

11. During the debate, reference was made to the decision of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination (1987/20) to "suspend all operations, other than those of a purely humanitarian nature, and to cancel future missions" in certain situations of violations of the privileges and immunities of officials (see para. 40 below); it was asked whether that decision was compatible with the legislative authority of the General Assembly and other organs to mandate programmes. In that regard, the Legal Counsel stated that the action taken by the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination on the matter had been reported to the Economic and Social Council, which had taken note of it by its decision 1988/167. The Legal Counsel also observed that, in the view of the Secretary-General, there was no conflict between the decision of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination and the authority of the Assembly or other organs, since it was a matter which fell within the competence of the members of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination in their capacity as chief administrative officers of their respective organizations.

Report of the Secretary-General

12. The Secretary-General, in his report (A/C.5/43/18), covered the period 1 July 1987 to 30 June 1988, and focused mainly on cases involving arrest, detention and abduction of officials. As in previous years it was based on information provided by the United Nations as well as on information requested from all United Nations subsidiary organs, offices or missions, the specialized agencies and related organizations. The report also contained a consolidated list of 85 staff members under arrest and detention or missing and with respect to whom the United Nations and the specialized agencies and related organizations had been unable to exercise fully their right to protection. That list is reproduced in annex I to the present report. The report of the Secretary-General also contained information on this subject submitted by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNWRA), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Truce Supervision in Palestine (UNTSO) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

13. The Secretary-General expressed great concern at the inordinate delays which different organizations faced in trying to exercise fully the right of functional protection. In many instances, the organization concerned was not allowed access to the staff member until a considerable time after the initial detention.

14. As to new cases of arrest, the Secretary-General pointed to the disturbing significant increase in such cases reported by UNWRA which alone had documented 151 new cases of arrest and/or detention of its officials during the reporting period. Of those, 57 officials were still in detention as at 30 June 1988. Despite prompt requests to the authorities concerned, in none of the 151 cases had UNWRA received adequate and timely information on the reasons for the arrest and detention. While UNWRA was given access to four detained staff members in the occupied West Bank and to one staff member in the occupied Gaza Strip, its efforts, during the reporting period, to visit its other detained staff members in detention had not been successful. It might be noted, however, that immediately after the end of the reporting period, UNWRA was granted access, on 28 July 1988, to 17 staff members arrested in the occupied Gaza Strip and, on 4 August 1988, to 13 staff members arrested in the occupied West Bank; all of those arrested were being held by Israeli authorities at the Ansar III/Ketziot detention centre in the Negev.

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