

United Nations
GENERAL
ASSEMBLY

TWENTIETH SESSION

Official Records

SPECIAL POLITICAL COMMITTEE, 443rd
MEETING



Monday, 1 November 1965,
at 11 a.m.

NEW YORK

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Chairman: Mr. Carlet R. AUGUSTE (Haiti).

AGENDA ITEM 35

Reports of the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (continued) (A/5813, A/6013; A/SPC/103 to 106; A/SPC/L.112/Rev.1)

1. The CHAIRMAN announced that the list of speakers would be closed at 3 p.m. and urged delegations to submit their draft resolutions on the question under consideration as soon as possible.
2. Mr. EL-FARRA (Jordan) said he wished to stress the point that any attempt to break down the responsibilities of UNRWA in order to shift them to the host countries would not be acceptable to his Government, which would regard it as a manoeuvre designed to sidestep the problem. On the contrary, additional funds had to be found in order to meet the present deficit and provide assistance to third generation refugees and other claimants. If it was impossible to increase the Agency's budget and expand its programme, as wisdom dictated, the Committee should at least keep them at the same level as in previous years. In view of the increase in the number of refugees and the rise in the cost of living, the existing funds were no longer sufficient to provide for the refugees' basic needs. Thus, the food ration of about 1,200 calories cost less than \$.04 per day, and the health programme was based on an average outlay of \$4 per year per person. The strike which had recently taken place in Beirut as a protest against the Agency's intention to decrease education grants was evidence of the difficulties encountered in that field. Moreover, as a result of an unduly narrow interpretation of the word "refugee", almost half a million persons were unable to qualify for the Agency's help. It was partly for those reasons that the Governments of the host countries had had to make certain reservations, as presented in the Committee by the Lebanese representative (436th meeting).
3. The Agency's deficit seemed to be becoming chronic. From \$0.5 million in 1963 it had increased to \$2 million in 1964 and then to \$2.5 million in 1965; and it was expected to reach \$4.2 million

in 1966. As a result, the working capital had decreased to \$15 million. It was therefore desirable to explore every possible means of providing the Agency with additional funds, as the Commissioner-General had requested in his report (A/6013, para. 14), for if that situation was allowed to go on it would threaten the Agency's ability to continue its activities. The deficit explained the change in the attitude of the refugees towards the Agency and the apprehensions of Arab public opinion. The major contributing Powers would therefore be well advised to give the matter careful thought before allowing the budget, which was already far too low, to be reduced further. Their indifference, encouraged by Zionist pressure, could only complicate the situation and jeopardize peace and stability in the Near East. If they failed to make the necessary effort they would not only be ignoring their own interests but would also be failing in their duties and responsibilities. The refugees would welcome anything which could be done, pending the final solution of their problem, to enable them to enjoy the income accruing from their own property. That income alone would be sufficient to meet all expenses, and the dignity of the refugees would be safeguarded. If the international community, represented by the United Nations, which was responsible for the Palestine problem, was to protect its prestige and authority, it must adopt the measures dictated by the possibility of a reduction in contributions and the Zionist threat hanging over the refugees.

4. Israel's expansionist designs, though the Israel representative had repeatedly denied their existence, were borne out by the facts. Statements by many Israel Zionists could be cited, but it would suffice to recall Mr. Ben-Gurion's statement in the Israel Yearbook for 1951-1952 and 1955 to the effect that the State of Israel had been established in only one part of the land of Israel. The Israel representative could not deny those quotations, nor could it deny that the Israel authorities sought by every possible means to make that expansion a reality. The original claim to a Jewish national home had been converted into a claim for a Jewish State. Israel had forcibly occupied a territory over one third greater in area than that allotted to it by the United Nations. In that connexion it should be recalled that Israel had so far refused to evacuate the zone it had occupied in violation of United Nations resolutions. Then in 1956 there had been aggression against Egypt, with the Sinai campaign designed to incorporate that other part of the Arab East into Israel. At that time Mr. Ben-Gurion had asserted that the 1949 armistice signed between Israel and Egypt no longer existed. He had not only claimed the Sinai area, which was twice the size of Israel, but also the island of Tiran, in

the Gulf of Aqaba. Only five weeks before the invasion he had said that Israel would never start a war. Similar words of peace had been heard from the Israel representative exactly one week before Israel forces attacked two Lebanese villages and only a few days before their violation of agreements on 30 October 1965 in the Latrun sector in Jordan. He described in detail the incidents of 30 October, which he said were not isolated acts but premeditated violations motivated by a carefully studied Zionist plan for expansion and aggression.

5. The creation of Israel was itself an act of aggression. He wondered how long the Israelis would continue to mislead public opinion. The facts he had he had just mentioned left no doubt regarding Israel's expansionist policy. In order to abandon that policy the Israelis would have to abandon an ideology—Zionism—which had much in common with nazism, since it had the same goals, used the same methods and was based on racism and the concept of Lebensraum. The Zionists wanted to increase the influx of Jewish immigrants into the Near East, give them larger and larger tracts of Arab lands and in that way increase the number of refugees. In other words, they were seeking space which they deemed adequate to receive Jewish exiles from the entire world in Palestine; that was the purpose of their expansionist policy. They had a fifth column in all countries, which exerted the necessary pressure to induce Governments to follow a policy favourable to Israel, even if it was contrary to the national interests of those Governments—a process which proved the hold which Zionism had on Jews throughout the world. According to the Israel Yearbook of 1953-1954, Jews even regarded Israel's ambassadors as their own representatives. Thus, Zionism, which had its base in the Near East, had ramifications throughout the world.

6. The Israel representative had stated at an earlier meeting that Jordan had nothing to fear from Israel but had a great deal to fear from certain other countries in the area. While there were at times differences between Jordan and its neighbour States, they were the normal differences between members of the same family having common goals. What they differed over was the best means of freeing the region from domination and exploitation and making the Arab nation worthy of its part and the Arab leaders worthy of their heritage. Each of the States might have its own opinion regarding the best means of attaining those objectives, but they all regarded Israel as the only threat. Zionism was by its very presence a defiance of every value embodied in the Charter. The United Nations was open to those who, in the terms of Article 4 of the Charter, were able and willing to fulfil their obligations under the Charter. There was no room for those who did not meet those conditions.

7. Every one of the four successive Directors of the United Nations Relief and Works Agencies for Palestine Refugees during the past fifteen years had made it clear that the only solution to the refugee problem was repatriation. The United Nations and the Powers mainly responsible for the tragedy should recognize

the right of the refugees to their property, secure those rights, and enable the people of Palestine to determine their own destiny.

8. The Israel representative insisted that the issue was between the Arab States and Israel and that the political questions could only be settled by a negotiated agreement between the Arab Governments and the Israel Government. The real problem, however, had nothing to do with the maintenance of peace between Israel and the other States; it was a question of the refugees, which were guaranteed by the United Nations Charter and by numerous resolutions.

9. The Israel representative had also referred to the resolution which created the State of Israel. In that connexion it should not be forgotten that the United Nations had no right to partition a land against the will of the majority of its people and in utter disregard of the right of self-determination. Even if the resolution which had created Israel was assumed to be valid, it had never been respected by that State. The acts of aggression it had committed in order to acquire additional Arab land were in flagrant disregard of the United Nations and left no doubt as to the Zionists' intentions and designs.

10. Replying to allegations concerning the responsibility of the Arab States for the exodus of Arabs from Palestine, he recalled the massacres which had been described by many reliable eye-witnesses. Even assuming that the Arabs of Palestine had left their homes on the advice of the Arab leaders, did that entitle the Jews to claim a land which their ancestors had never inhabited? Were they entitled to deprive the refugees of their right to return to their homes and their native land? The problem lay not between Israel and the Arab States but between the Zionist movement and Israel on the one hand and the Arabs of Palestine on the other. The refugees could accept no other solution than their unconditional return to their homeland and their attitude was clearly described in paragraph 6 of the Commissioner-General's report (A/6013). A tribute should be paid to the people of Palestine who despite their sufferings, privations and misery, continued to struggle for their liberation, and also to the Palestine Liberation Organization representing them.

11. No historical precedent, no rule of law authorized the Jews in Palestine to expel the Arab people and to establish a State in that area with complete disregard for the principle of self-determination. The only precedent that could be cited was to be found in Africa—in South Africa where the white settlers had dispossessed the legitimate inhabitants of their lands. That was a crying injustice which all United Nations organs were striving to bring to an end. He saw no reason why a similar injustice should be permitted in the Arab East and he wondered how much longer Zionist pressure groups would continue to mislead public opinion by exercising their influence in the United States and in certain European countries. The representative of Israel belonged to the club of political Zionists; he had left his own country, South Africa, to make use of the experience he had acquired there.

12. Mr. COMAY (Israel), speaking in exercise of his right of reply, pointed out that the incidents which had occurred within the past forty-eight hours in the Latrun area were under investigation by the Mixed Armistice Commission. The Jordanian representative's version was not in accord with the facts.

13. While it was impossible to prevent Arab spokesmen from attacking Zionism, the Jewish people's national independence movement, it was quite shocking to hear them equate that national movement with nazism. He reserved the right, at a later stage of the debate, to analyse more fully certain other arguments put forward by the representative of Jordan.

14. Mr. EL-FARRA (Jordan), remarked that there was a no man's land defined in an agreement and approved by the United Nations; and an attempt was being made to change its status and character, as was shown by the incidents that had taken place two days earlier.

15. The CHAIRMAN asked speakers to abide strictly by the rules of procedure and to confine themselves to the consideration of the report of the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East.

16. Mr. DAPCEVIC (Yugoslavia) observed that the very fact that for nearly twenty years the tragic problem of the Palestine refugees had been under consideration in various United Nations organs proved its importance and emphasized the moral and material responsibility of the United Nations in the matter. His delegation felt, therefore, that there could be no question of curtailing the activities of UNRWA.

17. Despite all its efforts and because of its limited resources and other difficulties, UNRWA could no longer bring about any appreciable improvement in the refugees' plight. Moreover, delay in taking proper steps would create a grave danger of making their plight worse. UNRWA's activities might be jeopardized by its financial stringency and that would inevitably give rise to serious political difficulties in the Middle East. If the worst was to be avoided, it was particularly essential that the developed countries should furnish increased assistance. Furthermore, the proposal that the property abandoned by the refugees and the income derived therefrom should be administered by a custodian was, in his view, justified. The refugees could not be allowed merely to subsist while their property was used for the benefit of others. The Commissioner-General's proposal that UNRWA's mandate be extended for a further period of five years should also be adopted.

18. The observations submitted by Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and the United Arab Republic (A/SPC/106), which as host countries contributed substantially to improving the refugees' plight, emphasized certain questions of principle which deserved the Committee's full attention. Curtailment of UNRWA's responsibilities could not be tolerated at a time when the plight of the refugees was worsening and practically nothing had been done to implement the provisions of paragraph 11 of resolution 194 (III) and subsequent resolutions.

19. Like the host Governments and some others, his delegation held the view that refugees who wished to be repatriated should be allowed to return to their homes, as they were entitled to do under resolution 194 (III). It was the only satisfactory way to solve that grave problem. In paragraph 6 of his report (A/6013), the Commissioner-General stated that the attitudes and feelings of the refugees in regard to their wish to return to their homes continued unchanged and that their emotions had been increased by the establishment of the Palestine Liberation Organization. Rather might it be said that it was the just aspirations of the Palestine Arabs that had led to the establishment of that organization, since the United Nations, which they held responsible for what had happened to them, had been unable to implement its own decisions. Moreover, the way in which the problem of the refugees had been handled so far offered them no guarantee of tangible results being attained, and that could only lead to further complications threatening the peace of that region and of the whole world.

20. In regard to the third generation refugees, his delegation felt that it was wrong to deny children in that category their entitlement to the rations distributed by UNRWA. Children could not be treated differently from their parents. At the same time the annual birth-rate of 40,000 children among the refugees undoubtedly aggravated the political problem. The third generation children should have the benefit of UNRWA services, and it would be a mistake to expect them to be any less desirous than their parents of returning to their homes. Thus the memorandum submitted by Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and the United Arab Republic (A/SPC/106) rightly attached great importance to that question.

21. He called the Committee's attention to the contribution made to the debate by the well-documented statement of Mr. Tannous (437th meeting), Deputy Chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization. The Committee should accord that statement its due importance, since it was essential to ensure the participation in the debate of the principal parties concerned, and more especially to win the co-operation of the refugees.

22. His delegation would support all efforts likely to solve the grave problem involving the fate of the 1,280,000 refugees.

23. Mr. BEAULIEU (Canada) congratulated the Officers of the Committee on their election. His delegation wished first of all to express its admiration for the devotion with which the Commissioner-General and the staff of UNRWA were discharging their arduous duties.

24. The divergencies of views about the way to alleviate the lot of the refugees must not obscure the goal—to facilitate UNRWA's task of furnishing assistance to the refugees. Since 1950, both the Canadian Government and private organizations in Canada had been unsparing in their support of UNRWA, which had been given in a variety of ways. The Canadian Government had been particularly happy,

during World Refugee Year, to be associated with the establishment of the Vocational Training Centre at Sibling in Lebanon.

25. The Commissioner-General had indicated the steps he had taken to try to remedy UNRWA's financial situation, but it was obvious that by themselves those measures were inadequate. Some countries, notably the United States and the United Kingdom, had been exceptionally generous to UNRWA; and there were also the contributions made by other countries, and especially those which the host countries had furnished in various forms. The participation of UNESCO and WHO, and of many private organizations, also deserved mention. The Canadian Government had taken due note of the Commissioner-General's remarks about UNRWA's financial situation,

and it would consider the question of its own contribution in a constructive spirit.

26. The Canadian Government accepted the principle of a longer mandate of perhaps three years which would help UNRWA to organize its activities; and Canada would give its full consideration to the matter along with other proposals.

27. The CHAIRMAN again appealed to delegations to confine themselves as much as possible to the subject under consideration, namely the UNRWA report. He also requested members who wished to exercise their right of reply to do so at the end of meetings.

The meeting rose 12.15 p.m.