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ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

UNITED NATIONS CONCILIATION COMMISSION FOR PALESTINE

Letter and Memorandum dated 10 February addressed to the
Conciliation Commission by Representatives of the
Inhabitants of Western Galilee

Sir,

We enclose herewith the original arabic text of a memorandum, addressed to you, signed on behalf of the inhabitants of Western Galilee, whereby they insist on the implementation of the Partition Resolution dated 29.11.47 and the Lausanne Protocol dated 12.5.49, assigning western Galilee to the Arabs. In case the whole area of Palestine assigned, accordingly, to the Arabs cannot be independent of the rule of neighbouring states, then the signatories thereto insist that Western Galilee, according to the free desire and will of its inhabitants, be annexed to Syria, in view of the reasons set out in the enclosed memorandum.

This memorandum is made in furtherance to that delivered to you, in Beyrouth, on 22.3.49.

In case you have got no interpreter to translate same from Arabic, the signatories rely upon the translation of the Syrian Delegate, Mr. Ahmed Shukairy.

Mr. Shukairy is already authorised by the inhabitants of Western Galilee to act for them before your Commission and represent them in producing this memorandum and advocating their cause in the light thereof.

We have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient Servants

Sgd. For the Inhabitants of Western Galilee:

Jamal Hamid
Ahmed Sirhan
S. Fahouin
T. Abdul Majid

Damascus
10 February 1950

Memorandum

(Translation from Arabic by Mr. Shukairy)

Chairman of the Palestine Conciliation Commission, Geneva:

1. We, the undersignatories, inhabitants of Western Galilee, at present refugees in Syrian and Lebanon, repeat the request that has been submitted by the inhabitants of this territory last year to the Syrian Government, to the United Nations and the Conciliation Commission, either through cables or memoranda. The object of these presentations was to safeguard the Arab position of Western Galilee and amalgamate it with Syria, as it was previously a natural part linked to Syria. It is obvious that by the relinquishment of the French and British mandates over Palestine and Syria, the natural state of affairs must be resumed, more so that Western Galilee was and still is linked to Syria geographically, economically, strategically, and through ties of blood and common interests. Any change in the said situations that took place at the termination of the British mandate through force, usurpation and the violation of international decisions cannot be recognized as it is not based on the free will of the inhabitants of the area.

2. The solution for an Arab Galilee is consistent with natural justice, international law, and the various recommendations that were passed by the various committees. Such a solution is consistent with the General Assembly resolution dated 29.11.1947 which has recommended partition and whereby this territory has been assigned to the Arabs due to the fact that 97% of the population in the area is Arab.

3. The solution for an Arab Western Galilee relieves the problem of refugees now residing in Syria and Lebanon. With its absorptive capacity, its agricultural produce, and its economic and natural resources, Western Galilee can absorb 250,000 refugees in excess of its present inhabitants numbering 70,000 Arabs.

4. It has been the incessant object of international committees in their attempt to find a solution for the Palestine problem to avoid the subjection of the majority in any area to the rule of the minority. Is it reasonable for the Conciliation Commission to avoid this general principle in spite of the partition scheme, international law, and the natural rights?

5. The occupation by the Jews of the area of Western Galilee by force and against the wishes of the civilian population, and the displacement of the inhabitants by terror and force do not confer upon the Jews any political or legal right with regard to the area, the properties or sovereignty.

6. To support Jewish occupation of Western Galilee means their assistance in robbing Arab property as it is highly impossible for the Jews, even with the help of capital from their supporters, to compensate for the extensive properties of the Arabs including entire cities, as Acre, Nazareth, and no less than a hundred villages free from Jewish interests.

7. It is noteworthy to remark that in Western Galilee are to be found important Christian holy places, in Nazareth, Copernium and various other spots around the Sea of Galilee. The Christians have categorically refused the control of the Jews to these places.

8. The inhabitants of Galilee, as all the other refugees of Palestine, believe that the real solution of the refugees is to be found in their return to their homes consonant to the resolution of 11.12.1948. They refuse being settled or engaged in occupations outside the area. This return cannot be guaranteed to all of the refugees without the execution of the partition resolution and the guarantees it provided for. Unable to stand by itself, Western Galilee would have to be ceded to Syria in accordance with the principle of self-determination. Obviously the refugee who has built up his hopes and futures upon a profession or another income derived from property or otherwise considers that a settlement outside his country is fallacious and erroneous.

9. Finally we request that Galilee should remain Arab and that the area be ceded to Syria as a condition precedent to the discussions.

Damascus, 10 February 1950, on behalf of the people of Western Galilee.

Signatories-