document A/34/518. He wished to draw the Committee's attention specifically to the first two paragraphs of that reply. The representative of Guinea had read out the subsequent paragraphs of that reply, but had misunderstood their purpose. The purpose of the Israeli note verbale had been to show that the Israeli Government was doing all it could to alleviate the situation of the refugees, under extremely difficult circumstances and in the face of Arab terrorism against its territory.

53. In particular, Israel had been forced to contend with repeated PLO attempts to exploit its "open bridges" policy for criminal purposes. Under its covenant, the PLO engaged in acts of terror against both Jews and Arabs its aim being to destroy the State of Israel. It was also trying to subvert the ongoing peace negotiations and was a pliant tool in the hands of certain Arab Governments which were also opposed to the peace process and were attempting to infiltrate Israel for purposes of subversion. Such subversive activities had affected the return of persons displaced in 1967. Many Arabs had been killed by PLO terrorists in Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip, but even so the Government of Israel had enabled many families to be reunited. Operative paragraphs 1, 3 and 4 of the draft resolution were therefore totally unacceptable. Major developments had taken place in recent months, notably the Camp David Summit and the Middle East Peace Agreement, but the draft resolution was designed simply to destroy the peace process.

54. The reference in draft resolution A/SPC/34/L.8 to General Assembly resolution 194 (III) was totally irrelevant. When that resolution had been adopted in 1948, the Arab countries Members of the United Nations had voted against it. The representative of Jordan had denied that the Arab countries had voted against that resolution, but the official records of the United Nations proved the contrary. The draft resolution as currently worded no longer called on Israel to allow the refugees to return to their lands and to give them decent housing, but it

(Mr. Doron, Israel)

reflected a totally cynical attitude towards the refugees in the Gaza Strip by calling on Israel to desist from resettling the refugees in housing far better than that which they occupied at present. The draft resolution totally disregarded the refugees' human needs and would only cause discontent among those refugees who wished to move out of the camps and into new housing. Such resettlement would not alter their status or privileges. The draft resolution was obviously designed to perpetuate the squalor of the refugee camps and not to attend to the needs of the refugees, and he hoped that delegations would not be taken in by it.

55. Mr. ABDEL RAHMAN (Observer for the Palestine Liberation Organization) said that he had never thought that hate and antagonism could lead to the absurdities which the representative of Israel had just uttered. He could not believe that the representative of Israel would deny the tragedy which Israel had inflicted on the Palestinian people and go so far as to call upon the international community to desist from providing opportunities for young Palestinians to gain access to higher education. Such an appeal was distasteful and disgusting.

56. With regard to the principles outlined in draft resolution A/SPC/34/L.7, the right of return of the Palestine refugees was inalienable and could not be restricted in any way. Operative paragraph 1 reaffirmed that right because the Camp David agreements expressly authorized Israel to veto the Palestinians' right of return. Had the situation been different, and had there been conditions which facilitated the Palestinians' right of return, there would have been no need for that paragraph.

57. Draft resolution A/SPC/34/L.8 did not imply opposition to attempts to improve the living conditions of the refugees in the Gaza Strip. The draft resolution was designed simply to prevent Israel from resettling the refugees in areas other than their homes in order to pre-empt their right of return.

58. With regard to the so-called PLO "covenant", he did not deny that such a covenant existed. It was in fact the only possible response to the Zionist ideology, and would be set aside only if Zionist ideology was also set aside. The PLO had offered two different approaches to the Palestinian problem. The first approach, that of creating a secular democratic State in which Palestinians lived on an equal footing with Jews and Christians, had been rejected. As a result, the PLO had been forced to support the international consensus that it must create its own Palestinian State. It had agreed to that proposal on one condition: that the right of return of the Palestinians should be upheld in accordance with the Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

59. The PLO did indeed oppose the current peace negotiations, for they did not recognize the Palestinians' right of return and self-determination. The negotiations were designed to divide the Palestinian people by giving Israel the right to veto their right of return and forcing Palestinians to choose between being Jordanians or Israelis. The negotiations also legitimized the military occupation of Palestine and neighbouring Arab territories. Such conditions could not be accepted as a basis for peace. That did not mean that the PLO was opposed to peace, however, for all the Palestinians wanted peace and found no pleasure in

(Mr. Abdel Rahman, Observer, PLO

dispersion or in having to fight for their rights. They fought only because they wanted a national identity and a homeland, and peace based on justice rather than the disintegration of the Palestinian people.

60. Mr. DABO (Guinea) recalled that he had ended his statement at the current meeting with an appeal to Israel to hear the voice of reason. Clearly, there was a total breakdown of communication and Israel preferred to exploit every argument to its own advantage.

The meeting rose at 5.25 p.m.