

## No. 610

611,807-953

*Department of State Position Paper*<sup>1</sup>CONFIDENTIAL  
STA D-1/2a

[WASHINGTON, May 8 [?], 1953.]

## THE ARAB REFUGEE PROBLEM

As a result of the Arab-Israeli hostilities in the spring of 1948, about one million Arabs were driven from their homes in what then was Palestine and became refugees in the neighboring Arab states.

Our efforts toward a solution of the refugee problem are channeled through the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), with headquarters in Beirut. At the Sixth Session of the General Assembly, 49 countries voted for a three-year plan for UNRWA. The three-year period ends June 30, 1954, and commits a fund of \$250 million—\$200 for rehabilitation and \$50 million for relief on a descending scale of annual appropriations.

Progress on the refugee problem, while disappointing has made some headway. The number of refugees registered with UNRWA on January 31, 1953, was as follows:

475,233	—	In Jordan
206,005	—	In the Gaza Strip (held in Egypt)
103,149	—	In Lebanon
85,746	—	In Syria
<u>868,133</u>		

810,000 "rations" are distributed to the group, a "ration" consisting of flour and other foodstuffs calculated to yield 1600 calories daily. The reduction of the relief rolls from approximately one million to 868,133 refugees has been made possible in part through a number of UNRWA's small-scale projects, in part through the initiative of individual refugees who have found employment legally or otherwise and in part through the Agency's more stringent conditions for granting relief. General agreements have been entered into between Jordan, Egypt, Syria and Libya with respect to projects enabling refugees to become self-supporting. The Syrian

<sup>1</sup> One of a series of position papers on regional problems in the Near East prepared for the briefing book for the Secretary's trip to the Middle East and South Asia; see footnote 1, Document 604.