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Agenda item 49

United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

Report of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)

Rapporteur: Ms. Makarabo **Moloeli** (Lesotho)

I. Introduction

1. At its 2nd plenary meeting, on 13 September 2024, the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the General Committee, decided to include in the agenda of its seventy-ninth session the item entitled “United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East” and to allocate it to the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee).

2. The Fourth Committee held a general debate on the item at its 24th to 26th meetings, from 13 to 15 November 2024, and took action on the item at its 29th meeting, on 20 November. Statements and observations made in the course of the Committee’s consideration of the item are reflected in the relevant summary records.¹

3. For its consideration of the item, the Committee had before it the following documents:

(a) Report of the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East ([A/79/13](#));

(b) Report of the Working Group on the Financing of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East ([A/79/329](#));

(c) Report of the Secretary-General on Palestine refugees’ properties and their revenues ([A/79/287](#));

(d) Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine ([A/79/259](#));

¹ [A/C.4/79/SR.24](#), [A/C.4/79/SR.25](#), [A/C.4/79/SR.26](#) and [A/C.4/79/SR.29](#).



(e) Two draft resolutions, contained in documents [A/C.4/79/L.13](#) and [A/C.4/79/L.14](#).

4. At its 24th meeting, on 13 November, the Committee heard a statement by the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), followed by an interactive dialogue.

5. At the same meeting, the representative of Norway, in her capacity as Rapporteur of the Working Group on the Financing of UNRWA, introduced the report of the Working Group.

II. Consideration of proposals

A. Draft resolution [A/C.4/79/L.13](#)

6. At the 29th meeting, on 20 November, the representatives of South Africa and Indonesia, on behalf of Algeria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Brunei Darussalam, Cuba, Egypt, Honduras, Indonesia, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Malaysia, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, the Sudan, Tunisia, Viet Nam and the State of Palestine, introduced a draft resolution entitled “Assistance to Palestine refugees” ([A/C.4/79/L.13](#)). Subsequently, the following countries joined in sponsoring the draft resolution: Belgium, Belize, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Chile, Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Guyana, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Maldives, Malta, Monaco, Montenegro, Morocco, Namibia, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), Nicaragua, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, United Arab Emirates, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) and Yemen.

7. At the same meeting, the Committee adopted draft resolution [A/C.4/79/L.13](#) by a recorded vote 165 to 3, with 9 abstentions (see para. 10, draft resolution I). The voting was as follows:

In favour:

Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Canada, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czechia, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, North Macedonia, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Somalia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden,

Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, Türkiye, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Against:

Argentina, Israel, Tonga.

Abstaining:

Cameroon, Liberia, Micronesia (Federated States of), Nauru, Palau, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, United States of America.

B. Draft resolution [A/C.4/79/L.14](#)

8. Also at the 29th meeting, on 20 November, the representatives of South Africa and Indonesia, on behalf of Algeria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Brunei Darussalam, Cuba, Egypt, Honduras, Indonesia, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Malaysia, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Tunisia, Viet Nam and the State of Palestine, introduced a draft resolution entitled “Palestine refugees’ properties and their revenues” ([A/C.4/79/L.14](#)). Subsequently, the following countries joined in sponsoring the draft resolution: Belgium, Belize, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Gambia, Germany, Greece, Guyana, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malta, Montenegro, Morocco, Namibia, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), Nicaragua, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Senegal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, United Arab Emirates, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) and Yemen.

9. At the same meeting, the Committee adopted draft resolution [A/C.4/79/L.14](#) by a recorded vote of 162 to 6, with 10 abstentions (see para. 10, draft resolution II). The voting was as follows:²

In favour:

Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Canada, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d’Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czechia, Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, North Macedonia, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino,

² The delegation of Madagascar subsequently indicated that it had intended not to participate.

Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Somalia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkmenistan, Türkiye, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zimbabwe.

Against:

Argentina, Israel, Micronesia (Federated States of), Nauru, Tonga, United States of America.

Abstaining:

Cameroon, Fiji, Liberia, Madagascar, Palau, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Togo, Tuvalu.

III. Recommendations of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)

10. The Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolutions:

Draft resolution I **Assistance to Palestine refugees**

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution [194 \(III\)](#) of 11 December 1948 and all its subsequent resolutions on the question, including resolution [78/74](#) of 7 December 2023,

Recalling also its resolution [302 \(IV\)](#) of 8 December 1949, by which, inter alia, it established the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East,

Recalling further the relevant resolutions of the Security Council,

Aware of the fact that, for more than seven decades, the Palestine refugees have suffered from the loss of their homes, lands and means of livelihood,

Affirming the imperative of resolving the problem of the Palestine refugees for the achievement of justice and for the achievement of lasting peace in the region,

Acknowledging the essential role that the Agency has played for more than seven decades since its establishment in ameliorating the plight of the Palestine refugees through the provision of education, health, relief and social services and ongoing work in the areas of camp infrastructure, microfinance, protection and emergency assistance,

Acknowledging also the commitment of the Agency to operate in line with the humanitarian principles of neutrality, humanity, independence and impartiality,

Taking note of the report of the Commissioner-General of the Agency covering the period from 1 January to 31 December 2023,¹

Taking note also of the report of the Commissioner-General of 31 May 2024, submitted pursuant to paragraph 57 of the report of the Secretary-General,² and expressing concern regarding the severe financial crisis of the Agency and the negative implications for the continued delivery of core programmes to the Palestine refugees in all fields of operation,

Aware of the extreme challenges and multiple severe crises being faced by the Palestine refugees throughout all the fields of operation, namely, Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic and the Occupied Palestinian Territory,

Expressing grave concern at the especially dire situation of the Palestine refugees under occupation, including with regard to their safety, well-being and socioeconomic living conditions,

Expressing grave concern in particular at the catastrophic humanitarian situation and socioeconomic conditions of the Palestine refugees in the Gaza Strip, and underlining the importance of emergency and humanitarian assistance and urgent reconstruction efforts to urgently address this crisis,

¹ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Seventy-ninth Session, Supplement No. 13* ([A/79/13](#)).

² [A/71/849](#).

Noting the signing of the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements on 13 September 1993 by the Government of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization³ and the subsequent implementation agreements,

1. *Notes with regret* that repatriation or compensation of the refugees, as provided for in paragraph 11 of General Assembly resolution 194 (III), has not yet been effected, and that, therefore, the situation of the Palestine refugees continues to be a matter of grave concern and the Palestine refugees continue to require assistance to meet basic health, education and living needs;

2. *Also notes with regret* that the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine has been unable to find a means of achieving progress in the implementation of paragraph 11 of General Assembly resolution 194 (III), and reaffirms its request to the Conciliation Commission to continue exerting efforts towards the implementation of that paragraph and to report to the Assembly on the efforts being exerted in this regard as appropriate, but no later than 1 September 2025;

3. *Affirms* the necessity for the continuation of the work of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and the importance of its unimpeded operation and its provision of services, including emergency assistance, for the well-being, protection and human development of the Palestine refugees and for the stability of the region, pending the just resolution of the question of the Palestine refugees;

4. *Calls upon* all donors to continue to strengthen their efforts to meet the anticipated needs of the Agency, including with regard to increased expenditures and needs arising from conflicts and instability in the region and the grave socioeconomic and humanitarian situation, particularly in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, and those needs mentioned in recent emergency, recovery and reconstruction appeals and plans for the Gaza Strip and in the regional crisis response plans to address the situation of Palestine refugees in Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic and those Palestine refugees who have fled to countries in the region;

5. *Commends* the Agency for its provision of vital assistance to the Palestine refugees and its role as a stabilizing factor in the region and the tireless efforts of the staff of the Agency in carrying out its mandate;

6. *Decides* to admit, upon its request, Iraq, in accordance with the criterion set forth in General Assembly decision 60/522 of 8 December 2005, as a member of the Advisory Commission of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East.

³ A/48/486-S/26560, annex.

Draft resolution II Palestine refugees' properties and their revenues

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions [194 \(III\)](#) of 11 December 1948 and [36/146 C](#) of 16 December 1981 and all its subsequent resolutions on the question,

Taking note of the report of the Secretary-General submitted pursuant to its resolution [78/75](#) of 7 December 2023,¹ as well as that of the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine for the period from 1 September 2023 to 31 August 2024,²

Recalling that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights³ and the principles of international law uphold the principle that no one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his or her property,

Recalling in particular its resolution [394 \(V\)](#) of 14 December 1950, in which it directed the Conciliation Commission, in consultation with the parties concerned, to prescribe measures for the protection of the rights, property and interests of the Palestine refugees,

Noting the completion of the programme of identification and evaluation of Arab property, as announced by the Conciliation Commission in its twenty-second progress report,⁴ and the fact that the Land Office had a schedule of Arab owners and a file of documents defining the location, area and other particulars of Arab property,

Expressing its appreciation for the preservation and modernization of the existing records, including the land records, of the Conciliation Commission, and stressing the importance of such records for a just resolution of the plight of the Palestine refugees in conformity with resolution [194 \(III\)](#),

Recalling that, in the framework of the Middle East peace process, the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Government of Israel agreed, in the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements of 13 September 1993,⁵ to commence negotiations on permanent status issues, including the important issue of the refugees,

1. *Reaffirms* that the Palestine refugees are entitled to their property and to the income derived therefrom, in conformity with the principles of equity and justice;
2. *Requests* the Secretary-General to take all appropriate steps, in consultation with the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine, for the protection of Arab property, assets and property rights in Israel;
3. *Calls once again upon* Israel to render all facilities and assistance to the Secretary-General in the implementation of the present resolution;
4. *Calls upon* all the parties concerned to provide the Secretary-General with any pertinent information in their possession concerning Arab property, assets and property rights in Israel that would assist him in the implementation of the present resolution;

¹ [A/79/287](#).

² [A/79/259](#).

³ Resolution [217 A \(III\)](#).

⁴ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Nineteenth Session, Annexes, Annex No. 11*, document [A/5700](#).

⁵ [A/48/486-S/26560](#), annex.

5. *Urges* the Palestinian and Israeli sides, as agreed between them, to deal with the important issue of Palestine refugees' properties and their revenues within the framework of the final status peace negotiations;

6. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its eightieth session on the implementation of the present resolution.
