



Twenty-first session

TWENTY-FOURTH PROGRESS REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS
CONCILIATION COMMISSION FOR PALESTINE

(for the period from 24 December 1965 to 30 September 1966)

Note by the Secretary-General: The following 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 and pursuant to paragraph 7 of resolution 2052 (XX) of 15 December 1965.

1. In the period since the adoption by the General Assembly, on 15 December 1965, of resolution 2052 (XX) and since the submission of its twenty-third progress report (A/6225) on 28 December 1965, 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, and in particular to paragraph 7 of resolution 2052 (XX) which called upon the Commission to "intensify its efforts for the implementation of paragraph 11 of resolution 194 (III) and to report thereon as appropriate and not later than 1 October 1966".
2. Early in 1966 the Commission held the first of a series of meetings which have continued throughout the year.
3. In the course of these meetings the Commission has examined various ways in which it might be possible to intensify its efforts with any prospect of advancing matters toward the implementation of paragraph 11 of resolution 194 (III). However, it has found itself compelled to conclude that all of the ways envisaged presupposed substantial changes in the situation. Furthermore, it has had to recognize that there was no evidence that such changes were taking place.

4. Indeed, in the light of the political circumstances surrounding the problem, the Commission concluded that, until some change in the basic political position became evident, it should continue to explore what use could be made of the Commission's technical programme which, as reported in its twenty-second progress report (A/5700), had been completed in 1964. Accordingly, the Commission authorized its Technical Representative to continue to answer inquiries of a technical nature arising out of the identification of immovable property and the methods and techniques adopted for the purpose of valuation of such property.
5. The Commission had formally notified the parties of the availability of its Technical Representative for this purpose in 1964. Following the renewal of the Commission's authorization, the Technical Representative took appropriate steps to establish informal contact with the representatives of the Governments most directly concerned and held himself ready at all times to discuss matters of a technical nature.
6. As the Commission indicated in its twenty-third progress report it felt that by 31 March 1966 there would have been ample opportunity since the completion of the programme for inquiries to be addressed to its Technical Representative and it considered that this work should come to an end on that date.
7. In a letter dated 9 March 1966 the Commission notified the parties that the services of its Technical Representative would come to an end on 31 March 1966.
8. On 21 March 1966, the representatives of the host countries officially requested that the Commission extend the services of the Technical Representative for a reasonable period of time in view of the fact that the land experts of their Governments were still considering the matter.
9. The Commission which, on numerous occasions, had stressed the importance it attached to a proper understanding of its technical programme, considered it necessary to reverse its previous decision and to accede to this official request. It asked the Secretary-General to arrange for the services of the Technical Representative to be continued for a further period of six months ending on 30 September 1966. On 6 May 1966 the Secretary-General informed the Commission that the necessary action had been taken.
10. In informing the representatives of the host Governments on 9 May 1966 of its decision to respond favourably to their request, the Commission expressed the hope

that the six months extension would permit the Arab land experts to participate in discussions with the Technical Representative.

11. Meanwhile, on 11 April 1966, the Commission received from the representatives of the host Governments a paper entitled "Observations and comments of the host countries on the working paper prepared by the land expert of the Conciliation Commission (A/AC.25/W.84) dated 28 April 1964", with the request that it be circulated as an official document of the United Nations.

12. The Commission complied with this request and circulated the document under the symbol A/AC.25/W.85, together with a copy of a letter dated 16 May 1966 addressed by it to the representatives of the host Governments, in which it stated that it would welcome joint consideration, by its Technical Representative and by the delegations or land experts of the host Governments, of the technical aspects of these observations.

13. The Commission reserved its right to comment fully on the observations, should that prove necessary at any stage.

14. The Commission also found it appropriate to recall the statement in its seventeenth progress report (A/4225, para. 22) that:

"The Commission has taken into account the fact that the General Assembly has always been concerned with the property rights of Arab refugees within the terms of paragraph 11 of resolution 194 of 11 December 1948. It is obvious in carrying out this work [i.e., the technical programme] the Commission is not attempting to lay down a basis for an over-all settlement of the refugee problem. The work of identification and valuation is technical in nature and constitutes a prerequisite for any settlement with regard to the rights of individuals to their immovable property."

15. The Commission continues to believe that the results achieved by its technical programme present a detailed and unbiased documentation of the immovable property of the refugees, subject to such refinement as may be found to be necessary in consultation with the parties.

16. On 28 July 1966 the Commission addressed a further letter to the representatives of the host countries, recalling its previous communications and calling attention to the fact that any technical discussions which they or their land experts might wish to have with the Technical Representative would need to be held prior to the end of September 1966, when his extended service would terminate.

17. As of the date of this report the Commission has received no further response to its invitation to enter into joint consideration of the technical programme, although inquiries from individual refugees continue to be received and continue to indicate that the identification programme has resulted in a substantially correct record of individual property holdings.

18. In the circumstances, the Commission has decided to close down its technical office and terminate the services of its Technical Representative, Mr. F.E. Jarvis, on 30 September 1966.

19. In announcing this decision, the Commission wishes to place on record its appreciation of Mr. Jarvis' services and its belief in his complete impartiality, the unbiased nature of his work and the professional integrity with which he has carried it out.

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

20. During the first stage of the release operation in 1953, the Government of Israel had turned over for payment by the banks a total of 740,408 pounds sterling. As at 31 July 1966 a total of 2,802,110 pounds sterling of the blocked accounts of refugees and absentee owners had been released since the 1954 release scheme was inaugurated. Under the extended release scheme, as at 31 July 1966, 52,642 pounds sterling had been released. Thus, on 31 July 1966, a grand total of 3,595,160 pounds sterling had been paid to owners of blocked accounts.

21. The figures covering the status of safe custody items and of the contents of safe deposit lockers remain the same as those given in the twenty-third progress report.
