

Hungary 1956-1959 - correspondence, resolutions, General Assembly and Secur...

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Report of the Sec. - Gen.



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QUESTION CONSIDERED BY THE SECOND EMERGENCY SPECIAL SESSION
OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY FROM 4 TO 10 NOVEMBER 1956

Report of the Secretary-General

In a report to the General Assembly (A/3403), 30 November 1956, the Secretary-General gave an interim account of action taken by him on the basis of various resolutions adopted by the General Assembly concerning the withdrawal of foreign troops from Hungarian territory and related questions, including that of deportations, and concerning investigations of the situation caused by foreign intervention in Hungary. Humanitarian activities, including assistance to refugees, have been dealt with mainly in other reports.

In his report, 30 November, the Secretary-General drew the attention of the General Assembly specifically to the steps taken for investigation and observation of the developments in Hungary. As announced to the General Assembly, 16 November (A/3359), a group of three had been established by the Secretary-General to assist him in fulfilling the investigatory duties with which he had been charged by the General Assembly. This group consisted of Mr. O. Gundersen, Mr. A. Lall, and Mr. A. Lleras. The Secretary-General wishes to include in the present report an account of the views expressed by this group concerning the nature of and conditions for the investigations with which it was charged.

The group presented to the Secretary-General, 15 December 1956, the following note:

"Referring to our conversation with you yesterday when we exchanged views regarding the task of investigation which you asked us to undertake in pursuance of Assembly resolution A/RES/393 ^{1/} dated 4 November 1956 and in accordance with your information to the General Assembly (A/3359) of 16 November 1956, we would like briefly to state our views at the present stage.

^{1/} Resolution 1004 (ES-II).

"Already in the first conversation we had with you we noted that the resolution of the General Assembly of 4 November 1956 appeared to envisage the process of investigation, observation and reporting as a unified one. Moreover, that resolution, as also subsequent resolutions of the General Assembly, called on the Governments concerned to assist in the process of fact-finding and assessment of the Hungarian situation. While we immediately set out to examine the material made available to us in New York we found that it did not contain sufficient evidence for a broad-based investigation of the events that had taken place in Hungary. We found ourselves, as it were, in possession of a fringe of the material which we would have required for the kind of assessment of the situation which we felt that the General Assembly had had in view. In short, what we have looked at is the available and generally known material which does not put us in a position to add anything significant to what is common knowledge about the situation in Hungary. We have also taken note of the fact that as a result of your approaches in pursuance of General Assembly resolution A/RES/413 dated 4 December 1956 only one country of those requested has found it possible to offer facilities for observation.

"Until it is possible to open up further sources of reliable material through observation on the spot in Hungary and by the co-operation of the Governments directly concerned, there would be little purpose in our attempting an assessment of the present situation or of recent events. In these circumstances the question arises as to whether it is not best for the process of investigation to be suspended for the present, and for the matter to be re-examined at a later stage."

Serious consideration should be given to the conclusion of the group that short of access to reliable material, provided through observation on the spot in Hungary and by the co-operation of the Governments directly concerned, there would be little purpose in attempting an assessment of the present situation or of recent events.

So far there has been no possibility for representatives of the United Nations to make direct observations in Hungary, nor has the co-operation necessary for the investigations been forthcoming from Governments directly concerned. The only source of new and direct information, under these circumstances, possibly available might be hearings with refugees from Hungary, conducted, in the first place, in neighbouring countries.

The Government of Austria has declared itself prepared to receive observers for such a purpose. Offers to the United Nations to send observers for hearings with refugees have been received from the United States of America and Italy. Some additional points of significance might be established through hearings with refugees in these countries, but, in order to yield results of value, such hearings must be extensive and organized in a juridically satisfactory form.

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The Secretary-General continues, on his part, to try to further the aims of the General Assembly, pursuant to paragraph 5 of the last resolution on the Hungarian question.^{2/} He has, under present circumstances and pending also the result of efforts along other lines, hesitated now to initiate, himself, further investigatory activities, including hearings with refugees.

The Secretary-General has felt that this might be the proper time for a reconsideration of the form to be given to the investigatory activities. In view of the active and continued concern of the General Assembly for the development, the Assembly may now wish to establish a special ad hoc committee which would take over the activities of the group of investigators established by the Secretary-General, and follow them up under somewhat broader terms of reference.

Such a committee should obviously serve as an organ of the General Assembly for a continued observation of developments in relation to Hungary in all those respects which may be of relevance to the Assembly. The work of a committee with such a mandate might facilitate for the General Assembly the consideration of matters relating to Hungary beyond what could be achieved through an investigation of the kind with which the Secretary-General has been charged. The committee, if established, should report directly to the General Assembly. It would be entitled to all the assistance and facilities which the Secretariat might provide for it in the fulfilment of its task.

^{2/} A/RES/424.

4 January 1957

In a report to the General Assembly, (A/3403), 30 November 1956, the Secretary-General gave an interim account of action taken by him on the basis of various resolutions adopted by the General Assembly concerning the withdrawal of foreign troops from Hungarian territory and related questions, including that of deportations, and concerning investigations of the situation caused by foreign intervention in Hungary. Humanitarian activities, including assistance to refugees have been dealt with mainly in other reports.

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