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UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND WORKS AGENCY FOR PALESTINE
REFUGEES IN THE NEAR EAST*

Report of the Secretary-General

1. This report is submitted to the General Assembly in pursuance of its resolution 2452 A (XXIII) of 19 December 1968 in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to follow the effective implementation of the resolution and report thereon to the General Assembly. In this resolution, which deals with the displaced persons who have fled the Israel-occupied areas as a result of the hostilities of June 1967, the General Assembly called upon the Government of Israel "to take effective and immediate steps for the return without delay of those inhabitants who have fled the areas since the outbreak of hostilities".
2. On 23 July 1969, the Secretary-General addressed the following note verbale to the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations:

"The Secretary-General of the United Nations presents his compliments to the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations and has the honour to refer to General Assembly resolution 2452 A (XXIII) of 19 December 1968, which deals with the displaced persons who have fled the Israel-occupied areas as a result of the hostilities of June 1967.

"In this resolution, the General Assembly called upon the Government of Israel 'to take effective and immediate steps for the return without delay of those inhabitants who have fled the areas since the outbreak of hostilities' and requested the Secretary-General to follow the effective implementation of the resolution and to report thereon to the General Assembly.

* Item 36 of the provisional agenda.

"The Secretary-General plans to submit to the General Assembly the report that has been requested of him before the opening of the twenty-fourth session of the Assembly. For this purpose, the Secretary-General would appreciate it if the Government of Israel would provide him with information on the steps it has taken to implement the above-mentioned resolution and the results thus far achieved. He very much hopes that this information will be made available to him not later than 15 August 1969.

"The Secretary-General takes this opportunity to express to the Permanent Representative of Israel the assurances of his highest consideration."

3. The reply of the Permanent Representative of Israel to the above message was set forth in a note verbale dated 14 August, which reads as follows:

"The Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations presents his compliments to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and has the honour to refer to the Secretary-General's note of 23 July 1969 concerning General Assembly resolution 2452 A (XXIII) of 19 December 1968 and, on instructions from his Government, to state the following:

"1. The attitude of the Israel Government towards this problem was set out in the statement made by the Israel delegation before the Special Political Committee on 26 November 1968, as follows:

'My Government is acutely conscious of the human aspect of this question. My delegation will inform the Committee of what we have done and what we propose to do about it, under present circumstances. I say "under present circumstances" because it is not helpful to discuss the matter as if it existed in a vacuum and not in a complicated local context. The extent and rapidity with which a return can be facilitated is inevitably affected by the political and security conditions on the spot. We still live in a situation that officially rests on a cease-fire but that is in practice marked by continuous border warfare and by efforts to promote violence and disrupt orderly administration within the Israel-held areas. The Jordanian Government, which foments and supports all these activities, is itself making any large-scale repatriation as difficult and as sensitive as possible...

'Pending a peace settlement, Israel is doing its best to reconcile the return of displaced persons with responsibility for the safety, welfare and security of the local population and the security of the State itself. A programme for an influx of returnees obviously needs to be carefully regulated, though it can be reviewed and expanded as the situation permits.' (A/SPC/PV.622, 29 November 1968)

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"2. In accordance with that policy, the Israel delegation voted against resolution 2452 A (XXIII) of 19 December 1968, since that resolution dealt with the question in isolation from its local context, and without any regard for the realities of the situation. On the other hand, the Israel delegation voted in favour of resolution 2452 C (XXIII) of the same date, as it had done for two previous resolutions reaffirmed by it, namely 2252 (ES-V) of 4 July 1967 and 2341 (XXII) of 19 December 1967. Regarding these resolutions, the Israel delegation stated that:

'The original resolution as reaffirmed, as the Committee is well aware, called upon the Israel Government to ensure the safety, welfare, and security of the inhabitants of areas where military operations had taken place, and to facilitate the return of persons who had fled from these areas since the outbreak of hostilities. These two elements in the resolution are interrelated, as both of them are with the other elements in the same resolution. It must be regarded as an integral whole and cannot be reaffirmed only in part without changing its meaning and purpose.'
(A/SPC/PV.624, 4 December 1968)

"3. Since the adoption by the General Assembly of resolutions 2452 A (XXIII) and 2452 C (XXIII), the Arab Governments in general, and the Jordanian Government in particular, have continued to carry out policies and practices that have aggravated the security and political conditions in the area, and made the return of displaced persons more difficult. These Governments have encouraged and assisted terrorism and violence, tried to disrupt normal civilian life, and carried out or co-operated with armed attack from their territories across the cease-fire lines by regular and irregular forces. Moreover, the willingness of the Israel Government on humanitarian grounds to permit the return of a number of displaced persons has been exploited for the purpose of infiltrating trained terrorists and saboteurs.

"4. During the same period, certain Arab Governments in the Middle East have continued ruthlessly to persecute the helpless Jewish minorities in their countries, in violation of the humanitarian resolutions adopted by the Security Council and the General Assembly since June 1967.

"5. In spite of the difficulties set out above, the Israel Government has continued to the best of its ability to facilitate the return of persons who fled from the west bank in the June 1967 hostilities. This has been done in full co-operation with the Arab local authorities in the area, and in the context of family reunion, hardship cases, and the re-issuance to other applicants of entry permits not utilized by their original recipients. The progress of these programmes will be indicated by the Israel delegation in the Committee debate on the annual report of the Commissioner General of UNRWA, at the next regular session of the General Assembly.

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"6. It is pertinent at this stage to make two general observations. Firstly, the majority of persons that crossed from the west bank to Jordan after the end of the June 1967 hostilities, cannot be regarded as 'displaced persons who have fled the Israel-occupied areas...'. They were persons who left the area of their own will, in an orderly fashion, and without being obliged to do so. Secondly, since last year this movement eastward has been negligible, and the only substantial movement of a permanent nature has been that of persons permitted by the Israel Government to return. Apart from that, a great number of permits have been issued by the Israel authorities for temporary visits in either direction, for business, family, and other reasons.

"The Permanent Representative of Israel avails himself of this opportunity to express to the Secretary-General of the United Nations the assurances of his highest consideration."
