



Monday, 10 October 1955,  
at 10.50 a.m.

New York

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**Chairman: Mr. Omar LOUTFI (Egypt).**

**AGENDA ITEM 27**

**Report of the United Nations High Commissioner  
for Refugees (A/2902 and Add.1, A/2943,  
chapter V, section IV, A/C.3/L.463, A/C.3/L.  
464/Rev.1) (*continued*)**

CONSIDERATION OF DRAFT RESOLUTIONS (A/C.3/L.463,  
A/C.3/L.464/Rev.1) (*continued*)

1. Mr. BAROODY (Saudi Arabia) said that the amendments (A/C.3/L.465) which he had proposed to the Soviet draft resolution (A/C.3/L.463) entailed others. If the words "Instructs the High Commissioner" were deleted from operative paragraph 2 of the draft resolution, sub-paragraph (c) would not apply to him. He therefore proposed that sub-paragraph (c) should be replaced by a new paragraph 3, with the following wording:

"Directs the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to co-operate with the Governments of those countries on whose territories there are still displaced persons and refugees to take all the necessary steps to provide work for those displaced persons and refugees who are still unemployed."

The existing operative paragraph 3 should be renumbered 4, and the words "to implement this resolution" should be deleted, as the implementation of such a resolution was the responsibility of Governments; the High Commissioner could merely co-operate. He hoped that with the amendments he had proposed the Soviet draft resolution would be adopted unanimously.

2. Mr. SASKIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) accepted the amendments submitted by the Saudi Arabian representative in writing (A/C.3/L.465) and the two additional amendments which he had just proposed orally. In doing so, the Soviet delegation was showing its sincere desire to contribute to a constructive solution of the refugee problem.

3. He welcomed the co-operativeness of the representatives who had criticized his delegation's draft resolution and proposed practical and useful amendments.

4. The draft resolution, as amended in conformity with the views of the Asian and African delegations, should also meet the points raised by the United Kingdom and United States representatives. The reference to propaganda in operative paragraph 2 (a), to which

the United Kingdom representative had objected, had been deleted, as had the reference to General Assembly resolution 8 (I) of 12 February 1946. Furthermore, in order to take into account the views expressed not only by the United Kingdom and United States representatives but also by a number of others, his delegation had agreed to the addition of the new operative paragraph proposed by Saudi Arabia (A/C.3/L.465) mentioning solutions other than repatriation, which might include resettlement and integration in the countries of asylum. It could therefore no longer be objected that the Soviet draft resolution stressed one solution only, that of voluntary repatriation.

5. The adoption of his draft resolution, as amended, would help to bring about a constructive solution of the refugee problem and would enable the High Commissioner to extend his useful activities to cover all three possible solutions, not only, as in the past, those of resettlement and integration.

6. As his delegation had accepted all the proposed amendments, it was not necessary to vote on them, and the draft resolution, as amended, should be voted on as a whole. He hoped that the United Kingdom and United States representatives would be able to vote for it in its new form. If, however, the United States representative still persisted in voting against it, he would be showing clearly that he opposed all solutions other than resettlement. In any event, the Soviet delegation would not vote against the joint draft resolution (A/C.3/L.464/Rev.1).

7. Mr. HIMIOB (Venezuela), referring to paragraph 179 of the High Commissioner's report (A/2902 and Add.1), said that refugees who came to Venezuela received every assistance from Government and private sources. The traditional concept of a refugee had entirely disappeared in Venezuela, as refugees had the same rights as Venezuelan nationals. Many refugees had risen to important posts and launched large enterprises. The problem of refugee children to which the Uruguayan representative had referred did not exist, as refugee children had Venezuelan nationality.

8. Referring to paragraph 82, he said that offices financed by the Government and responsible to the Ministry of Justice had been set up in Venezuela to provide legal aid free of cost to anyone, whether a refugee or a national, who was unable to pay for his own lawyer.

9. It was clear from the High Commissioner's report and from what he had just said that Venezuela was doing its share to solve the refugee problem.

10. The USSR draft resolution (A/C.3/L.463) failed to give balanced emphasis to the problem, and his vote would depend on the decisions taken on the amendments proposed to it.

11. He would be unable to vote for the joint draft resolution (A/C.3/L.464/Rev.1), as the second para-

graph of the preamble referred to resolution 589 (XX) of the Economic and Social Council, on which his delegation had abstained. He also had reservations to make with regard to operative paragraph 3, which contained an implicit reference to the same resolution. He requested a separate vote on both paragraphs.

12. Mr. HAKIM (Syria) said that the joint draft resolution (A/C.3/L.464 Rev.1) stressed the collection of funds rather than voluntary repatriation. Furthermore, operative paragraph 2 stated that emphasis should be laid on the reduction of the number of refugees in camps, without giving any priority to repatriation. He would therefore abstain on the joint draft resolution.

13. He would vote for the USSR draft resolution (A/C.3/L.463), as amended, as it upheld the principle of voluntary repatriation laid down in General Assembly resolution 8 (I). The United Kingdom representative had objected that that resolution was already out of date, but the passage of time could not affect the rightness of principles.

14. Mr. NAJAR (Israel), speaking on a point of order, protested against the remarks made by the previous speaker. In spite of the restraint shown by the Israel delegation, certain delegations seemed determined to open a debate on the problem of the Arab refugees, although that problem, which was on the agenda of the *Ad Hoc* Political Committee, was as far from the one under discussion in the Third Committee as were the questions of refugees in Korea, India and Pakistan, or of the exchange of populations happily effected between Greece and Turkey. Aspersions had again been cast on the reputation of his country and it was his duty not to permit them.

15. The problem of the Palestine refugees was the direct result of the decision of the States of the Arab League and of the Arab Higher Committee to oppose by force of arms the implementation of General Assembly resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947. Planning the massacre of the Jews, Arab leaders had ordered the Arab population of the Jewish part of Palestine to abandon their homes and flee to the neighbouring Arab countries, with a view to returning after the expected victory. Instead of victory, there had been defeat and thus some 650,000 Arabs from Palestine had remained in the Arab part of Palestine, in the Gaza strip and in those very Arab States which had created the problem and which, in spite of the 1949 armistice, still considered themselves at war with Israel. If international tension hampered the settlement of the European refugee problems, as asserted in the Third Committee, that was surely true of the Palestine refugees. It must be stressed that during those very years, Israel had taken in 300,000 Jews from Arab countries, welcoming them like brothers, and thus a historical and natural exchange of population had taken place.

16. Moreover, created to solve the Jewish problem, Israel had received 500,000 Jews from Europe and was proud of that achievement.

17. In refusing to run the terrible risk of opening its gates to refugees who for eight years had been living in countries at war with Israel, which they had been taught to hate, Israel was merely showing the normal instinct of self-preservation of any sovereign State. In any event, the country was no longer the Palestine

of 1947, and the Arab refugees would find themselves more alien there than in any Arab country.

18. Since financial resources for settling the refugees in Arab countries and compensating them existed, that solution of the problem, dictated by social, human and political realities, would quickly lead to a happy and prosperous Middle East and to the peace which remained the vision of Israel.

19. Mr. BAROODY (Saudi Arabia) thought that propaganda harangues were out of place in the discussion of an essentially humanitarian problem. He suggested that representatives who wished to exercise the right of reply should be given an opportunity of doing so after a vote had been taken on the proposals before the Committee.

20. Mr. KADHIM (Iraq) wished to point out that it was not the first time that the representative who had spoken before the representative of Saudi Arabia had brought up what he called a point of order and interrupted the normal proceedings of the Committee on such a pretext. At the 628th meeting, when the representative of Lebanon was speaking, he had raised a similar point. At the current meeting, immediately after the Syrian representative had spoken, he had read a carefully prepared statement. Apparently he wished to take the opportunity to speak whenever a representative of one of the Arab States mentioned the words "Palestine Arab refugees". Since the problem of refugees was a general one, it was perfectly logical to cite examples by way of explanation and illustration, and that was why the question of the Palestine Arab refugees had been mentioned by the representatives of the Arab States. Therefore there was no point of order, and if anyone was to be rebuked in that connexion, it was the very speaker who had raised a point of order.

21. He reserved the right to reply whenever the speaker in question brought up the matter.

22. Mr. HAKIM (Syria) also reserved the right to reply.

23. Mr. AZKOUL (Lebanon) said that none of the arguments adduced by the Israel representative could conceal the three fundamental truths on which any consideration of the problem of the Palestine refugees must be based. In the first place, whatever the causes of their plight might be, the refugees could not be deprived of the right to return to their homes. Secondly, the refugees who had gone to Israel when that State was established had taken the place of a corresponding number of the original inhabitants; thus, those original inhabitants had been driven from their homes and despoiled of their rightful heritage. Thirdly, the 300,000 Jews who had come to Israel from the Arab States had not done so as the result of persecution or war, but in response to Zionist appeals designed to disrupt peace in the Near East.

24. Mr. SUDJAHRI (Indonesia) said that although his country was not directly concerned with the problem of the refugees under the High Commissioner's mandate, it considered that all Members of the United Nations should share the responsibility of bringing about an early solution to that problem and alleviating the sufferings of hundreds of thousands of human beings. The Indonesian delegation was fully aware that such a solution could be achieved only by giving the refugees complete freedom of choice between repatriation, resettlement and integration; unfortunately,

however, the harsh reality was that that choice depended on certain circumstances.

25. In helping refugees to make their choice, preference should be given to voluntary repatriation, a solution which served their interests better than financial relief or economic integration. Thus, the guiding principle laid down in General Assembly resolution 8 (I) was sound, provided that repatriation was freely accepted. In the past, it had not been possible to give refugees the necessary assurances that they would not be subjected to persecution on return to their countries of origin because of the fact that the problem had been dealt with in an atmosphere of political tension. The recent relaxation of that tension should bring about a salutary change.

26. The Indonesian delegation therefore endorsed the principle set forth in operative paragraph 1 of the USSR draft resolution (A/C.3/L.463); but it had some doubts as to the feasibility of the action proposed in operative paragraph 2. The debate had made it clear that political factors could not be altogether eliminated from measures such as those suggested, and the implementation of the paragraph did not seem to fall within the High Commissioner's competence. The Indonesian delegation would therefore be obliged to abstain from voting on the USSR draft resolution.

27. The nine-Power draft resolution (A/C.3/L.464/Rev.1) rightly stressed the need for voluntary contributions from Governments with a view to permanent solutions under General Assembly resolution 832 (IX). The Indonesian delegation noted with regret, however, that operative paragraph 2 endorsed the directive of the UNREF Executive Committee that the main emphasis of the programme should be on the reduction of the number of refugees in camps. There should be no discrimination between various categories of refugees in raising funds for a purely humanitarian cause. For that reason, the Indonesian delegation would abstain from voting on the joint draft resolution also.

28. Mr. PEREZ DE ARCE (Chile) said that his country had always co-operated in efforts to alleviate the plight of refugees. In Chile, immigrants and refugees enjoyed the same rights as Chilean citizens, because the Government and the people of Chile realized that their civilization could only benefit from contact with new groups. Unfortunately, Chile was not in a position to make any financial contribution to UNREF, owing to the heavy expenditures it had made in connexion with the industrialization of the country.

29. He would abstain from voting on the USSR draft resolution (A/C.3/L.463), and would vote for the joint draft resolution (A/C.3/L.464/Rev.1), with the exception of operative paragraph 3, on which he would abstain.

30. Mr. RODRIGUEZ FABREGAT (Uruguay) thanked the sponsors of the joint draft resolution (A/C.3/L.464/Rev.1) for incorporating his amendment in their proposals. His delegation attached great importance to the principles set forth in General Assembly resolution 832 (IX), and was glad that the draft resolution now made it clear that those principles were not being superseded or ignored. As revised, the joint draft resolution would offer the High Commissioner a sound basis for extending his work with a view to finding permanent solutions. The nine-Power draft had the further merit of referring to voluntary repatriation as one element of the general problem, on

an equal basis with resettlement and integration. Under Uruguayan law, all refugees and immigrants enjoyed equal rights with citizens of Uruguay and were given the opportunity of leading lives consistent with human dignity. For that reason, the Uruguayan delegation would vote for the parts of the joint draft resolution which restated resolution 832 (IX), especially since that resolution gave priority to family units in resettlement programmes.

31. The Saudi Arabian amendments (A/C.3/L.465) to the USSR draft resolution (A/C.3/L.463) brought out the twofold nature of voluntary repatriation by introducing the concept of voluntary refusal. The Uruguayan delegation would be prepared to consider any further amendments based on that principle, and its vote on the USSR draft resolution would depend on such amendments.

32. Mr. PAZHAWAK (Afghanistan) thought that there had been exhaustive general debate and discussion on the draft resolutions and amendments, and that any other representatives who wished to speak might be prepared to state their views in explanation of their votes. He therefore moved the closure of the debate.

33. Miss BERNARDINO (Dominican Republic) opposed the motion for closure of the debate. The refugee problem was one of the most serious questions on the Committee's agenda, and should accordingly be discussed as fully as possible.

34. Mr. HOARE (United Kingdom) also objected to the closure of the debate; before the vote was taken he wished to explain his vote on the USSR draft resolution (A/C.3/L.463) and to clarify his delegation's attitude towards the Saudi Arabian amendments.

*The motion for closure of the debate was rejected by 34 votes to 6, with 11 abstentions.*

35. Mr. MORENO (Panama) said that the problem of refugees was primarily a humanitarian one, and the refugees should therefore be given the greatest possible freedom of choice between the three solutions recommended by the General Assembly: voluntary repatriation, resettlement and economic integration. The USSR draft resolution (A/C.3/L.463), even as amended, laid greater stress on repatriation than on the two alternatives. The joint draft resolution (A/C.3/L.464/Rev.1), on the other hand, left the High Commissioner free to use all three methods and safeguarded the refugees' freedom of choice; he would therefore vote for it and against the USSR text.

36. Mr. HOARE (United Kingdom) observed that the Saudi Arabian representative had very skilfully pruned the USSR draft resolution (A/C.3/L.463), although he should also have eliminated the reference to displaced persons, who were not within the High Commissioner's mandate. Nevertheless, the sponsors of the joint draft resolution (A/C.3/L.464/Rev.1) still felt that the USSR text laid undue stress on repatriation, whereas their own text presented the matter in the proper focus, preserving a balance between the three methods of solution and leaving the choice to the refugees themselves.

37. In paragraph 1 of the operative part of the USSR draft resolution, the High Commissioner was instructed to "encourage" the early return of the refugees to their countries of origin; while in the new text proposed by Saudi Arabia (A/C.3/L.465) for the last operative paragraph, he was requested to seek other solutions only for those refugees who "voluntarily refused" to

return to their countries of origin. The High Commissioner was thus to be asked to question decisions made by refugees years before and to sway their choice towards repatriation. That was both undesirable and beyond the powers conferred upon him by the Statute of his Office (General Assembly resolution 428 (V), annex), and the delegations which had co-sponsored the joint draft resolution would therefore be obliged to vote against the amended USSR text.

38. Mr. BLAUSTEIN (United States of America) associated himself with those remarks. He did not think a compromise could be achieved between the two draft resolutions, because they represented two conflicting concepts of what was the High Commissioner's proper function. Even as amended, the USSR text (A/C.3/L.463) would make it incumbent on the High Commissioner to give priority to repatriation; and that would amount to indirectly amending the Statute of his Office and undoing much of what he had already accomplished. Furthermore, the moral pressure on the refugees which the USSR draft resolution implied was entirely unacceptable. The Saudi Arabian amendments, which the USSR delegation had accepted, had not basically altered the USSR text, which at best would delay the practical solutions approved by the General Assembly in resolution 832 (IX) and at worst could result in a disguised form of forcible repatriation. The joint draft resolution (A/C.3/L.464/Rev.1), on the other hand, included all three methods of permanent solution laid down by the General Assembly and, in appealing for funds for the programme of permanent solutions was most realistic in its approach. The refugees had lived in misery for ten long years; the Committee must not fail them now and it should not force them in their choice.

39. For those reasons, he would vote against the USSR draft resolution and he urged other delegations to do likewise.

40. Mr. SAKSIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) recalled that the fate of 2,200,000 human beings was at stake. The USSR draft resolution (A/C.3/L.463) was intended to help those unfortunates and to solve the refugee problem as a whole. In the past five years, the High Commissioner had helped 530,000 refugees to settle in foreign lands, without assisting one single refugee to return to his country of origin. It was hard to believe that such unanimity could have been the result of voluntary choice. The United States delegation sought to limit the High Commissioner to

the methods of resettlement and integration, barring the solution of repatriation, whereas the USSR draft resolution, based on the Charter of the United Nations and on humanitarian principles, would remedy the one-sidedness of the High Commissioner's programme by allowing him, in addition to his current activities, to encourage voluntary repatriation. Consequently, a vote against the USSR text as amended would be a vote against the very principle of voluntary repatriation.

41. The USSR delegation had accepted all the amendments proposed to its text in the sincere desire to help millions of refugees who were the responsibility of the United Nations. It felt that a programme incorporating all three solutions approved by the General Assembly would better achieve that purpose than one limited to resettlement and integration. He therefore urged the Committee to adopt the balanced, humanitarian and practical USSR proposal.

42. Mr. BAROODY (Saudi Arabia) was surprised at the unbending attitude of the two previous speakers, who appeared to regard their own texts as sacrosanct and rejected all attempts at a compromise.

43. He failed to see how the United States representative, in particular, could assert that the Saudi Arabian suggestions and amendments had made no basic change in the USSR draft resolution (A/C.3/L.463). An effort had been made to meet all the earlier objections to that text; thus, the reference to General Assembly resolution 8 (I) had been eliminated and the mention of "solutions other than repatriation" had been introduced. Those were both basic changes, major concessions by the USSR delegation. A number of less important amendments had also been accepted by that delegation in an effort to make its draft generally acceptable. If those amendments were inadequate, the sponsors of the joint draft resolution (A/C.3/L.464/Rev.1.) were free to propose others; that would be far more constructive than their flat refusal to try to reach a compromise. It was disheartening to see the solution of a purely humanitarian question subordinated to political considerations.

44. He proposed that the vote should be postponed until the revised text of the USSR draft resolution had been circulated to delegations so that they could judge for themselves whether or not basic changes had been made in it.

*It was so decided.*

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.