

PRESS RELEASE

GOVERNING COUNCIL OF UNITED NATIONS COMPENSATION COMMISSION
HAS CONCLUDED ITS FIFTY-SIXTH SESSION

The Governing Council of the United Nations Compensation Commission, under the Presidency of Ambassador Tassos Kriekoukis (Greece), has concluded its fifty-sixth session today. Representatives of Kuwait and Iraq addressed the fifteen-member Governing Council at its opening plenary meeting. The Governing Council approved four remaining reports and recommendations of the panels of Commissioners and awarded US\$366,772,383.83 for compensation to successful claimants.

The approval of these reports marks the completion of 12 years of claims processing at the UNCC and brings to an end the work of the panels of Commissioners, as a whole. Since the appointment of the first panels in 1993, over 2.68 million claims, seeking approximately USD 354 billion in compensation, have been resolved by the various panels of Commissioners. Awards of approximately USD 52.5 billion have been approved in respect of approximately 1.5 million of these claims, representing roughly 14.8 per cent of the amount claimed. To date, approximately US\$19.2 billion has been made available to Governments and international organizations for distribution to successful claimants in all categories of claims. In addition, pursuant to Governing Council decision 227, up to US\$200 million will be made available for distribution to successful claimants in July 2005. The resolution of such a significant number of claims with such a large asserted value over a period as short as twelve years has no precedent in the history of international claims resolution.

Following the conclusion of the claims processing stage, the Commission will continue its work, with a small secretariat, on payments of awards to claimants and a number of residual tasks. In this context, at this session the Council approved the proposed budget of the Commission for the biennium 2006-2007.

The reports and recommendations of the panels of Commissioners approved at this session concerned claims in category "A" (claims of individuals for departure from Kuwait or Iraq), category "C" (claims of individuals for losses up to US\$100,000), "bedoun" claims (individual claims from the "bedouns" for a fixed amount of US\$2,500), category "D" (claims of individuals for losses over \$100,000) and category "F4" (claims for damages to the environment).

The second instalment of the late-filed category “A” and category “C” claims programme involved 339 claims filed on behalf of individuals by the Government of Pakistan. Of these, 139 category “A” claims, with a total award value of US\$393,500.00 and 151 category “C” claims, with a total award value of US\$4,164,964.99, were approved by the Council for compensation.

The special instalment of “bedoun” claims involved 31,868 claims filed by the Government of Kuwait. Of these, 31,715 claims, with a total award value of US\$79,287,500.00, were approved by the Council for compensation. The report also included 10 claims filed pursuant to Governing Council decision 12, comprising 9 category “D” deceased detainee claims and one category “D” claim for death as a result of a landmine explosion. These 10 claims were approved by the Council for compensation, with a total award value of US\$4,457,188.09.

The instalment of Palestinian late claims in category “D” involved 404 claims filed by the Palestinian Authority that satisfied the threshold eligibility requirement for review, namely whether the claimants had a full and effective opportunity to file their claims, as set out by the Governing Council. Of these, 296 claims with a total award value of US\$25,872,466.70, were approved by the Council for compensation. The report also involved 17 Palestinian late claims in category “C”, 14 of which were approved by the Council with a total award value of US\$568,296.05.

The fifth instalment of category “F4” claims (environmental claims) involved 19 claims filed by six Governments. Of these, eight claims filed by four Governments were approved by the Council for compensation, with a total award value of US\$252,028,468.00.

During the session, the Council discussed a progress report of the Executive Secretary on the activities of the Commission. The report addressed the processing of claims and the payment of approved awards.

The Council also discussed the report of the Executive Secretary on the distribution by Governments and international organizations of payments to successful claimants, the transparency of the distribution process, and the return of undistributed funds.

The Council decided to hold its next regular session from 27 to 29 September 2005.

Further information about the Commission, including the text of Governing Council decisions and reports and recommendations of the panels of Commissioners, can be found on the United Nations Compensation Commission website located at www.uncc.ch.
