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CONTENTS

	Page
<i>Agenda item 35:</i>	
<i>Reports of the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (continued)</i>	1

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 asked representatives to be punctual so that the general debate on the question under consideration could be concluded as planned early in the following week. He also urged them once again not to depart from the subject and to defer exercising their right of reply until the end of the meeting.

2. He also reminded the Committee that the list of speakers had been closed the day before.

3. Mr. QASIM (Pakistan) said that while Pakistan was proud of the ties of faith and culture by which it was bound to the Arab countries, it had never based its attitude on racial or religious considerations and its stand on the question under consideration was in no way anti-Semitic. Anti-Semitism was a scourge which had never been known in the East. Pakistan, which had nothing but sympathy for the victims of racial persecution, wanted the Jews to flourish, but not at the expense of the legitimate rights of others. For that reason it demanded that the Palestine Arab refugees should be allowed to return to their homes or should be compensated for the loss of their property, according to their preference, in implementation of the provisions of General Assembly resolution 194 (III).

4. Nevertheless, one might well ask why some of the resolutions which had been adopted almost unanimously, such as the resolution on Palestine and those on South Africa, had never been implemented. The resolution by which Israel had been created (181 (II)) had been opposed by half the world and had been adopted by a majority of only three votes; yet it had been applied. Today, on the other hand, although the whole world favoured the return of the refugees to their homes, the United Nations was unable to bring that about. Perhaps the countries which really mattered did not want repatriation of the refugees; if that was

true, it must be concluded that for the small States the United Nations had been reduced to a debating society, and for the big ones to an instrument of power politics. However, the greatness of a State was measured by its respect for moral values, and the great Powers would be judged by their reaction to the desire of the Palestine Arabs to return to their homes.

5. Failure to insist on the implementation of United Nations resolutions encouraged States not to implement international decisions which they had themselves approved. Such an attitude was shaking the very foundations of the United Nations. His delegation therefore appealed to all the Members, and in particular to the big Powers, to see that the prestige of the United Nations was not allowed to suffer; otherwise the Organization might suffer the fate of the League of Nations.

6. His country was familiar with the plight of refugees from its own experience; hundreds were pouring in every day. It also knew what genocide was and was witnessing it daily. It therefore knew that no one would voluntarily leave the land of his fathers. However, it was easy to create conditions that would compel people to flee their homes. If the Palestine refugees had left their country of their own free will, the Commissioner-General of UNRWA would never have had occasion to say, as he had done in paragraph 6 of his report (A/6013), that the attitudes and feelings of the refugees continued unchanged, that they were still embittered, that they held the United Nations responsible for their lot and that their longing to return to their homes remained unabated.

7. There was a limit to human patience; when people had suffered too long they started thinking of adopting other means for the solution of their problems, and that resulted in a situation which threatened the peace and security not only of the particular region but of the whole world.

8. His delegation supported all proposals which would enable UNRWA to continue to help the refugees. It considered that the financial aid provided at present was not enough, and that the financial burden of the relief should fall on those States which were primarily responsible for the present situation because they had brought the State of Israel into being in disregard of the rights of the Arabs. While it desired immediate implementation of resolution 194 (III), his delegation also supported the proposal for the appointment of a United Nations custodian for the property of the Arabs in Palestine, so that the income of that property could be utilized for the benefit of the refugees pending the final solution of the problem.

9. Mr. CHEN (China) recalled that as far back as 1947 his delegation had stated that any solution to the situation must be based on the consent of the parties immediately concerned. It had said that the welfare of the inhabitants of Palestine was of paramount importance; the General Assembly must take into account all the factors involved and should above all endeavour to ensure peace in the Middle East.

10. The Chinese Government and people had a full measure of sympathy for the Palestine refugees and would like to see an end to their predicament. The General Assembly had adopted a number of resolutions on that tragic question which, unfortunately, had not been fully implemented. That was particularly true with regard to the principles of compensation and repatriation, set out in paragraph 11 of resolution 194 (III). Failure to implement that resolution had unquestionably prolonged the suffering of the Palestine refugees.

11. However, in the absence of a political solution as envisaged in resolution 194 (III), the refugees must continue to receive the support of the international community. With the growth of the refugee population, the need for such essential services as health and education was all the more urgent. On the other hand, in view of the Agency's growing deficit, steps must be taken to avoid the possible collapse of its activities, which would have grave consequences for the stability of the whole Middle East.

12. The General Assembly must therefore do everything possible to provide the Agency with the additional funds it needed to continue its present services, which should not be curtailed in any way. His delegation hoped that those Governments which were in a position to make substantial contributions would be generous and that other Governments would do all that they could. The Chinese Government, for its part, had decided to increase its contribution from some \$3,300 in 1964 to \$5,000 for the next year. His delegation also considered that the Agency's mandate should be extended for a period of five years in accordance with the Commissioner-General's proposal, and it expressed its appreciation of the dedication with which the Commission-General and his staff had carried out their work in conditions of extreme difficulty.

The meeting was suspended at 11.35 a.m. and resumed at 11.45 a.m.

13. Mr. TARCICI (Yemen) said that the question of assistance to the refugees—the human aspect of the tragic problem of Palestine—more than ever deserved the Committee's full attention. After shocking the conscience of the world, the question had recently acquired new urgency and importance with the appearance of young States and the rise of new generations who considered that peace could not be maintained so long as certain situations founded on injustice had not been rectified and a whole nation, like the people of Palestine, had not recovered its rights. Contrary to the wishful thinking of some, time did not efface wrongs, especially in a period when it was becoming more and more difficult to mislead public opinion and when there was a growing desire in the world to know the truth. As for the victims

whose suffering was perhaps to a greater extent moral than physical, nothing—as the Commissioner-General had said—could make them forget their wrongs.

14. It was natural that Zionism should seek to discount the effects of that tragedy and should refuse to recognize the refugees' most undeniable rights, even those which had been proclaimed by the United Nations. Thus, the representative of Israel had not hesitated, in his first statement to the Committee (433rd meeting), to give a fanciful interpretation of paragraph 11 of resolution 194 (III). It was to forestall such attempts that in its resolutions since 1948, the General Assembly had repeatedly reaffirmed the provisions of that paragraph.

15. With his usual objectivity, the Commissioner-General had reported on the conditions in which the refugees lived today. But sister nations which had joined the ranks of the free peoples since the Palestinian tragedy had first begun were entitled to know certain facts with which they might not perhaps have had the opportunity to familiarize themselves, though they could not be completely unaware of them, particularly because of the efforts of the United Nations which had devoted almost 1,000 meetings to that question. The Palestinians who had inhabited the Holy Land from time immemorial had been transformed into refugees and were reduced to living on international charity for a reason which seemed inconceivable today. According to Zionist theory, those descendants of Canaanites or Aramaeans or perhaps even of the tribes of Israel had lost their right to live in the land of their ancestors because, at a particular moment in their history, they had been converted to Christianity or to Islam—in other words, because they were not Jews. Such anachronistic religious sectarianism lay at the roots of the problem with which the world had been confronted for seventeen years—that of the existence of over a million Palestinian refugees whose lands and properties had been confiscated for the benefit of intruders who had come from all quarters of the globe. Other representatives had explained how Zionism had succeeded in its enterprise, but it was worth recalling that the Palestine question was a vestige of colonialism and imperialism in its most revolting form. When that question had arisen, the colonialist countries had been at the height of their power and had divided up the world as they saw fit, disregarding the wishes of the peoples. Israel had been created arbitrarily at a time when the great Powers were becoming increasingly interested in the petroleum resources of the Middle East.

16. Thus, it was thanks to the support of imperialist colonialism that Zionism had been able to violate private international law in the most flagrant manner by appropriating Palestinian properties which were considerable and the annual revenue from which alone had been estimated, excluding accumulated interest, at the equivalent of \$173 million, i.e., four to five times the UNRWA budget. In those circumstances, why not make Israel pay the revenue from the property of the refugees, pending the restoration to

them of all their rights? It was worth noting that Israel itself had already received from Germany, since the war, \$12,000 million by way of compensation.

17. In that connexion, it was legitimate to ask why those who had committed crimes against the Jews were put on trial whilst the criminals of Deir Yassin and Count Bernadotte's assassins had been left undisturbed. Recalling the acts of terrorism which had given rise to the refugee problem, he cited the testimony of the English historian, Arnold Toynbee, who could find no excuses or even explanation for the atrocities committed by the Zionists against the non-Jewish Palestinians. According to that historian, the supreme tragedy of the Jews was that they had learnt nothing from the treatment which they themselves had received from the nazis. Mr. Robert Schuman, who at that time had been Minister for Foreign Affairs of France, had declared unequivocally that a situation which dishonoured mankind should be brought to an end, more especially as those events had taken place in a country from which, twenty centuries before, a great message of peace and brotherhood had gone forth and where, for the first time in the history of the world, charity and respect for the human person had been preached.

18. Nevertheless, the refugees, victims of racial discrimination and atrocities, were not prepared to give up their rights and with the passage of time they only became more embittered, as the Commissioner-General had pointed out in paragraph 6 of his report (A/6013).

19. The forces of colonialism and imperialism should reconsider their attitude to the Near East and they should abandon their old methods. With the break-up of the colonial empires and the awakening of the new States, military bases and neo-colonialist bridgeheads could no longer serve their interests. Only cordial relations founded on reciprocal advantage could be

profitable and serve the cause of world peace and security.

20. The refugees had not forgotten and would never forget those who were really responsible for their plight. If the colonialist Powers tried to shirk their responsibilities toward the refugees and denied them the right to live in dignity—a right recognized by the United Nations—such an attitude would be fraught with consequences. As was stated in paragraph 6 of the Commissioner-General's report, "the refugee problem has not grown any less complex or less dangerous to the peace and stability of the region". The Palestinian people, rich in culture and traditions, were beginning to awaken and to organize. Their voices were becoming louder. Mr. Tannous, the spokesman of the Palestine Liberation Organization, had informed the Committee of the machinations which had led to the people being deprived of their properties and he had explained how those properties had come into the possession of persons who had never lived in Palestine. The same people, whose inalienable rights had been recognized by the United Nations, were today faced with the threat of famine because of an international conspiracy to reduce the UNRWA budget. The reduction of the budget would involve grave risks for the security of the region. The United Nations had a threefold responsibility in the matter: it had been the cause of the tragedy; it was under an obligation to maintain peace and security in the world; and it must take into consideration the human aspect of the refugee problem. His delegation therefore approved the Commissioner-General's report and commended it for its impartiality. It also approved the Commissioner-General's request that the mandate of UNRWA should be extended for a period of five years, which was necessary to enable the Agency to accomplish its task and ensure the continuity of its services.

The meeting rose at 12.30 p.m.