



Eighteenth session

UNITED NATIONS CONCILIATION COMMISSION FOR PALESTINE
TWENTY-FIRST PROGRESS REPORT

(for the period from 8 December 1962 to 31 October 1963)

Note by the Secretary-General: The twenty-first progress report of the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine has been transmitted by the Chairman of the Commission for communication to the Members of the United Nations in accordance with paragraph 6 of General Assembly resolution 512(VI) of 26 January 1952.

1. In the period since the submission of its twentieth progress report on 7 December 1962 (A/5337), the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine has given continuing and serious attention to how it might best fulfil the Assembly's mandate to achieve progress on the Palestine refugee problem, as expressed most recently in General Assembly resolution 1856 (XVII) of 20 December 1962.
2. The Commission early in 1963 held the first of several meetings to determine how it should proceed to carry out the request of the General Assembly. Taking into account the Commission's intensive efforts during the past year, the United States suggested that, as a member of the Commission, it might initiate a series of quiet talks with the parties concerned - Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic and the United Arab Republic. It was proposed that the five Governments concerned should be approached at a high level and without preconditions as to the nature of the eventual solution of the problem. The Commission agreed to this approach, and has been kept generally informed of the progress of these talks with Arab and Israel leaders during the past spring and summer.

3. Recently the United States informed the Commission that, in its opinion, the talks had been useful. All sides had shown good will, a desire to achieve progress on the refugee problem, and a desire to continue the talks, which are not yet completed. The Commission noted these views, expressed appreciation for the efforts made in the conduct of these talks, and requested that it continue to be kept informed of their progress. The Commission, expressing confidence that every effort will be made in the continuation of such talks to advance the wishes of the General Assembly expressed in resolution 1856 (XVII), proposes to report to the General Assembly after the completion of such talks.

4. On 31 January 1963, the Commission accepted with deep regret the resignation of its Special Representative, Dr. Joseph E. Johnson. In submitting his letter of resignation because of "compelling personal commitments", Dr. Johnson expressed his appreciation for the opportunity to "attempt to contribute to a solution of the problem of the Arab refugees, whose tragedy has become increasingly apparent during these past fifteen years".

Identification and Valuation Programme

5. In its twentieth progress report the Commission, after explaining that the task of computing the value of each owner's holdings and the preparation of an index of owners' names was the most logical stage of work following completion of the valuation of individual parcels of immovable property, stated that in its opinion any compensation operation would be facilitated by completion of this task which was begun in 1962.

6. At its 353rd meeting on 9 January 1963, the Commission decided to request the Secretary-General to provide the necessary staff and facilities to enable this task to be completed during 1963. The Secretary-General agreed to the Commission's request.

7. The land expert in charge of its Technical Office has reported to the Commission that the substantive work on this programme is largely completed and that statistical summaries will be completed by the end of the year, as was forecast in the Commission's twentieth progress report. Consequently, on 31 December 1963 the staff engaged in this project will be released.

8. However, additional technical arrangements will be required to make easier later use of the information developed in the course of the identification and evaluation programme. The land expert has been instructed to take the necessary steps to this end prior to 1 April 1964.

Release of Arab Refugee bank accounts blocked in Israel
and transfer of safe deposit and safe custody items

9. During the period since the submission of the Commission's last progress report, the processing of applications for the release of bank accounts of refugees and absentee owners has continued in accordance with established procedure. Full current figures on this operation and on the transfer of safe deposit and safe custody items, which has also proceeded during this period, were not available at the time of preparation of the present report and will be released when received.
