

GENERAL  
ASSEMBLY

THIRTY-SECOND SESSION

Official Records \*

UN LIB



NOV 16 1977

COPY: SPECIAL POLITICAL COMMITTEE  
DO NOT REMOVE  
FROM ROOM  
L-201 (C/VWR)

16th meeting  
held on  
Thursday, 3 November 1977  
at 10.30 a.m.  
New York

UN/ISA COLLECTION

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 16th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. NEUGEBAUER (German Democratic Republic)

CONTENTS

AGENDA ITEM 55: UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND WORKS AGENCY FOR PALESTINE REFUGEES IN  
THE NEAR EAST (continued)

\* This record is subject to correction. Corrections should be incorporated in a copy of  
the record and should be sent *within one week of the date of publication* to the Chief,  
Official Records Editing Section, room A-3550.

Corrections will be issued shortly after the end of the session, in a separate fascicle for  
each Committee.

Distr. GENERAL  
A/SPC/32/SR.16  
9 November 1977  
ENGLISH  
ORIGINAL: SPANISH

The meeting was called to order at 11 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 55: UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND WORKS AGENCY FOR PALESTINE REFUGEES IN THE NEAR EAST (continued) (A/32/13, A/32/238, A/32/263, A/32/264 and Add.1 and Corr.1, A/32/278; A/SPC/32/L.5 and Corr.1)

1. Mr. VALDERRAMA (Philippines) said that UNRWA, with a deficit for 1977 which had been calculated at \$16.4 million, could not be expected to discharge its responsibility of providing relief, education and health care for 1.7 million Palestine refugees, a population larger than that of many States Members of the United Nations. Because the Agency's programmes represented quasi-governmental functions, any curtailment or suspension of services would have very serious political and social consequences for the Palestine refugees. He therefore wished to pay a tribute to those Governments which had responded to the Commissioner-General's appeal for special contributions to the Agency. The Philippines had always supported the work of UNRWA to the extent of its financial capacity, and in 1977 it had increased its contribution by almost 50 per cent over its contribution for 1976. It would maintain the level of its contribution in 1978 and give serious consideration to the possibility of increasing it in 1979. Moreover, his delegation supported the proposal to establish the new advance planning procedure outlined in paragraphs 17 to 22 of the Report of the Commissioner-General (A/32/13).

2. The loss of life, injuries and displacement suffered by thousands of Palestine refugees during the civil war in Lebanon were tragic. Fortunately, the situation had improved, and in that connexion his delegation was glad to know that UNRWA would return to its Beirut headquarters in November.

3. On the other hand, the new settlements legalized and authorized by Israel on the West Bank of the Jordan (A/32/263, para. 5), changing as they did the legal status and the demographic composition of the occupied Arab territories, contravened the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and violated the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, as well as the relevant resolutions of the United Nations. For that reason, his delegation had co-sponsored General Assembly resolution 32/5, which had been adopted by an overwhelming majority on 28 October 1977.

4. Fortunately, according to the report of the Secretary-General on Palestine refugees in the Gaza Strip (A/32/264), there had been no further cases of punitive demolition of refugee shelters, and his delegation hoped that there would be none, but it was concerned about the alarming situation of a large number of refugee families lacking decent accommodation.

5. His delegation was in favour of extending the mandate of UNRWA, and emphasized that the problem of the Palestine refugees could be solved only in the context of a just and permanent solution of the question of Palestine. Such a solution should take into account the inalienable right of the people of Palestine to self-determination, sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence, in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 3236 (XXIX), 3375 (XXX), 3376 (XXX), 31/20 and 31/21.

6. Mr. AL-MOKARRAB (United Arab Emirates) called attention to the financial crisis, which the Agency was experiencing, and which was worse than that of the previous year. As long as the financing of the Agency depended entirely on the voluntary contributions of a few donors, UNRWA would show increasingly large deficits each year, owing to its increasing costs and the world economic situation. Its financial difficulties had at various times threatened to cause a suspension of operations. In order to prevent that from happening, the best temporary solution would be to incorporate the UNRWA budget into the regular budget of the United Nations. That would stabilize the Agency's resources and enable its staff to devote most of their energies to the refugees, rather than to fund-raising campaigns.

7. UNRWA had been established as a temporary body, pending the solution of the refugee problem and the return of the refugees to their homeland, from which they had been forcibly expelled. The problem, however, had persisted, and the blame for that situation lay mainly with Israel, which arrogantly defied the wishes of the international community and the Security Council's resolutions calling for the return of the Palestine refugees to their homes. The root of the problem was political and lay in the uprooting of a peaceful people from its territory, in which other populations had been settled. The best solution would be the repatriation of the Palestine refugees and the establishment of a State for them in their ancestral homeland; that right had been recognized by the international community.

8. The United Arab Emirates continued to honour its obligations to the Agency and, in 1975, had made an additional contribution of \$2 million over and above its regular contribution. It considered it wrong, however, that only a small group of States should bear the costs of the Agency, and it therefore reaffirmed its position of principle that responsibility for the financing of UNRWA fell directly on those States that had brought about the problem of the expulsion of the Palestinian people from their native land, and on the United Nations, which had allowed its resolutions to go unimplemented.

9. Mr. MEERZA (India) stressed the importance of the humanitarian services provided by UNRWA, and hoped that the need for those services would soon come to an end.

10. The United Nations had for 29 years provided services and assistance to Palestinian Arabs displaced from their homes as a result of the hostilities of 1948, following the termination of the British mandate and the creation of the State of Israel. Many of those Palestinians had been displaced a second time as a result of the 1967 conflict. The fact that a whole generation had been born and raised in refugee camps was a measure of their suffering. In its resolution 194 (III) and subsequent resolutions, the General Assembly had called for repatriation or compensation for the Palestine refugees; but the problem had not only remained unsolved, but had grown more acute.

11. UNRWA was at present providing services for over 1.7 million refugees, of whom more than 35 per cent were living in camps. Those services were minimal and could be no substitute for the right of the Palestinian Arabs to live in dignity in their own homeland. Until a just political solution was reached, however, the plight of the refugees would continue to demand the support and sympathy of the international community. Consequently, his delegation supported the renewal of UNRWA's mandate beyond June 1978 and was confident that, with the goodwill of the international

(Mr. Meerza, India)

community, the Agency would obtain the resources it needed to carry out its humanitarian work.

12. Mr. AL-SHARAFI (Yemen) said that half of the Palestinians uprooted from their ancestral homeland still lived in tents, under the supervision of UNRWA, and the rest were dispersed in other countries, or suffering under the yoke of Zionist occupation.

13. UNRWA had been established in order to justify the silence over the oppression of an entire people. Its purpose was to alleviate the plight of the refugees pending a solution: their return to their homeland. Years had gone by and the Agency's existence was now threatened by bankruptcy, which would oblige it to reduce or suspend its services. Many of its current activities were therefore aimed at obtaining contributions from voluntary organizations and individuals.

14. The Palestinians had been driven from their lands and stripped of their possessions, and the international community had expressed its indignation in words only. In spite of the appeals contained in United Nations resolutions, Israel had refused to respond and had taken an arrogant and obstinate attitude. The Zionists had the support of the Western Powers, which enabled them to carry on their practices in the occupied territories, and that was a matter of concern to the United Nations. In that connexion WHO, in World Health Assembly resolution 30.37 (A/32/13, annex III), had expressed its concern over the eviction and deportation of medical and auxiliary staff from the occupied territories.

15. Israel continued to deceive public opinion, claiming that the Jews had been the ones who had undergone dispersal. The Jews of Europe, however, had not lived in tents or depended on contributions; on the contrary, they had come with weapons and used terrorist methods to divest the Arab people of their lands and property, to spread terror, to start expansionist wars against their neighbours and establish colonies as if they had had some legitimate right to do so.

16. UNRWA's operations continued to be a temporary measure pending a definitive solution, which could be nothing less than the restoration to the Palestinian people of their lands and recognition of their right to self-determination.

17. Mr. AL-GAYED (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) shared the concern of the Commissioner-General of UNRWA over the financial situation of the Agency. In his report (A/32/13), the Commissioner-General pointed out that only through special contributions had the Agency been able in 1976 to 1977 to avoid the suspension of operations and the discharge of staff. In spite of the postponement of certain capital outlays and the curtailment of services, the deficit persisted and unfortunately, the crisis was expected to be even more serious in 1978. Libya for its part had always contributed to the Agency and had increased the level of its contribution in 1977. Its role was not confined to making that nominal contribution, however, as it gave its full support to the legitimate struggle of the refugees.

18. The responsibility for that financial problem lay with the United Nations, which had contributed to the expulsion of the Palestinian people and had helped the Zionist entity to establish itself. It also lay with the countries which had collaborated with the Zionists. The United Nations and those countries must therefore help to finance UNRWA pending a complete solution to the problem. That solution was political in nature, as UNRWA realized, and consisted in the repatriation of the refugees and in the payment of compensation. /...

(Mr. Al-Gayed, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

19. For years the Palestinian people had lived prosperously, cultivating their land and harvesting its fruits until they had fallen a victim to zionism and zionism's allies, the colonialist and imperialist forces, which had usurped their land, expelled them and prevented them from returning. There had thus come into being a Zionist entity comprised of disparate elements brought in through waves of immigration and moved by racist and fanatical principles. The Zionist entity continued to carry out its plans for expansion by force of arms and to expel the Arabs by acts of terrorism. That was made clear in General Assembly resolution 32/5, which condemned the Israeli practice of establishing settlements in the occupied territories. The aggression of the Zionist entity and its lack of respect for the Charter and for the principles of international law had prevented the solution of the problem and the termination of UNRWA's mandate.
20. Referring to the Commissioner-General's report (A/32/13), he called attention to resolution WHA 30.37 (annex III of the report), to the Israeli air-raid on an UNRWA camp in 1974 (para. 80), to the demolitions carried out by the Israeli authorities in 1971 (para. 86), and to the incidents involving the Israeli authorities and affecting UNRWA premises and personnel (para. 152).
21. The United Nations had contributed to the sufferings of the Palestinian people by allowing the partition of Palestine in 1947, when the membership of the United Nations had been dominated by the colonialist and imperialist Powers. With the changed membership of the General Assembly, the concept of the problem of Palestine had changed, and resolutions aimed at recognition of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, which constituted the basis for any solution of the problem, had been adopted. The United Nations had also recognized that the Palestine Liberation Organization was the only legitimate representative of the Palestinians, and zionism had been denounced as a racist movement.
22. All the aspects of the problem of the Palestine refugees involved a basic political question. The international community must unite to carry out its responsibilities, including the financing of the Agency and the achievement of a just solution involving the return of the Palestinians to their land and the exercise of their right to self-determination, national sovereignty and independence.
23. Mr. IQBAL (Pakistan) recalled that the Palestine refugees had been compelled to flee from their homes when the State of Israel had been established in their homeland by force in 1948. Ever since then they had been in great need of help, which the Agency had been endeavouring to give them. The services provided by the Agency should therefore be maintained, because the end of the tribulations of the Palestinians was still not within sight.
24. The international community had not yet succeeded in securing Israel's compliance with the persistent calls of the General Assembly for the repatriation and compensation of the Palestine refugees. Israel had refused to co-operate with UNRWA in its efforts to provide relief for the displaced population in the occupied territories. According to the Secretary-General's report (A/32/264),

/...

(Mr. Iqbal, Pakistan)

Israel had not discontinued the practice of demolishing the shelters of those who had shifted to new accommodation, which had led to a shortage of shelters for the refugees. Obviously Israel did not want to help resolve the problem of the Palestine refugees, an attitude which showed its disregard of international opinion and its cynical indifference to the cause of peace in the Middle East.

25. Lack of financial resources had forced the Agency to reduce services at various times. It was a matter of concern that the Agency still had a deficit of about \$12 million, for the suspension of certain essential services would have very serious implications for the refugees, for the countries in which they resided and for the prospects of a peaceful settlement in the Middle East.

26. In view of the political dimensions of the problem, it was necessary to systematize the humanitarian assistance to the refugees. Since the problem of the refugees had been created by those Member States which were responsible for the establishment of the State of Israel, the financing of UNRWA was an obligation which devolved primarily upon those States. Some of them had fulfilled that obligation, but others had made contributions which fell short of meeting even the basic needs of the refugees.

27. His delegation had consistently held the view that the needs of the refugees should be attended to until the achievement of a just and permanent solution of the problem. It had also consistently believed that the international community should try to exert pressure on Israel to make it comply with United Nations resolutions on the subject, so that the problem of the Palestine refugees could be resolved, and, so that they could be given the option of either returning to their homes or receiving compensation.

28. It was the moral responsibility of the international community to leave future generations not a legacy of frustration and violence but one of peace and prosperity. The Palestine refugees were a nation, but they had been reduced to living as exiles. Their right to sovereignty and territorial integrity must be restored to them, and that could only be achieved when Israel withdrew from all the occupied territories.

29. Mr. TAKALA (Finland) said that his delegation strongly supported the extension of the Agency's mandate pending a just and lasting settlement in the Middle East. It fully understood the concern at the alarming financial difficulties faced by the Agency and the serious consequences that the financial crisis could have on its services. The Government of Finland also shared the view that there was a need for longer-term financial planning based on estimates of the Agency's income and expenditure. In that respect, the new procedure described by the Commissioner-General in his report (A/32/13) deserved the attention of all contributing Governments. For its part, Finland accepted those new procedures and would inform the Agency accordingly.

30. Finland had assisted the Agency annually, and would continue to do so in the future. In addition to its regular contribution for the current year, the

/...

(Mr. Takala, Finland)

Government of Finland had decided to make a special contribution of 100,000 Finnish marks, equivalent to about \$25,000. It was its conviction that the financing of the humanitarian work of UNRWA was the collective responsibility of the international community, and it sincerely hoped that all Member States would consider making substantial contributions to the Agency.

31. In addition to the chronic financial difficulties, UNRWA's work had been seriously affected during recent years by the situation in Lebanon. It was most encouraging, therefore, to note that the positive development of the situation in that country would soon enable UNRWA to return and reorganize its headquarters at Beirut.

32. Mr. IPSARIDES (Cyprus) noted that UNRWA, which had been established more than 25 years ago as a temporary measure, was still in existence, as it had to cope with a situation which persisted and, indeed, continued to deteriorate. The crux of the question was the political problem of the Palestinian people, which should have been resolved by the implementation of United Nations resolutions, ostensibly resolution 194 (III), in which the General Assembly had resolved that the Palestinians should be allowed to exercise their legitimate right to repatriation or the payment of compensation.

33. The people of Cyprus, who had recently had the bitter experience of seeing their homes and land usurped by force and the population uprooted, fully comprehended the situation of the Palestinian people. In that respect, the world community had a moral obligation and imperative duty to do all that it could to assist UNRWA financially with a view to alleviating the misery of the almost 2 million Palestinians, who were the victims of international politics.

34. In view of the constant increase in the need for the services provided by the Agency, it was obvious that there would have to be a commensurate increase in the funds available for that purpose. The Agency was already providing its services at a remarkably low cost, and it was clear that the elimination or curtailment of any of its activities would accentuate the suffering and hardship of the Palestinians, and that could have an adverse effect on the Middle East situation.

35. Despite its minimal financial capability, which had been further minimized by the tragic fact of having had to cope with a situation where a third of its population had become refugees in their own country, Cyprus had continued, and would continue in its modest way, to contribute to UNRWA as a token of solidarity. At the same time, it joined in the urgent appeal for generous contributions. It hoped that the response would be sufficient to maintain the lives and the hopes of the Palestine refugees. The future should not be simply relief, but a comprehensive solution of the Middle East problem, based not on charity, but on justice, equality and freedom.

36. Mr. TARZI (Afghanistan) pointed out that the Committee had been considering the item for more than a quarter of a century, and that a political settlement of the problem and a just and lasting peace in the Middle East had yet to be achieved.

(Mr. Tarzi, Afghanistan)

The existence of the Agency, originally set up as an emergency measure to alleviate the sufferings of Palestinians expelled from their homes as a result of the creation of the State of Israel, remained a necessity because Israel continued to refuse to acknowledge the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people, which had been recognized in various United Nations decisions.

37. Despite the financial difficulties it was experiencing, the Agency had always provided invaluable humanitarian assistance to the refugees. He hoped that additional contributions would be forthcoming to prevent any reduction in the already inadequate services of the Agency. In view of the chronic deficit in the Agency's budget, he hoped that the United Nations would take all necessary steps to avoid a suspension of that humanitarian assistance and he trusted that an effort would at least be made to alleviate some of the material hardships of the Palestinian people.

38. The question of the Palestinian people was, above all, a political problem and demanded a political solution. That problem could not be separated from the effects of Israel's continued occupation of the territories of three Arab States Members of the United Nations. The continuation of that occupation was one of the main factors contributing to increased tension in the area. His country had always supported, and would continue to support, the cause of the just and legitimate struggle of the Arab people of Palestine for the restoration of their inalienable right to return to their homeland and to create an independent Palestinian State.

39. Mr. NAJAR (Israel), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, expressed his disgust at the statements of the Arab representatives and some of their supporters. He rejected the falsifications of history and the abusive accusations which could only emanate from minds blinded by passionate hatred and oblivious to the need to achieve peace.

40. Mr. AL-ATIYYAH (Iraq), exercising his right of reply, considered it extremely impertinent of the Zionist representative to exercise his right of reply in order to insult all the members of the Committee. It was not the Zionist representative, but the other members of the Committee who were disgusted at the situation, not only because of the Zionist representative's impertinence, but because of his abuse of the decency and the courtesy shown to him by the Committee.

The meeting rose at 12.30 p.m.