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Chairman: Mr. Eugeniusz KULAGA (Poland).

AGENDA ITEM 36

**United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine
Refugees in the Near East (*continued*) (A/7577, A/7614,
A/7665, A/SPC/133 and A/SPC/134, A/SPC/L.175):**

(a) Report of the Commissioner-General;

(b) Report of the Secretary-General

1. The CHAIRMAN, in accordance with the decision taken by the Committee at its 665th meeting in connexion with a letter dated 14 November 1969 (A/SPC/132), invited Mr. Saadat Hassan to address the Committee.
2. Mr. HASSAN (speaking as one of the persons constituting the Palestine Liberation Organization in accordance with the decision taken by the Committee at its 665th meeting, which did not imply that the Committee recognized that organization) said that the fact that the Palestine Liberation Organization was taking part in the Committee's debates in no way meant that it recognized the competence of the United Nations; it participated in order to make the position of the Palestinian people known to the world and to reaffirm once again that it would, through sacrifice and struggle, rectify the mistakes of the United Nations which, taking the path of political opportunism and appeasement, had recommended the partition of Palestine on 29 November 1947. Those reservations did not, however, mean that the Palestine Liberation Organization failed to appreciate the dedicated work of Mr. Michelmores and his staff.
3. At a time when colonialism was withdrawing, the Palestinian people were faced by a racist settler State which constituted an economic, human and military base for colonialism and imperialism. Israel played the part of policeman in the area; it was acting in collusion with the United States, whose counter-revolutionary and neo-colonialist activities in the guise of assistance programmes were promoted by Israel. The true nature of Israel had been revealed by the role it played in serving the interests of imperialism, and particularly by the revolution of the Arab people of Palestine.
4. That revolution was the extension of the heroic resistance of the Palestinians to the gradual invasion of their

country by the Zionist settlers since the turn of the century. The invaders had temporarily succeeded in realizing their dream, but the Palestinian people, who had nothing to lose by fighting and who were ready to pay the price of victory, would achieve their objectives and regain their ancestral homeland. Twenty years of indifference on the part of the world and of political expedients on the part of the United Nations had taught them that they must fight for their freedom. Their situation, more than any other, warranted a revolution. They realized that the course adopted by the Palestine Liberation Organization was the only way of putting an end to the odious phenomenon of Zionism and of destroying the aggressive and racist State called Israel. It was by conviction and in complete liberty that they had taken up arms, inspired by the love of their country and hatred for the invader. It was those feelings, coupled with popular discontent and the social and economic conditions, which had impelled them to join in the revolution.

5. That revolution was in itself a political process which was calling into question all aspects of national life, thus sparking off a chain reaction. Despite all the efforts of Tel Aviv to drive a wedge between the freedom fighters and the people, the latter were quite aware where the truth lay and identified themselves wholeheartedly with the liberation movement, which embodied all their aspirations; that could not be altered by collective punishment or the brutality of the police and the army.

6. The Palestinian revolution was an integral part of the liberation movements which were combating the forces of evil, foreign domination and occupation, exploitation, colonialism and imperialism throughout the world.

7. The humanitarian objectives of the Palestinian revolution, which sought to establish a pluralistic State, without reference to the purity or the supremacy of a particular race, were in sharp contrast with the expansionist policy of the Israel Zionist movement, which endeavoured to create a purely Jewish State, while treating the Eastern Jews as second class citizens. It was that contrast of attitude and thinking in policies and goals which had convinced the Palestinians that they had no other choice but to live and fight as they did. That was the way they sought the support and assistance of all peoples and Governments which believed in the dignity of man and the right of all peoples to self-determination in accordance with the principles proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Thus, every Israeli had the right to return to his country of origin, and the financial and administrative restrictions which prevented him from exercising that inalienable right should be removed. Those Israelis who chose to remain in Palestine would be treated as equal citizens and partners.

8. An objective study of the situation should lead the United Nations to the conclusion that Israel was the cause of the insecurity and tension which prevailed in that region; it should likewise induce it to repair the injustice done to the Palestinian people. In that respect, it should be pointed out that the Palestinians had categorically rejected Security Council resolution 242 (1967), which some people wrongly regarded as a suitable basis for a solution of the problem. Only the revolutionary movement, sprung from the Arab people of Palestine, who were the main interested party, could speak in their name. The Palestinians had no guardian or protector, and no State or group of Powers could conclude an agreement on their behalf or determine the destiny of Palestine without the consent of the indigenous population.

9. Finally, the Palestinian people, who had taken up arms in defence of their rights and of their survival as a nation, would not abandon the struggle until their goals had been attained. There could be no just or lasting peace for the Palestinian people until a Palestinian State was established on the soil of Palestine. Only when all the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people had been restored could peace and tranquility return to the area.

10. Mr. LARKIN (New Zealand) said that, in his report (A/7614), the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East had stressed that, unless certain necessary steps were taken, the Agency would be facing a financial crisis within a year. In the view of his delegation, that was a consideration which the Committee should keep in mind. Mr. Michelmores report was deliberately confined to a sober account of the steps taken by UNRWA to meet the subsistence needs of about a million people. He and his staff were entitled to feel proud of what they had achieved.

11. However, the human aspects of the situation emerged through the restrained language employed. Thus he, the New Zealand representative, had been particularly struck by the high value which the refugees, both parents and children, set on education, which opened the way to independence and dignity. However, if new economies were attempted, they would clearly fall in the field of education, since it was scarcely possible to prune administrative costs any further, or to reduce the basic ration or the number of recipients; supplementary feeding was indispensable for children and other vulnerable groups; the health services could not be reduced without grave risk; therefore, only education remained the largest item in the Agency's budget and also the most constructive part of its work. Any reduction made in that field would affect the morale of the refugees, thereby detracting from UNRWA's effort.

12. Eighteen years previously, the General Assembly had recognized in resolution 512 (VI) that the Governments concerned had the primary responsibility for reaching a settlement of their outstanding differences in conformity with the resolutions of the General Assembly concerning Palestine. That statement struck a balance between respect for the General Assembly's own decisions and the recognition that, ultimately, Israel and the Arab States would have to reach an accommodation. Since that time, many resolutions had been adopted to no great effect, but UNRWA had remained dedicated to its humanitarian objectives. While UNRWA had no political function, its

activities had political implications in that it met the immediate needs of the refugees and, by providing the opportunity for education, it set limits to their feeling of frustration and despair. There was no prospect of a rapid settlement of the political problems of the Middle East at present. Any solution would be only slowly and painfully achieved. In those conditions, it was absolutely essential that UNRWA should continue its work. That was why its financial difficulties constituted genuine grounds for anxiety.

13. His delegation considered that three choices were open to Member States. They could allow UNRWA to founder, they could maintain their financial support at the present level, or they could furnish the Agency with the means of providing the refugees not only with food and shelter but also with hope for the future. Of those three paths, New Zealand would like to see the Assembly choose the third.

14. New Zealand was far from the Middle East and its contributions to UNRWA, which were nevertheless the fourth or fifth largest on a *per capita* basis, were made at the expense of its obligations elsewhere in the world, as was often the case for small countries. New Zealand was therefore naturally concerned about the tendency to expect that the relatively small number of countries which sustained UNRWA's activities would be able to do so indefinitely. His delegation appealed to those Member States which had not yet done so to make contributions that would help to meet the present shortfall; that would give them an opportunity to demonstrate the respect and support which UNRWA well deserved.

15. Mr. EL BOURI (Libya) paid a tribute to the Commissioner-General of UNRWA, Mr. Michelmores, for his report (A/7614) and for the devotion, integrity and impartiality he had shown. He also thanked the staff of the Agency, who had performed their duties in difficult conditions.

16. Turning first to the Commissioner-General's report, he said that once again that document gave the United Nations occasion to reflect on the consequences of its unfortunate decision of 1947. It also showed that the distressing situation in which the Palestine refugees had lived since that time had been further aggravated as a result of the Israel aggression in 1967. As the Secretary-General had said in his statement to the Committee at the twenty-third session (612th meeting), the refugees had no homeland, no future and no hope. The Commissioner-General's report showed that those whom the 1967 aggression had forced into a new exile were exposed to bombing and other acts of war by Israel, and that the treatment inflicted on those who remained in the occupied territories was even worse: dynamiting of their camps, arrests, torture, curfew, closing of schools and so on.

17. The Commissioner-General's report did not mention the many refugees who had been arrested and imprisoned by the Israel military authorities, but it did reveal that during the period July 1968-June 1969, fifty-four UNRWA staff members had been arrested, of whom forty had been detained for varying periods without trial, and four deported.

18. The report contained a number of facts which revealed the tragedy of the Palestinians. For example, it stated that

out of 1,395,074 registered refugees, 554,721, including 293,000 children, were not receiving food rations. The situation with regard to education was becoming worse: the Commissioner-General observed that "... the 1968-1969 school year has been marred by widespread disturbances to the school programme: demonstrations, strikes by students, teachers' strikes, curfews, and, in the occupied territories . . . , the closing of certain schools and the detention of some staff and pupils on security grounds by order of the military authorities". (See A/7614, para. 92.)

19. Furthermore, despite the appeal made in General Assembly resolution 2452 A (XXIII), fewer than 20,000 refugees and other displaced persons had been able to return to their homes. That fact demonstrated once again Israel's contempt for the United Nations.

20. In his report, the Commissioner-General also revealed the Agency's alarming financial situation and the distressing steps he would be obliged to take if the Agency was not given enough funds to do its work. The United Nations, which was largely responsible for the situation, should remedy it. To that end, the General Assembly should find a way of restoring to the refugees the income from their property, from which the Israelis alone now benefited.

21. For twenty-one years, the Palestine refugees had waited in vain for the international community to ensure the implementation of General Assembly resolution 194 (III) concerning their repatriation and compensation. Now more than ever the Palestinians wished to return to their homes, and the young *fedayeen* who sacrificed their lives every day on the soil of Palestine bore witness to that desire.

22. He then read out extracts from articles published in Western newspapers which showed that the brutal repression carried out by Israel against the Arab population of the occupied territories was now attracting the attention of the world Press. On 27 October 1969, Mr. Patrick Brogan, special correspondent of *The Times* of London, had described the destruction of the village of Halhul and had reported that sixty to seventy families were homeless. In an article circulated as a Security Council document,¹ the foreign editor of *The Times* Mr. Hodgkin, had described the forms of repression to which the Arabs were subjected, particularly the destruction and requisition of buildings, and had concluded that Israel's aim was purely and simply to annex the occupied territories. He had also noted that in pursuing that goal, the Israelis were inconvenienced by the presence of 650,000 Arabs on the West Bank of the Jordan and of 450,000 more in the Gaza Strip, and were making every effort to persuade those Arabs to go. At the end of his article, Mr. Hodgkin had stated that the Arabs were being persecuted into a new Diaspora by the armies and people of Israel. In an article published on 6 November 1969, the special correspondent of *The New York Times*, Mr. James Feron had likewise described the collective punishments inflicted by the Israelis, such as the blowing up of dwellings and the seizure of Arab property.

23. The articles he had mentioned had already provoked a wave of emotion throughout the world. For example, on 30

¹ See *Official Records of the Security Council, Twenty-fourth Year, Supplement for October, November and December 1969*, document S/9501.

October an Israel citizen now staying in London, Mr. Machover, had sent *The Times* a letter saying that factual reports such as those by Mr. Brogan were long overdue, and that the situation in the Gaza Strip was even worse than on the West Bank of the Jordan. In a letter sent to the same newspaper on 30 October, Mr. Dennis Walters, a Member of Parliament in the United Kingdom, had said that Israel should no longer be allowed to get away with conduct which would be regarded as intolerable if perpetrated by any other State in the free world.

24. In that connexion, he recalled that some years previously the historian Arnold Toynbee, in his book *A Study of History* had observed that the Jews had

"... become persecutors in their turn . . . at the first opportunity that had . . . arisen for them to inflict on other human beings who had done the Jews no injury, but who happened to be weaker than they were, some of the wrongs and sufferings that had been inflicted on the Jews by their . . . persecutors".²

25. Israel could not act as it did without help. The deplorable collusion between Zionism and imperialism, which had made possible the adoption of the 1947 resolution on the partition of Palestine, was still in evidence twenty-two years later. In 1947, the United Nations had established a colonialist and racist State which in twenty years had launched three expansionist wars. Even now, the repression carried out in the occupied territories left no doubt as to Israel's expansionist intentions. Indeed, the annexation of the occupied territories had been the main theme of the recent electoral campaign in Israel. The statements by the Israel leaders were revealing: Mr. Ben-Gurion had announced on several occasions that the Israel empire would stretch from the Nile to the Euphrates, while Mr. Moshe Dayan had stated at Tel Aviv, on 6 April 1969, that Israel should take steps to remain in the occupied territories, despite the four great Powers, the United Nations and the hostile population of those territories.

26. In fact, the Zionist movement could not have carried out its plans without the encouragement and support of imperialism. The Balfour Declaration had been issued by the United Kingdom, which during its Mandate had opened the gates of Palestine to Jewish immigration and had helped the Zionists to organize and arm themselves, while its troops massacred Arabs who opposed the establishment of a Jewish national home. The United States had supported the Zionist movement since the end of the Second World War, except in 1956, when President Eisenhower had condemned Israel aggression. After the new Israel aggression in 1967, the United States had voted for none of the Security Council and General Assembly resolutions condemning Israel or calling upon it to withdraw its troops. The United States was currently supplying Israel with massive financial and military assistance, and the recent visit to Washington by the Prime Minister of Israel had revealed the scope of that support. The position of the United States was inconsistent with its liberal traditions and with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, of which it was one of the founders.

² See Arnold J. Toynbee, *A Study of History* (London, Oxford University Press, 1954), vol. VIII, p. 288-289.

27. Despite the support given to the Zionists, particularly by the United States, the Palestinians would not give up their sacred rights and their lawful struggle. On the contrary, it was to be feared that the Zionists, encouraged in their policy of expansion and belligerence against the Arab peoples, would provoke a general confrontation. The United Nations must decide whether it could allow such a catastrophe to occur.

28. Mr. CHOWDHURY (Pakistan) requested that the statements by Mr. Hassan and the representatives of New Zealand and Libya should be reproduced *in extenso*.

29. The CHAIRMAN said that if there was no objection, the Pakistan representative's request would be granted, in accordance with the relevant General Assembly decision.

*It was so decided.*³

The meeting rose at 12.20 p.m.

³ The verbatim record of the present meeting was circulated as document A/SPC/PV.671.