

United Nations  
**GENERAL  
ASSEMBLY**

TWENTY-FIRST SESSION

Official Records

**SPECIAL POLITICAL COMMITTEE, 510th  
MEETING**

Wednesday, 9 November 1966,  
at 10.50 a.m.



**NEW YORK**

CONTENTS

	Page
<i>Agenda item 32:</i>	
<i>Report of the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (continued) . . . . .</i>	67

*Chairman:* Mr. Max JAKOBSON (Finland).

AGENDA ITEM 32

Report of the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (continued) (A/6313, A/SPC/L.126)

1. Mr. TELLALOV (Bulgaria) said that the refugee problem was part of the general situation in the Middle East and should therefore be regarded not only as a humanitarian question, but as a political problem seriously affecting relations among States. As a member of the Security Council, Bulgaria had participated in the debate on the tensions between Israel and its neighbours and had become aware that both in that forum and in the Committee, Israel and the States allied with it were seeking to obscure the reality of the existence of 1.3 million refugees, victims of a grave injustice.
2. The Chairman of the delegation of the Palestine Liberation Organization had graphically described the unspeakable conditions in which the refugees were forced to live, and the Commissioner-General had confirmed that they continued to look to the United Nations to implement paragraph 11 of General Assembly resolution 194 (III). The Arab delegations had cited numerous facts indicating that Israel, supported by the imperialist Powers, had no intention of discharging its duties under that resolution and was determined to exploit the refugee problem in order to maintain tension in the area—and that could lead to military conflict.
3. The host Governments were to be congratulated upon the assistance they were providing to the refugees despite their own difficulties. Bulgaria had consistently supported the cause of the refugees and wished once again to stress the responsibility of the Powers whose actions had precipitated the tragic situation in which they were trapped.
4. Mr. CHU (China) said that the Commissioner-General's report (A/6313) confirmed that the plight of the refugees was as serious as ever and that the continued existence of the problem had dangerous implications for the peace and stability of the Middle East.

In the circumstances, the United Nations should re-double its efforts to arrive at a solution based on the principles of repatriation and compensation established in General Assembly resolution 194 (III). The position of the Chinese delegation continued to be governed by the two considerations it maintained in 1947: the paramount importance of the interests of the inhabitants of Palestine and the safeguarding of peace in the area and, consequently, in the world. It hoped that more contributions to UNRWA would be forthcoming so that the Agency's financial difficulties could be overcome. China, although beset by urgent problems of relief of Chinese refugees, would continue to make modest contributions and was prepared to pledge \$20,000 for the year 1967. He expressed appreciation of the work accomplished by the Commissioner-General and his staff and the hope that more could be done with the funds available.

5. Mr. GUELLAL (Algeria) congratulated the Commissioner-General on his report and expressed appreciation to the States and private organizations which had contributed to the Agency's budget. The Algerian delegation strongly supported the conclusions reached by the representatives of Arab countries who had taken part in the debate.

6. The Palestine refugee problem should be considered in its entirety, not merely from the point of view of its humanitarian and social aspects. Its seriousness was evident from the Commissioner-General's report: the situation of the refugees, now reduced to a subsistence standard of living, was continuing to deteriorate. The passions it evoked and the threat it represented for the peace and stability of the Middle East gave it an added dimension and made it a truly international problem which must be effectively solved by the United Nations. Present United Nations policy of sustaining the refugees on UNRWA relief, as advocated by certain States, could only lead to the liquidation of the whole Palestine issue. In coping with the refugee question, the United Nations should apply the Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, and should ensure the right of the people of Palestine to live in peace in their ancestral land. Those instruments had been successfully applied in Asia and Africa to hasten the emergence of free, independent and sovereign States which had become full Members of the Organization.

7. The exiled people of Palestine and the democratic forces supporting them were engaged in a struggle not with Israel alone, but with the powerful international imperialist-colonialist machine. The 1952 Fundamental Law of Israel recognized the existence of a direct relationship between that State and the

international Zionist movement acting not only within the borders of Israel but throughout the world. The efforts of the United Nations to find a just solution for the Palestine problem had repeatedly been frustrated because the Organization had acted irresponsibly to establish Israel as a colonial enclave in the heart of the Arab world, threatening Syria with aggression and feeding the tensions in the area.

8. Israel represented a desperate colonialist attempt to maintain influence by force and terror, similar to those being made in Mozambique, Angola, Portuguese Guinea, Southern Rhodesia, South Africa and the Federation of South Arabia. Indeed, Israel served as the instrument of colonialism in Africa: it had furnished arms of its own manufacture to the Portuguese army in its operations to suppress the Angolan liberation movement. At the same time, the imperialists continued to help Portugal in NATO. Consequently, it was not by accident that they had allowed Zionist colonialism to enslave Palestine at a time when independence movements were jeopardizing their interests in Africa, Asia and Latin America. They envisaged the State of Israel as a permanent base for aggression, which would weaken the Arab States and stifle their development. In the same way, it was no accident that the colonial Powers had conspired to establish a white minority government in Southern Rhodesia at a time when the African revolutionary surge was spreading to Angola, Mozambique and South Africa. In Southern Rhodesia, as in Israel, they had a base for aggression against liberation movements. Their ultimate objective was to create a "white Africa" comprising Rhodesia, South Africa and South West Africa and extending to Angola and Mozambique, which would crush the efforts of the African peoples to develop economically and socially.

9. As the Commissioner-General had reported, the Palestine refugees, chafing under the injustice of having been despoiled of their country, had been encouraged by the founding of the Palestine Liberation Organization in 1964. The objective of that organization was to consolidate the Palestinian nation and to constitute the vanguard of the Arab struggle for the liberation of Palestine. Thus, the people of Palestine, having lost faith in the ability of the United Nations to enforce its resolutions, had found their own "road back", and Algeria fully endorsed the resolutions adopted by the three national congresses of the Palestine Liberation Organization.

10. The experience of the past eighteen years had demonstrated that no lasting peace could be achieved in the Middle East unless the bridgehead of imperialism, the colonial enclave of Israel, was destroyed and the people of Palestine were allowed to return to their country. At first the colonial adventure in Palestine had taken the form of a movement seeking to return to the religious sources of Judaism; but it had soon revealed itself to be a colonialist, aggressive force seeking by terror to transform Palestine into a European enclave in disregard of the natural rights of the indigenous inhabitants. The General Assembly partition resolution (181 (II)) had been rejected by the Arab States and the Arab people of Palestine as illegal and in open violation of the Charter principle of self-determination. In their effort to obtain an ad-

visory opinion on it from the International Court of Justice they had been rebuffed by the Assembly. The precedent of Palestine had certainly encouraged the Court to reject the more recent request of certain African States for a decision on the status of South West Africa.

11. In the absence of a just settlement, the Palestine Arabs were being forced to resort to armed force in order to liberate their country, and those Palestinians referred to by some as troublemakers, infiltrators and terrorists were simply nationalists who had been compelled to take matters into their own hands. Moreover, the Arab neighbours of Israel could not be blamed for assisting them. Indeed, the establishment of the Palestine Liberation Organization was the most promising development in the Palestine situation in the past two decades. Strengthened by what it had learned from the struggles for national liberation in Africa and Asia, the organization was determined to sustain and organize the struggle of the Palestine people for independence and create a movement with wide popular support.

12. For eighteen years, the Western Powers had regarded United Nations resolutions on Palestine as mere scraps of paper and proceeded to strengthen Israel, concealing its expansionist designs and periodically creating artificial crises which provided a pretext for intervening to crush allegedly subversive movements. Quite recently, they had cynically sought to blame Syria for a situation created by the imperialist Powers and their agent, Israel. Algeria commended Syria's efforts to aid the people of Palestine in their struggle. Incidentally, Israel had received support from many quarters in the face of irrefutable evidence of its aggression against its neighbours in violation of the United Nations Charter and the General Assembly's resolutions.

13. The people of Palestine were determined to overcome all obstacles in the path towards independence, and it would be a tragic mistake for Israel and the colonial Powers to dream of destroying them militarily. From the long years of resistance to British colonial oppression and Zionist terror, they had acquired political maturity and an awareness of their responsibilities; they were no longer prepared to accept a solution which would in effect mean their own destruction. The Palestine Liberation Organization was fighting to restore their sovereign rights; it was not aimed at the extermination of the Jews, but at creating a revolutionary situation in which the masses would be mobilized to destroy the racist regime in Israel. It deserved the support of all anti-colonialists and anti-imperialists. The question of resorting to armed force concerned the people of Palestine and the people of Palestine alone; they needed no hypocritical counsel from the representatives of the colonial Powers whose aim was their destruction. In fact, the democratic forces of Palestine, of all races and religions, realizing the fascist and racist nature of the Israel regime, were rallying to the call of the Palestine Liberation Organization, and all freedom-loving peoples should support their objectives. Algeria's support for the people of Palestine was based not so much on the friendship which bound the two peoples as on an awareness that so long

as aggression and injustice continued to exist, international peace and security could not be safeguarded. His delegation would continue to press for the full and unconditional implementation of paragraph 11 of resolution 194 (III). He urged the Assembly to take measures to ensure the right of the Palestine refugees freely to exercise their choice.

14. Mr. BAROODY (Saudi Arabia), expressing appreciation for the efforts made by the Commissioner-General and his staff to alleviate the sufferings of the Palestine Arab refugees, said that the political and humanitarian aspects of the question under discussion, while interdependent, merited separate consideration. The Arab refugees, who constituted a majority of the indigenous inhabitants of Palestine, were victims of colonialism on a scale which had no parallel in modern times. Hitler's persecutions had strengthened the determination of the Zionists in Europe and the United States of America to seek a haven in the Holy Land, thereby fulfilling Herzl's dream.

15. A year previously he had reviewed the pressures which the Zionists had brought to bear on the Western countries. He had shown that Judaism was a religion and not a nationality and indeed that European Jews were not Semites but were largely of Khazar origin. He had refuted the Zionist argument that because Jews had flourished in the Holy Land a thousand years before Christ they were entitled to claim it as their own. Palestine was also the Holy Land for Christians and Moslems and, indeed, efforts had been made on other occasions, as in the Crusades, to dislodge the indigenous inhabitants. If the Zionist argument were valid, the Western Powers should not have taken exception to Mussolini's idea of "Mare nostrum", and all but the Red Indians were usurpers in America. On the same basis, the United Kingdom could claim large areas of northern France. Those examples demonstrated the absurdity of such historical arguments.

16. Hitler's crimes against the Jews had shocked the whole world. The Jews had been uprooted, dispossessed and slaughtered, and those who survived deserved the sympathy of mankind. The militant Zionists had played on that sympathy and had capitalized on the equivocal Balfour Declaration to achieve their ends.

17. President Truman, on the pretext of sympathy for the victims of nazism, had manipulated the voting in the United Nations in 1947 to partition Palestine and settle the Jews in a land where the Zionists had dispossessed the indigenous population very much as the Nazis had dispossessed the Jews. President Truman's Republican opponent, Mr. Dewey, had sought to outdo him in making campaign promises which ignored the rights and interests of the indigenous inhabitants of Palestine, in an effort to win the Jewish vote. Many prominent Americans familiar with the situation had pointed out that it would be a betrayal of the indigenous inhabitants to impose the victims of nazism on them, but after twenty years United States politicians continued to vitiate relations between Arab countries and the United States by their support of Zionism in an effort to gain votes.

18. Naturally, every country was entitled to its own system; he had taken the liberty of referring to election campaigns in the United States because of their

relevance to the item: politicians standing for election in certain cities of the United States had demonstrated their willingness to trample on the rights of the Palestine Arabs and their wish to solve the refugee problem by attrition.

19. Another instance where the cause of the Palestine Arabs suffered because of Jewish influence was in the Sub-Committee on Refugees and Escapees of the United States Senate's Committee on the Judiciary. The Massachusetts and New York members of that Committee represented States in which there was a strong Zionist vote. Meanwhile, UNRWA had to stretch its budget based on only six or seven cents per day per refugee—not enough to buy a newspaper or a cup of coffee in the United States—to cover all its services: relief, health, education, and even the cost of administration.

20. Mr. McHENRY (United States of America), speaking on a point of order, said that the Saudi Arabian representative had digressed from the subject and requested that he confine his statement to the agenda item.

21. The CHAIRMAN said that, while the question of what was relevant was interpreted rather liberally in the Committee, he hoped that the Saudi Arabian representative would heed the appeal to adhere to the item under discussion.

22. Mr. BAROODY (Saudi Arabia) said that while he had acknowledged that the matters to which he referred were within the domestic jurisdiction of the United States, they were relevant to the point which he wished to make. The persons to whom he had referred had had a part in the drafting of paragraph 26 of the Commissioner-General's report. They had threatened to withhold \$150,000 from the United States contribution to UNRWA if young refugees in military training under the auspices of the Palestine Liberation Organization were to be included among the Agency's beneficiaries. When he had asked the Commissioner-General how the figure of \$150,000 referred to in paragraph 26 had been arrived at, he had been given to understand that the explanation for it was to be found in the position of certain contributing countries: as the Agency calculated its annual expenditure per refugee at \$15 the figure of \$150,000 showed that the United States officials in question had estimated at 10,000 the number of refugees receiving military training. It would be interesting to know by what means of inquiry they had arrived at that figure.

23. Paragraph 26 injected a new note into the report which could only be interpreted as an attempt to pave the way for the liquidation of the whole refugee problem on the grounds that any refugee who expressed the desire to return to his homeland was a potential fighter and therefore not entitled to relief. The freedom fighters who had formed underground organizations to subvert the Nazi order in the Second World War had rightly been praised for their patriotism and even subsidized by the Allies. Why should the Palestinian freedom fighters be denied the same praise? Was it simply because they were not Europeans? The two members of the Senate Sub-Committee should speak out honestly and admit that in threatening to

reduce or withhold the United States contribution to UNRWA they were seeking to liquidate the whole Palestine problem.

24. In any case, it was not true that 10,000 young men from the refugee camps were being trained by the Palestine Liberation Organization. There were, however, many thousands of other Arabs who shared the bitterness of the refugees and were ready to fight to redress the evil which had been perpetrated in the Holy Land. When the time came, they would be joined by the Oriental Jews who were suffering from racial discrimination in Israel itself, as attested by liberal Zionist writers. If the refugees continued to be prevented from returning to their homeland, they would no longer be able to contain their frustration and the result would be a conflagration that would engulf not only Israel but the entire area, for the other Arab countries would come to their aid.

25. Under the administration of President Truman, the United States had exerted pressure on other countries to reverse their positions and support the establishment of an artificial State whose presence was like a festering wound in the midst of the Arab world. Succeeding United States administrations should have recognized the folly of that policy and taken steps to undo the damage; but they had been under the erroneous impression that the passage of time would solve the problem. The truth was that the wound would continue to fester as long as the refugees were prevented from returning to their homes. To suggest that they should accept resettlement elsewhere was only to aggravate their feelings. If the wishes of the refugees were to be ascertained, it would be discovered that practically all of them were determined to return to Palestine. What was more, if the two senators in question could ascertain the feelings of the Ashkenazi Jews in Israel they would find that the majority would be only too happy to abandon the fortress which was Israel today and return to Europe or the United States were they given the opportunity to do so. All that the two senators would have to do would be to persuade their Government to open its gates to the Jews now living in Israel and the problem would be solved.

26. The Jews were prospering in all the countries of which they were loyal citizens, and Israel, by its own estimate, had been able to attract only 17 per cent of world Jewry. Moreover, the narrow strip of land of which the State of Israel consisted could not absorb many more immigrants and remain economically viable. The dream of the ingathering of the Jews was being shattered by the unwillingness of the majority of Jews to renounce their present nationalities and emigrate to a land where they would be continuously exposed to the possibility of conflict. Ninety per cent of the Jews being urged to settle in Israel were now more adamant than ever in their refusal to heed the Zionists' call. The militant Zionists in the United States constituted only a small percentage of the country's total Jewish community, but their high degree of organization enabled them to exert an

influence on the legislature which was out of all proportion to their numbers. That situation was of concern to the Arabs because it was contributing to the deterioration of relations between the Arab States and the Western States. The Arabs had warned the Western Powers that there would be no peace in the Middle East until the State of Israel ceased to exist in their midst. No Arab leader would dare to make any accommodation whatever with Israel; if he did he would be assassinated by his people. For one who had long been committed to the principles of the Charter it was not a pleasant task to have to reiterate that warning, but he would be failing in his duty to the United Nations if he misrepresented the issue. So long as the human race was divided into nationalities, even the United Nations could not ask any people to give up its national identity. In the world as it was today both great and small Powers still indulged in sabre-rattling, and the danger was compounded when a Government espoused a certain cause to the detriment of an entire people. When certain Powers had condoned Mussolini's aggression in Ethiopia, the League of Nations had foundered, opening the way to the Second World War. If the United Nations continued to condone the injustice done to the indigenous inhabitants of Palestine, it might well go the way of the League. Power politics no longer offered a solution to the world's major problems and military alliances could not ensure peace. Only the willingness of the great Powers to rectify past mistakes in the interests of justice could save the United Nations. He was glad that the USSR delegation, recognizing that fact, had vetoed the draft resolution which the Security Council had recently had before it in a similar connexion, for to adopt a resolution condemning one side or the other would only inflame passions in the Middle East.

27. The Jews of the world should realize that the Arabs had no quarrel with them as Jews; rather it was with political Zionism, which was responsible for the turmoil in the Middle East, that the Arab world found itself at odds. The Jews should acknowledge that Herzl's dream, however noble, of an ingathering of the world's Jews in a national homeland could not justifiably be realized at the expense of another people and was not feasible in the world of today.

28. He appealed to the United States and other Western Powers to abandon a policy which had so far failed to bring peace to the Holy Land and the continuation of which might make it impossible ever to attain the goal of universal brotherhood. The political and humanitarian aspects of the problem of the Palestine refugees were interconnected and the only solution lay in allowing them to return to their homeland. Pending their return, the United Nations should insist on the appointment of a custodian to protect the assets they had had to leave behind them in Israel and see that they received the income derived from those assets, which would be more than enough to enable them to dispense with international charity.

*The meeting rose at 1 p.m.*