

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON PALESTINE

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE TWENTIETH MEETING (PRIVATE)

Held at the YMCA Building, Jerusalem, Monday,
7 July 1947 at 1:30 p.m.

Present:

CHAIRMAN: Mr. Sandstrom	(Sweden)
Mr. Hood	(Australia)
Mr. Rand	(Canada)
Mr. Lisicky	(Czechoslovakia)
Mr. Garcia Granados	(Guatemala)
Sir Abdur Rahman	(India)
Mr. Entezam	(Iran)
Mr. Blom	(Netherlands)
Mr. Garcia Salazar	(Peru)
Mr. Fabregat	(Uruguay)
Mr. Simic	(Yugoslavia)
Secretariat: Mr. Hoo	(Assistant Secretary-General)
Mr. Garcia Robles	(Secretary)

The CHAIRMAN called the meeting to order at 1:50 p.m..

Adoption of the Agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Consideration of Letters and Telegrams received by the Committee

The CHAIRMAN asked whether any member wished to take any action concerning these petitions.

Mr. LISICKY (Czechoslovakia) asked that at least one of the petitions should be read aloud.

Mr. Garcia ROBLES (Secretary) said he had asked the Secretariat to prepare a summarized list^{*} stating the essence of each of the forty-nine communications. He then proceeded to read part of the list.

Mr. LISICKY (Czechoslovakia) suggested that petitions should be grouped in categories.

Mr. FABREGAT (Uruguay) proposed to deal separately with letters containing applications for hearings.

Mr. BLOM (Netherlands), Chairman of Subcommittee Two, explained that letters containing requests for hearings were being investigated, according to a decision of the Committee, in a preliminary way by Mr. Stavropoulos (Assistant Secretary), who would then present a report to the Subcommittee. The Subcommittee would then make recommendations to the Committee.

Mr. Garcia ROBLES (Secretary) referred Mr. Fabregat to Document A/AC.13/27
/which contains

* See document A/AC.13/NC/46 which lists thirty-nine communications. The other ten make no request for action by the Committee.

which contains the decision of the Committee with regard to the first report of Subcommittee Two.

Mr. FABREGAT (Uruguay) moved that the petitions for hearings be taken first.

The CHAIRMAN suggested a different procedure, namely, to consider first petitions for taking special measures to release prisoners or detainees.

Mr. FABREGAT, on a point of order, proposed to separate the two questions.

The CHAIRMAN accepted Mr. Fabregat's proposal as regards the separation of the two questions, but wished to begin with petitions requesting special measures. He asked the Committee whether they wanted to take action on any of the petitions.

Mr. LISICKY (Czechoslovakia) wished to deal with the petitions by categories and asked when this could be done.

Mr. Garcia ROBLES (Secretary) thought it would be finished that night. Answering a question of the Chairman, he stated that most of the petitions requested intervention of the Committee to obtain immigration certificates for relatives or friends, or to secure liberation of detainees.

Mr. BLOM (Netherlands) formally proposed that all requests for immigration certificates, as well as requests for intervention of the Committee for releasing prisoners or detainees, be answered by letter stating that it was not within the power of the Committee to intervene in these categories.

The CHAIRMAN supported this proposition.

Mr. LISICKY (Czechoslovakia) proposed to separate the requests for certificates of immigration and the petitions in favour of detainees.

Sir Abdur RAHMAN (India) inquired how the Committee was interested in granting or refusing immigration certificates.

The CHAIRMAN indicated that since no one had spoken in favour of these requests, a negative reply should be given.

DECISION: It was decided to answer in the negative, indicating that the Committee could not intervene in either category of requests.

Applications for Hearings

The CHAIRMAN proposed that requests for hearings be considered next. He said that, in view of the Committee's previous decisions, hearings should not be granted.

Mr. Garcia ROBLES (Secretary) indicated that the requests were those previously considered from Rahel Ber and Deborah Pantofaru.

Mr. BLOM (Netherlands) suggested that the applicants be advised that their request was not within the terms of reference of the Committee.

Mr. FABREGAT (Uruguay) inquired whether there were not more than

the two requests referred ^{to} by the Secretary. He did not think any distinction should be made between those wishing to be heard in favour of relatives and those seeking release of persons sent to prison. He desired each application to be considered separately.

He went on to say²:

"I should like to explain in a few words the position of the Uruguay delegation on these particular problems.

The Committee came to Palestine to study the situation in the country completely. And now, after travelling through the country, it has started to grant hearings, and has done so very wisely up to now. Without doubt, those hearings are very illustrative of the situation in Palestine. But apart from the Jewish institutions, the Committee has decided to grant very numerous hearings to religious organizations which have asked to be heard. Unfortunately, I would say, we will not be able to hear any testimony from the Arab side. I must say that I deeply regret this. But there still remains another aspect of the problem which is in very close relation to the interior situation in Palestine. Who is going to speak in favour or on behalf of the people who have been sent to prison, who have suffered because of the laws of Palestine? Some people may say it is not within the terms of reference of the Committee, but I think this position would be very difficult to maintain. The Committee has been given very wide powers, and one of those powers was to visit Palestine and all places which it considered necessary to visit in order to understand the situation perfectly.

We must, therefore, hear all those people who have anything to say in relation to the problem of Palestine. We must, of course, hear also the Government of Palestine, the Jewish Agency, the Arab High Committee and so on, but those we could and have already heard in New York. We have heard them at the General Assembly. They have spoken before Committees of the Assembly. What we came here for was to hear and see what we could not hear and see in New York. There are other

/aspects

* At Mr. Fabregat's request the statement of his delegation's position is reproduced in extenso.

aspects of the problem.

For these reasons, I am going to vote in favour of granting a hearing to those persons who have requested to be heard. I think the duty of the Committee would not be perfectly accomplished if those people who want to speak are not granted a right to be heard.

I should like to add that I do not intend we should intervene with the internal regime of Palestine. But, what I think, is that we should hear those who wish to be heard. I am not asking that we should do anything that may seem like taking action in the internal affairs of Palestine, because those who think that hearing certain persons who simply want to be heard might be right when they say it may seem like intervening. But what I think is that we should hear those persons who want to be heard by our Committee because they have something to say which will have a bearing on the problem of Palestine."

The CHAIRMAN suggested that a hearing might be justified if as a result there were something to be gained by the Committee. He could not agree in these particular cases that this would be so.

Mr. FABREGAT (Uruguay) declared that it should not be thought too delicate a matter simply to hear the persons asking to be heard. They should be granted the right to a hearing.

Mr. Garcia GRANADOS (Guatemala), indicating his agreement with Mr. Fabregat, thought that the Committee had not only the right but an obligation to hear everybody. He felt it was important to hear the present applicants because their testimony would make more vivid members' understanding of prevailing security conditions.

The CHAIRMAN then called for a vote.

DECISION: The proposal of Mr. Fabregat was rejected: two votes for and nine against.

The meeting adjourned at 2:10 p.m.