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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, A/SPC/134, A/SPC/L.175):**

- (a) Report of the Commissioner-General;
- (b) Report of the Secretary-General

1. Mr. FRELEK (Poland) deplored the plight of the million and a half Palestine refugees, whose feelings of uncertainty and disappointment were so eloquently described in paragraph 11 of the Commissioner-General's report (A/7614), which he read out. Among the refugees it was the children who suffered most; in paragraph 13 of his report the Commissioner-General stated that children over the age of one year eligible for rations but for whom none was available totalled 308,038.

2. In the circumstances, the humanitarian activities of UNRWA deserved recognition. UNRWA could not solve the problem, however. The solution had been prescribed over twenty years earlier in General Assembly resolution 194 (III), which envisaged the return of the refugees to their homes and the payment of compensation to those choosing not to return. That resolution, like many others, had never been implemented. The aggression of 1956, and to a much greater extent the Israel aggression of 1967, had increased the complexity of the problem. In 1967 the number of refugees had mounted considerably, with thousands becoming refugees for a second time.

3. Israel was aggravating the refugee problem by its disregard of the resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council and its pursuit of a policy of conquest. Instead of progress towards a solution, what was occurring at present was a process, typical of all military occupations, of steadily increasing repression. Equally reprehensible were the measures directed against the refugees and UNRWA personnel which the Commissioner-General had mentioned at the 680th meeting. The practice of "collective punishment", which a number of representatives had already described in detail, would have the same consequences as had been the case with other occupiers in the past. The

Polish people had been among the first to experience a policy of extermination which had also borne the name of "collective punishment". For them, those who fought against the occupier were not terrorists but freedom fighters. The members of the Arab resistance movements were fighting for their right to freedom, which no one could deny them; that was how progressive opinion all over the world saw their struggle.

4. The humanitarian activities of UNRWA, commendable as they were, could not solve the refugee problem. The present debate clearly showed that the Committee was aware of the problem's political nature. For a solution to be achieved, the consequences of the Israel aggression must be liquidated. To that end it was necessary to ensure the strict implementation of Security Council resolution 242 (1967) and other pertinent resolutions of the United Nations.

5. Mr. EREN (Turkey) expressed his delegation's profound concern at the situation in the Middle East. The humanitarian aspect of the problem with which the Committee dealt had often been obscured by the precedence accorded to the politics of the issue. Turkey's stand had been clear and consistent. From the beginning Turkey had supported the principle of repatriation or compensation as expressed in General Assembly resolution 194 (III), and on joining the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine it had worked for the implementation of that resolution.

6. When the war of 1967 had introduced a new phase into the problem, Turkey had pronounced itself against the acquisition of territory through the use of armed force. It had endorsed Security Council resolution 242 (1967) of 22 November 1967. It had encouraged Mr. Jarring's mission. It had supported the two-Power and the four-Power talks, and it was heartened by the resumption of those talks. Turkey was fully behind all international efforts for a political settlement. No people in the world had suffered the ravages of war longer than the people of Palestine, and none yearned more for a just and enduring peace.

7. At the end of a long debate, if there was any point on which the Committee appeared to be unanimously agreed it was the lack of progress in the political as well as the humanitarian phases of the problem. One example showing the total lack of headway was the problem of the half-million persons displaced by the 1967 war. At the twenty-third session of the General Assembly Turkey had co-sponsored a draft resolution calling for their return without delay, which the Assembly subsequently adopted (resolution 2452 A (XXIII)). The international community had agreed that positive action on their behalf could be a first step towards a settlement. But as could be seen from

paragraph 10 of the Commissioner-General's report (A/7614), the stalemate continued. The positive potential of action in that area, and particularly the issue of large numbers of return permits, would have outweighed the negative security considerations and been the warrant of good faith which was so sorely needed.

8. At the present session Turkey again advocated the adoption by the Committee of decisions favouring the return of the displaced persons to their homes.

9. The prospects for the refugees were darkening. The Commissioner-General's report provided a graphic description of the present state of affairs. The physical circumstances of the refugees had worsened. Continued hostilities across the cease-fire lines and retaliatory raids had exposed the refugees to the dangers of war. Security measures, curfews, interrogations and detentions had interrupted the daily routine of their lives. Economic depression had lessened their chances of employment. The uncertainty of their existence was increasing their sensitivity to their long-endured ordeal. Realizing their suffering, one could not but admire their fortitude, their unrelinquished faith in a free and dignified existence. UNRWA deserved gratitude for providing the refugees with the means of survival and the Commissioner-General and his staff deserved recognition for performing so well under exceedingly difficult conditions.

10. The Commissioner-General had stated that unless services were reduced or more funds were made available, the Agency was certain to run out of cash in the course of 1970. The Agency was providing three types of services—food, health and education. The food aid of about 1,500 calories per day per person was less than a minimum diet. Health services were sufficient only to meet the most basic requirements. Education, which accounted for only 43 per cent of expenditure, was confined to primary and secondary schooling. Those services could not be reduced without causing further hardship to the refugees or further political repercussions. The only solution lay in increased efforts to provide the Agency with additional support.

11. Previous speakers had suggested various ways of bolstering the Agency's finances. Due consideration should be given to all the possibilities proposed—namely, that the administrative expenses should be transferred to the assessed budget of the United Nations; that other United Nations organs and particularly the specialized agencies should increase their aid; that the fifty or so Member States which had so far abstained from participating in UNRWA should be requested to make voluntary contributions; that the present contributors should be invited to agree to increase their contributions by a certain percentage; that efforts should be made to obtain increased contributions from private resources; and, finally, that the Secretary-General should be invited to nominate an outstanding personality or appoint a Committee of three to try to implement those or any other helpful suggestions.

12. Mr. OULD DADDAH (Mauritania) said that the people of Palestine, indignant at the intrigues, persecutions, assassinations and tortures perpetrated by the Israel authorities for so long had begun its liberation struggle with heroism and determination. The struggle, which involved

heavy sacrifices for the freedom fighters, was giving rise to new hopes—in Palestine and throughout the world—that the problems of that area would now be solved on the basis of justice and equity. Since the Palestinians had begun their struggle, the true dimensions of the Palestinian tragedy were now being better understood in certain quarters.

13. States Members of the Organization should have a greater awareness of the intolerable situation which had existed for several years as a result of the plundering, aggression, murders, destruction of homes, occupation and other barbaric acts perpetrated daily by the Zionist authorities against an entire people. As Mr. Nakhleh, a member of the Palestine Arab delegation, had said:

“The Palestinian people has been subjected to the greatest injustice in all history. Zionist colonialism has not merely usurped the sovereignty and economic resources of this people, but has expelled them and replaced them with immigrants from Europe, America, Asia and Africa. Today, Palestinian refugees are living on international charity, while the Jewish usurpers are deriving an annual income of \$200 million from Arab properties, which represent 94 per cent of Palestine.”¹

14. The abominable crimes perpetrated by the Tel Aviv authorities against the people of Palestine were comparable with those committed by the SS and the Gestapo. Tortures, collective punishment, dynamiting of houses, arrests, arbitrary imprisonments and shooting of civilians were everyday occurrences on the West Bank of the Jordan and in the Gaza Strip. According to *The Times* of London of 28 October 1969, the Arabs of Palestine, who were probably the most intelligent and most moderate members of their race, had been condemned to a new Diaspora. A United Kingdom journalist who had spent four years of captivity in Germany had said that he had never been treated so badly as the Arabs in the Gaza Strip—most of them women and children.

15. Israel was in essence an imperialist and aggressive State. Its surprise attack of June 1967 had enabled it to occupy additional areas of Palestine, the Sinai Peninsula in Egypt and the Golan Heights in Syria. Assured of active support from Zionist imperialism, it was arrogantly pursuing its policy of aggression and intimidation. It was time to recall once again that President Eisenhower had stated 20 February 1957 that he thought he would be failing in his duty if he allowed the United States to support the proposal that one country which had invaded another country should be permitted to impose terms for the withdrawal of its forces. Those words were now more topical than ever, since the world was faced with aggression of the same kind. The countries which had checked the aggression of 1956 should now offer the same resistance to the same aggressors.

16. The people of Palestine, for whom the United Nations had a special responsibility, had taken their destiny in their hands. They had decided to begin the struggle for liberation, in order to conquer the homelands which had been

¹ This statement was made at the 668th meeting of the Committee, the official records of which are published in summary form.

usurped. The Palestinian people were waging the struggle for liberation without hate; but their feelings would ultimately turn to hatred if Israel continued to engage in collective reprisals. The Jewish people had, throughout history, had its own sad story of misery, migration and persecution. It would be wrong if a handful of adventurers and mercenaries of decadent colonialism were to bring new pogroms and massacres to hundreds and thousands of people. He addressed a solemn appeal to Jewish people of goodwill to unite their efforts with those of their Arab brothers to drive Zionism out of Palestine.

17. The attitude of the representatives of the Zionist authorities of Tel Aviv in the Committee itself was particularly reprehensible. By abusing the right of reply and repeating untruths, those representatives were trying to create a false impression that their country was longing for a peace which its numerous and obdurate enemies were denying it.

18. The Arab countries could not be reproached for drawing world attention to the criminal acts of those who were guided by a racist and fascist doctrine. The attitude of the opponents of Zionism was not anti-Jewish. The Republic of Mauritania shared that attitude, as it did not see any difference between the situation in Palestine and the situation in Africa. The people of Palestine were engaged in a struggle which was directly comparable in its causes and objectives with that waged against nazism and *apartheid*. His delegation wished, therefore, to appeal to the international community to assist the Palestinian people in its struggle for liberation. In spite of the obligations it had assumed, the international community had for several years left the Palestinian community to lead an aimless life in miserable camps, without any prospects for the future.

19. His delegation was grateful to all those who, by their gifts to the Agency, had helped to relieve much of the suffering. It paid a tribute to the zeal and devotion of the Commissioner-General and his staff, and it hoped that the Organization would find the funds necessary to cover the Agency's deficit.

20. Mr. SLINGENBERG (Netherlands) said that, far from being solved, the problem of the refugees had become worse. Their number was dangerously high and the position of UNRWA was critical. Furthermore, the general problem remained the same, because, in spite of the efforts made by the United Nations, neither Israel nor the Arab States had shown a willingness to modify their positions. The Netherlands was prepared to contribute to the finding of a solution to the conflict and to study any economic measures which could be taken to alleviate the plight of the populations, once tensions were removed. However, no solution would be found unless concessions were made on both sides.

21. Meanwhile, suggestions should be made for the betterment of the fate of the refugees, who were deprived of their homes and their country and were leading an abnormal existence in camps. The Netherlands delegation was grateful to the Commissioner-General and his staff for the unrelenting efforts they had made on behalf of the refugees. It realized the pressures to which they were subjected in the accomplishment of their task. Since the lack of funds might

endanger the humanitarian activities of UNRWA, as stressed by the Commissioner-General in his report (A/7614), the Netherlands Government had decided to increase its contribution from 400,000 to 600,000 guilders, subject to parliamentary approval. His delegation hoped that other countries would follow that example. It would support the United States draft resolution (A/SPC/L.175).

22. It would be interesting for the Committee to be informed of the conclusions which Mr. Johnson, the United States representative to the Committee, had reached in his efforts several years ago to find a solution to the problem of refugees. He therefore requested the United States representative to give the Committee an account of his views on a problem which he had studied so deeply.

23. The Netherlands delegation was glad to note that the representatives of the four major Powers had decided once again to unite their efforts in seeking a solution to the present situation. They should follow the advice of William the Silent, who had said: "There is no need to hope in order to undertake, nor to succeed in order to persevere."

24. Mr. EL-FARRA (Jordan), exercising his right of reply, said that the Committee should be quite clear about the truth of the statements made by the Israel representative. The latter should feel himself isolated, because he attacked everyone, as he had formerly attacked the Security Council, accusing it of moral, political and legal bankruptcy after the Council had decided to condemn Israel for its actions in Jerusalem. Although the Jordanian delegation had based its accusations on quotations from Israel authorities, the Israel representative wanted only his own assertions to be believed: all the rest for him was merely newspaper talk, although he himself was continually quoting the press. Indeed, one day he had even misquoted the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* before the Security Council. The statements of the Israel representative could not be believed: he claimed that Jordanian Act No. 20 did not repeal the legislation enforced at the time of the British Mandate, which was untrue. In any case, international law took precedence over domestic law, and Israel was required to observe the provisions of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War of 12 August 1949.

25. With regard to Israel's detention of UNRWA employees, his delegation would like the Commissioner-General to explain how many such employees had been detained by Israel, at any time, in the occupied territories since June 1967, and how many had been excluded from those territories.

26. The Israel representative had claimed that the figures relating to houses destroyed in the occupied territories had been exaggerated, while the Commissioner-General had spoken only of the number of refugee camps. He (Mr. El-Farra) repeated the figures quoted at the 680th meeting by the Commissioner-General and pointed out that the destruction of refugee camps by the Israel authorities helped to explain why the UNRWA budget was in a state of deficit.

27. His delegation paid a tribute to the work done by the Commissioner-General and his staff. It also thanked them

for clarifications made during the discussion. However, it would like to have some further information: why had UNRWA had so many employees detained without trial in Israel prisons for several months and what had been the results of the efforts made by the Commissioner-General to visit those prisoners in the occupied territories.

28. Finally, the Jordanian delegation felt that the number of camps dynamited by the Israel authorities should be mentioned in the Commissioner-General's annual report. That was a question which affected the well-being of the refugees and which came within the competence of UNRWA. The Committee had the right to know what was happening to the refugees, their families and their camps. It was important to inform the public of arrests, deportations and other arbitrary measures, if justice was to prevail.

29. Mr. TOMEH (Syria) drew the Committee's attention to a serious incident which had occurred that day at the Permanent Mission of Syria to the United Nations. At 1.30 p.m., forty young people had entered the premises of the Mission, forcing their way in despite the presence of a policeman, and had occupied the premises until the police had removed them at 3.40 p.m. He pointed out that a similar incident had occurred at the Permanent Mission of Syria on 4 October 1966 at the time of a meeting of the Security Council.

30. The latest incident constituted a further flagrant violation of international practice. He had asked the Secretary-General to transmit a protest to the United States Department of State. He would like to know, after that incident, whether those responsible were United States or Israel citizens. He explained that on the previous day the police had warned him that a demonstration would take place against the Syrian Mission and had advised him to close the Mission that day. He had refused, saying that the Mission must function in the normal way. He was certain that the Committee would appreciate the gravity of that incident.

31. Mr. JOHNSON (United States of America) said that he had not known of the incident to which the representative of Syria had drawn the Committee's attention. He wished to express his Government's regrets to the Syrian Government. He noted that the premises of the Permanent Mission of Syria had now been cleared and he hoped that his Government would be able to take steps, in co-operation with the Secretary-General, to ensure that such incidents were not repeated.

32. Mr. TEKOAH (Israel), exercising his right of reply, said he regretted that the representative of Jordan had distorted the statements he had made at earlier meetings. For instance, Mr. El-Farra had claimed that Mr. Tekoah wished representatives to refer to his statements rather than to press articles, whereas, in fact, he had expressed the hope that they would refer to the official statements of Israel leaders.

33. As for Mr. El-Farra's allegations concerning the measures taken against members of the UNRWA staff, he explained that, according to the Commissioner-General's report, twenty-four members of the UNRWA staff in all

had been imprisoned out of a total of 5,000. It was therefore difficult to compare such measures with the repression which had occurred on the West Bank of the Jordan during the period of Jordanian annexation; he referred to the statement by Sir John Glubb on that subject which he had quoted earlier. He emphasized once again that Israel was at present obliged to take certain measures as a result of the campaign of terror being waged against it, whereas the Jordanian repression had occurred in peace time.

34. With regard to the legislation in force before June 1967 which Israel was applying, he repeated that in Act No. 20, which Mr. El-Farra had omitted to quote, there was nothing to indicate that the legislation in effect prior to the annexation of the West Bank by Jordan had been repealed; the only change mentioned concerned the status of the administration and the United Kingdom armed forces. On the other hand, Act No. 28 of 2 September 1950 provided that, after the unification of the two banks of the Jordan, the legislation applicable to each bank would remain in force.

35. Lastly, he referred to a statement by King Hussein concerning the Arab refugees in which the Jordanian sovereign had said that, since 1948, the Arab leaders had dealt with that problem in an irresponsible manner with only their own selfish interests in mind.

36. Mr. SAYEGH (Kuwait), exercising his right of reply, noted that Mr. Tekoah denied that Israel applied collective punishment and that, since the previous day, he had been referring to a denial by Mr. Moshe Dayan on that subject. It was nevertheless true that in the statement Mr. Dayan had made on 12 November to the world press, he had recognized the existence of what he had called "neighbourhood punishment". That was corroborated by reports in *The Times* of London of 14 November, *The New York Times* of 13 and 14 November, and *The Washington Post* and the *Jewish News Bulletin* of 16 November, which he then quoted. No correction to the articles in those papers had been requested by Israel, and no comment on them had been made in Israel. It was only three weeks later, on 1 December, that Mr. Dayan had issued his denial.

37. Mr. TEKOAH (Israel), exercising his right of reply, once again invited the representative of Kuwait to refer to official statements, such as the statement made by Mr. Moshe Dayan on 1 December, rather than to newspaper articles.

38. Mr. SAYEGH (Kuwait) replied that the articles appearing in the western press—and even in the Zionist press—which he had quoted, had reported remarks that Mr. Dayan had in fact made at his press conference on 12 November. He assured the representative of Israel that he was not seeking to pick personal quarrels when human beings were suffering; he only wished to establish the truth.

39. Mr. TEKOAH (Israel) said that the concern for the truth shown by the representative of Kuwait was not in keeping with the distortions to which the Government of Kuwait resorted. For example, the Minister of Posts, Telegraphs and Telephones of Kuwait had sent to certain

African Governments a supposedly Zionist publication entitled *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* which was in fact, as the representative of the Soviet Union could testify, a forgery produced by the Czarist police to lead people to believe in a Jewish conspiracy and to provoke pogroms in Russia.

40. Mr. SAYEGH (Kuwait) said that the members of the Committee would judge for themselves what connexion there was between Mr. Tekoah's remark and the question under consideration.

The meeting rose at 5.10 p.m.