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

Palestine refugees in the Gaza Strip

Report of the Secretary-General

1. The present report is submitted to the General Assembly in pursuance of its resolution 38/83 E of 15 December 1983, in which the Assembly reiterated its demand that Israel desist from the removal and resettlement of Palestine refugees in the Gaza Strip and from the destruction of their shelters, and requested the Secretary-General, after consulting with the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), to report to it, before the opening of its thirty-ninth session, on Israel's compliance with the resolution.

2. By a note verbale dated 22 March 1984 addressed to the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations, the Secretary-General drew attention to his reporting responsibility under paragraph 2 of General Assembly resolution 38/83 E and requested the Government of Israel to communicate to him, by 30 June 1984, any information relevant to the provisions of the resolution.

3. In a note verbale dated 29 June 1984, the Permanent Representative of Israel replied as follows:

"The position of the Government of Israel on the matter dealt with in the above-mentioned resolution was set out in successive annual replies, submitted to the Secretary-General in recent years. The report of the Secretary-General,

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\*\* A/39/150.

issued on 3 October 1983 (A/38/418), contained the latest of those replies, dated 26 August 1983. As regards the situation prevailing since, the Permanent Representative of Israel would like to add the following:

"a) To date, Israel has provided housing for more than 8,000 families within the framework of the Refugee Rehabilitation Programme. During the current year 1984, another 1,500 families are to be housed under the same programme.

"b) It should be stressed that the Rehabilitation Programme is a voluntary one and is becoming increasingly popular with the refugees who fully realise that it materially contributes to the improvement of their living conditions."

4. The following information concerning Israel's compliance with General Assembly resolution 38/83 E is based on reports received from the Commissioner-General of UNRWA.

5. No demolition of refugee shelters on punitive grounds took place during the year under review. The families affected by such measures in the previous year (see A/38/418, para. 5) have not as yet been provided with alternative shelters.

6. The Agency has taken up again with the Israeli authorities the question of rehousing refugees affected by the 1971 demolitions (see A/38/418, para. 6). After lengthy discussions, it was agreed that the Agency would review the status of the 88 families categorized previously as hardship cases and report the results to the Israeli authorities who would then consider the matter. The results of the review of the 88 hardship cases were as follows:

23 are still in hardship;

18 are unsatisfactorily housed (inadequate);

37 are satisfactorily housed (adequate);

9 purchased houses in projects sponsored by the Israeli authorities;

1 died.

7. During the reporting period, the Commissioner-General received the following information relating to the demolition of refugee shelters by the Israeli authorities on the grounds that those shelters had been built without proper authority on state land outside camp boundaries:

(a) In October 1983, demolition began of a number of shelters in the Rafah camp but was stopped after an accident which led to the death of a child.

(b) Some families on the northern perimeter of Jabalia camp bordering Beit Lahiya were told by the Israeli authorities to have some of their shelters or extensions to them removed. The Agency understands that this was stopped through an injunction issued by the High Court of Israel early in 1984. In July 1984, however, 10 such shelter rooms belonging to 15 refugee families were demolished. It would seem that these families had not taken their cases to the High Court and no injunction against the demolition had therefore been issued.

(c) The 35 families whose shelters on the perimeter of Beach camp were demolished last year (see A/38/418, para. 8) have not been rehoused. These families are still living either on the same site in shacks or have found temporary accommodation with other refugees.

8. The Commissioner-General has also received the following additional information concerning related matters:

(a) In January 1984, refugee shelters in the Khan Yunis camp were surveyed by the Israeli authorities. Some refugees stated that they were told that it was intended to demolish their shelters and either reconstruct them on the same site or on other sites adjacent to the nearby Al Amal housing project sponsored by the Israeli authorities.

(b) In February/March 1984, special forms were issued by the Israeli authorities to all inhabitants of Jabalia camp to be filled with their family particulars. The reason for this is unclear, but the refugees in general believe it relates to the stated intention of the authorities to rehouse them elsewhere. The Agency has been assured, however, that any such moves would be on a voluntary basis.

(c) The Israeli authorities have indicated to the Agency that they have plans to construct a security road along the beach at Deir El Balah. If this comes about, it may entail the demolition of some 400 shelter rooms.

9. In the year under review, according to information available to the Commissioner-General, 748 refugee families, comprising 4,594 persons, moved to 550 plots of land in housing projects sponsored by the Israeli authorities. As a pre-condition, this has required the demolition of 579 Agency-built shelter rooms, 64 rooms built with Agency assistance and 420 rooms built without such assistance. In addition, five non-refugee families, comprising 25 persons, also moved to three plots in the same projects.

10. The Israeli authorities have to date allocated a total of 3,364 plots of land in the Gaza Strip for housing projects. Houses have been built by refugees on 1,873 plots and by non-refugees on 100 plots. These were occupied by 2,480 refugee families and 100 non-refugee families, comprising 15,241 refugees and 666 non-refugees; 384 plots are under construction and 1,007 are still vacant. In addition, 2,940 families, comprising 17,665 persons, and 14 non-refugee families, comprising 65 persons, have moved into completed houses to date.

11. Construction in three new housing projects in Beit Lahiya, Nazleh and Tel-el-Sultan is continuing (see A/38/418, para. 11).

12. Since the re-establishment of the border between Egypt and the Gaza Strip, following the return of the Sinai to Egypt in April 1982, a total of 791 refugees and 86 non-refugee shelter rooms have been demolished at the instance of the Israeli authorities in order to make way for a security zone and a border fence (see A/38/418, para. 12). This affected 266 refugee families or 1,669 persons and 28 non-refugee families or 203 persons. The authorities have paid compensation to the families concerned and those families have availed themselves of the Israeli offer of plots of land, mainly in the Tel-el-Sultan project, where they built themselves new houses. However, 80 families in Rafah have obtained an injunction against the demolitions from the High Court of Israel.