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SPECIAL POLITICAL COMMITTEE 7th meeting held on Thursday, 26 October 1989 at 10 a.m. New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 7th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. OUDOVENKO (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 28: POLICIES OF <u>APARTHEID</u> OF THE GOVERNMENT OF SOUTH AFRICA (A/SPC/44/L.2 and Add.1-8)

1. <u>The CHAIRMAN</u> drew attention to the requests for hearings on item 28, which had been circulated as documents A/SPC/44/L.2 and Add.1-8. If he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to grant those requests.

2. It was so decided.

AGENDA ITEM 76: UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND WORKS AGENCY FOR PALESTINE REFUGEES IN THE NEAR EAST (<u>continued</u>) (A/44/13 and Corr.1 and Add.1, A/44/431, 474, 497, 505-508, 608, 641; A/SPC/44/L.5)

3. <u>Mr. WOLOSI</u> (Afghanistan) said that the situation in Palestine was worsening, owing to Israeli repression and expansionism. The Palestinian people was struggling courageously to preserve its identity and culture and to exercise its inalienable rights.

4. Afghanistan supported the continued efforts of the United Nations for a just political settlement of the question of Palestine. He emphasized the need for the following relief measures for Palestine refugees: strengthening of the educational system in the occupied Arab territories, including Jerusalem; establishment of the University of Jerusalem "Al-Quds"; the return of all displaced inhabitants to their homes in the occupied territories; and increased contributions to UNRWA.

5. His delegation reaffirmed its support for all the relevant United Nations resolutions and condemned Israel's iron-fist policy and continued occupation of Arab lands. The convening of an international conference, with the participation of all parties concerned, including the State of Palestine, on an equal footing, was the only possible way to resolve the Middle East conflict.

6. <u>Mr. GARBOUJ</u> (Tunisia) said that item 76 was of particular interest to his delegation because, in spite of favourable international developments, the Palestinian people continued to be denied its legitimate right to live in security and independently to determine its future. Tunisia fully supported the <u>intifadah</u>. It condemned Israel's policy of repression and violence in the occupied territories, expulsion of Palestinians and continued thwarting of peace initiatives. It called for the implementation of General Assembly resolution 194 (III) and for the return of the Palestinian refugees to their homes.

7. Referring to the Commissioner-General's report (A/44/13), he said that all delegations should welcome the surge of international solidarity which had enabled UNRWA to meet its additional needs. That spirit was all the more encouraging as the donors now included intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and other institutions. The Organization was duty-bound to reinforce the revival of interest in the cause of the Palestine refugees, which would inevitably help in seeking a just and lasting political solution to their dilemma.

(Mr. Garbouj, Tunisia)

8. His delegation noted with deep concern the problems that UNRWA was encountering. Israeli obstacles to education, health and other relief services should be condemned. Pressure should be brought to bear on Israel to respect its commitment to the Agency's mandate.

9. While Tunisia fully supported the Agency's programme and paid tribute to all those who participated in it, the services that UNRWA provided could not replace the refugees' right to live in peace and security on their land. His delegation shared their bitterness on the fortieth anniversary of the establishment of UNRWA. The international community had a greater responsibility than ever $\underline{vis}-\underline{a}-\underline{vis}$ the Palestine refugees and should seize the opportunity provided by détente to safeguard their fundamental rights. Such protection could be guaranteed only through negotiation in the framework of an international peace conference.

10. <u>Mr. DANUS</u> (Chile) said that his delegation had noted with concern that the Agency's financial situation remained serious. It was essential to encourage the donor countries to maintain or increase their contributions and to provide new inputs enabling UNRWA to cope with the annual growth of five per cent in expenditures that was necessary for maintaining the regular programme at its current level. As far as possible, Chile would continue to contribute financially to achieve the Agency's objectives.

11. His delegation appreciated the sacrifice being made by the Agency's staff. All the parties to the conflict in Lebanon should follow their example and show respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of that country.

12. Chile wished to reaffirm that the future of the Palestine refugees and the stability of the countries in the region were closely linked to a just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine, which was the crux of the Middle East problem. That solution should be achieved through the implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). An international peace conference should be convened, under the auspices of the United Nations, with the participation of the permanent members of the Security Council and all parties to the conflict on an equal footing. The work that UNRWA had carried out since its establishment did credit to the United Nations and showed what the Organization could do to relieve the suffering of mankind.

13. <u>Mr. PODTSEROB</u> (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that the Commissioner-General's report provided a vivid account of the Agency's activities in the difficult conditions created by Israeli occupation. The Soviet Union supported those activities, regarding it as a matter of priority to furnish the Palestinian people in the occupied territory with emergency assistance during the <u>intifadah</u>. The Agency was to be congratulated on 40 years of selfless work in behalf of the Palestinian people.

14. The USSR was expanding its co-operation with UNRWA at both the official and non-governmental levels. In June 1989 an UNRWA delegation had visited Moscow to review, in particular, issues relating to the Soviet Union's participation in the

(<u>Mr. Podtserob, USSR</u>)

Agency's humanitarian assistance. In that connection the Commissioner-General had recently visited the Soviet Union for discussions with a number of non-governmental organizations in connection with policy and further co-operation. The Soviet Union was also providing large-scale bilateral assistance to the Palestinian people.

15. The Agency faced continuing obstruction from the Israeli authorities, as could be seen from the Commissioner-General's report. It was also disturbing to note that the Agency's staff was increasingly subject to violence and detention. The Soviet Union condemned such acts and called on Israel to implement the many United Nations resolutions relating to the inalienable rights of the Arab population of Palestine, including its right to self-determination and to the creation of its own independent State.

16. Although profound changes were taking place with regard to the settlement of regional conflicts, no solution had yet been found to the complex problems of the Middle East. The region continued to be a source of international tension, the root cause of which was Israel's stubborn refusal to relinquish the territory it had seized in 1967 and the cruel repression practised by the Israeli authorities against the population of that territory.

17. The <u>intifadah</u> enjoyed the support of the international community at large, as could be seen from the virtually unanimous adoption by the General Assembly recently of a resolution condemning the practices of the Israeli authorities <u>vis-à-vis</u> the defenceless Palestinian people.

18. The Soviet Union considered that new and positive elements had emerged in the recent period in connection with the prospects for a settlement of the Middle East problem, in particular the more constructive and realistic position taken by the PLO and the consensus in the world community on the need to hold an international conference, in which the United Nations could play an important role, on that issue. Many suggestions had been put forward, and it was now up to the international community to find some common denominator among those proposals. With that aim in view, the Soviet Union had recently proposed that a meeting should be held on Soviet territory between representatives of the PLO and the Israeli Government. The USSR would continue its efforts to seek a peaceful solution to the Middle East problem in accordance with United Nations resolutions.

19. <u>Mr. AHMAD</u> (Malaysia) said that the Palestinian people had been dispossessed of its right to live in peace in its own country. Palestinian statehood was recognized by 117 countries. The plight of the Palestinians would persist as long as Israel ignored their inalienable rights for a homeland and did not take steps towards a political solution. Through the use of force and punitive civic regulations Israel had continued with impunity to disrupt and uproot Palestinian family life in the occupied territories. International relief bodies and UNRWA in particular were being taxed to their limits by the <u>intifadah</u> and the repressive Israeli response thereto.

(Mr. Ahmad, Malaysia)

20. He expressed great admiration for the efforts of UNRWA and its Commissioner-General to alleviate the sufferings of the Palestinian people. Those efforts were being severely restrained by inadequate funds. His country felt that the educational programme for Palestinian refugee children was among the most important of UNRWA's programmes.

21. He expressed grave concern over the report of the Commissioner-General (A/44/13). The harsh Israeli suppression of the <u>intifadah</u> caused great suffering to Palestinians and hampered UNRWA's operations. He condemned the use of firearms, detentiate without trial, indiscriminate beatings, destruction of property, including UNRWA premises, and other severe measures employed by the Israeli authorities. He called upon Israel to desist from all such acts, in accordance with the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Times of War.

22. He was pleased that UNRWA had received sufficient funding for its regular and emergency-related programmes in 1988. However, he was concerned that the shortfall for 1990 could lead to cutbacks. Therefore, he supported the recommendations of the Working Group on the Financing of UNRWA (A/44/641) urging Member States that had not yet contributed to do so. His Government had pledged a 50-per-cent increase to the 1989 programme. A voluntary special fund established by his Government had also made direct contributions to the Palestinians through the PLO.

23. He concurred with the Commissioner-General that the fortieth anniversary of UNRWA was a "stark reminder of the failure to resolve one of the most unsettling political and humanitarian issues of our time". UNRWA would be indispensable until a just and lasting solution had been found to the Palestine question.

24. <u>Mr. BEN OMRAN</u> (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that the report of the Commissioner-General (A/44/13) bespoke the continuing tragedy of a displaced people forced to live on meagre hand-outs. After over 40 years as refugees, Palestinians were currently threatened with the hal'ing of the Agency's modest aid and the spread of illiteracy and disease. He called upon the international community to fulfil its commitments towards the Palestine refugees by enabling UNRWA to continue its humanitarian services until a just and lasting solution was found to the Palestinian question.

25. The Palestinians only desired to exercise their inalienable right to self-determination and the establishment of an independent State comprising the whole of their native land. The conditions endured by over two million refugees should stir the public conscience of the world. Palestine belonged to the Palestinian people.

26. Over the two years of the intifadah, hundreds of Palestinians, including women and children and the elderly, had been killed, their sole crime being to oppose the occupation. That fearless intifadah had been criminally repressed by the usurping Zionist gangs, using live ammunition, internationally banned poison gases, carrying out mass arrests, detention and expulsion, razing houses, burning farms, cutting

(Mr. Ben Omran, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

off water and electricity, closing schools and universities and even pursuing Palestinians abroad. They also committed hostilities against international organizations, including UNRWA, preventing them from carrying out their mission. They had even killed international relief workers, just as they had once assassinated Count Bernadotte.

27. The Zionists had not heeded General Assembly or Security Council resolutions calling for an end to occupation and respect of the 1949 Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War. The great Powers, and, unfortunately, the United Nations itself - had shared responsibility with the Zionists for the tragedy of the Palestinian people, caused by the creation of the State of Israel. How long would the international community remain silent in the face of Zionist arrogance?

28. UNRWA faced an acute financial crisis which prevented it from providing minimal services. The countries responsible for the plight of the Palestinian people should assume the entire financial burden of supporting UNRWA until the Palestinians could return to their homeland. The United Nations had a duty to solve UNRWA's successive financial crises. His country would < ntinue to contribute to the Agency.

29. Urgent steps should be taken to ensure the return of the Palestinians to their homes, to stop funding for Zionist settlements in the occupied territories and to halt Jewish immigration to Palestine, which would result in further displacement of Palestinians.

30. He commended the efforts of the Working Group on the Financing of UNRWA and urged them to continue those efforts, in co-operation with the Secretary-General and the Commissioner-General, to enable the Agency to carry out the task entrusted to it.

31. In view of the Zionist entity's continuing refusal to allow international inspection teams or the international media to report on its arbitrary measures in the occupied territories, he supported the role played by UNRWA in informing world opinion as broadly as possible.

The meeting rose at 11.05 a.m.