

# PALESTINE REFUGEES TODAY



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**UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND WORKS AGENCY FOR PALESTINE REFUGEES IN THE NEAR EAST**

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**OUR COVER PICTURE :**

Winter storms reach UNRWA's emergency camps in east Jordan. Here at Baqa'a, prefabricated shelters are being used as clinics and bath-houses, while solid shelters for the inhabitants to replace their tents are now being erected with funds from the Federal Republic of Germany.

**FURTHER INFORMATION  
MAY BE OBTAINED FROM :**

UNRWA Public Information Office,  
Museitbeh Quarter,  
Beirut,  
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UNRWA Liaison Office,  
Palais des Nations,  
Geneva,  
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UNRWA Liaison Office,  
United Nations,  
New York,  
U. S. A.

# U THANT AND THE PALESTINE REFUGEES

On 11 November 1968, U Thant, the United Nations Secretary-General, addressed the General Assembly's Special Political Committee as it began consideration of the Annual Report of the Commissioner-General of UNRWA. The text of his statement is given below:

"This is the first time, I understand, that a Secretary-General has addressed this committee during its consideration of the subject of UNRWA and the Palestine refugees. I do so now only because I consider it to be my duty to call for special attention of the members of this committee to certain acute situations requiring urgent action. My purpose here, therefore, is to point out and underscore certain vital needs which are in my view an international responsibility. Before doing so I may be permitted to make one general remark. For twenty years the Palestine refugees - well over one million of them - have had no homeland, no future and not even a detectable glimmer of hope on their horizon. We should remind ourselves, I think, that in all these twenty years the General Assembly has not found it possible to take any significant step towards a real solution of this great and tragic human problem. It has found it possible to discuss each year at length the arrangements to be made through UNRWA for the relief of the refugees in their present plight, without touching upon measures which might achieve a fundamental solution for them.

"This fact reflects upon us all and certainly upon the United Nations, and we should not allow ourselves to forget it in the debate which is ahead of us in this committee. Having said that, I will proceed to the three main points to which I wish to call attention.

"In the first place it is, in my view, clearly imperative that UNRWA be in a position to meet adequately the increased demands that have been placed on the Agency since June of last year. The report of the Commissioner-General is before you and provides much detailed information about the current conditions of the refugees and the problems facing the Agency. The Commissioner-General himself will be giving the committee further information and clarifications. I do not propose, therefore, to go into detail in my statement today. I do wish, however, to draw the attention of the committee (at the opening of its discussions on these matters), to the urgent necessity of meeting the responsibilities of the United Nations for the care of the refugees and displaced persons.

"At the outset, I may point to the basic question which faces this committee under the item now being considered, namely, the renewal of the mandate of UNRWA. It must be renewed, of course. Not to continue UNRWA after next June would be,



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in my view, unthinkable. The international community which the United Nations represents, cannot abandon this very large group of people, for whose plight the United Nations must bear a considerable measure of responsibility, without dealing a harsh blow to international morality and to the conscience of humanity which the United Nations must always seek to reflect.

"All members know of the efforts being made by Ambassador Jarring under the terms of the Security Council Resolution of 22 November 1967 to promote, among other objectives, the achievement of a just settlement of the refugee problem. I should like to take this opportunity to appeal to governments to afford



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Ambassador Jarring all possible cooperation and assistance in finding a solution. Whatever success may ultimately attend these efforts, they are unavoidably directed towards a long-term solution which could not, by its very nature, immediately be put into effect. Pending the implementation of a just settlement of the refugee problem, some Agency, obviously, must continue to perform the functions and supply the services which for so long now have been the responsibility of UNRWA - providing shelter, food, health services, education and training facilities for the refugees. Certainly the elimination of these services would make far more difficult the long-term settlement of the refugee problem which is being sought and which must be achieved.

"It seems to me, therefore, that the renewal of UNRWA's mandate is by far the most practicable, if not the only, method of continuing the main task of caring for the refugees until a final settlement of the refugee problem is achieved. I strongly urge that the committee decide positively - and I would hope, unanimously - on the renewal of the mandate of UNRWA for a suitable and reasonable period.

"Secondly, I wish to refer to a problem which will immediately arise, if, as I hope, it is decided to continue UNRWA. I have in mind the necessity of providing UNRWA with the means for carrying out its task adequately and well. The General Assembly, in its Resolution 2252 (ES-V) of 4 July 1967 on humanitarian questions, made an urgent appeal to all governments to make special contributions to UNRWA. It also appealed to other inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations for the purpose of obtaining the means to meet the new demands of the refugee situation. The General Assembly, last December, repeated in Resolution 2341 of 19 December 1967, its appeal to governments to consider increasing their contributions to UNRWA, as well as to governments, organizations and individuals to make special contributions to UNRWA or to other intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations concerned. I myself have made various appeals, including one made jointly with the Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization on 29 April 1968.

"Although some governments have responded generously to the appeals for additional contributions for UNRWA, the total received has fallen short of what is required to meet its responsibilities. In 1968, the Agency will again have to draw on its working capital to finance its operations. For 1969, to maintain the present programme of UNRWA activities will require some \$42.5 million - about \$5 million above the level of expenditure before the June

Ein Sultan Camp at Jericho on the Israeli-occupied West Bank of the Jordan, one of the camps from which the thousands fled for whose return the Secretary-General is asking



1967 hostilities. Income is again likely to be inadequate on present indications by as much as \$5 million. This would be very serious and almost catastrophic. The consequences in human suffering, as well as in complicating the efforts for a solution of the problems of the area, lead me to appeal once again, and this time most urgently, to all governments to make contributions as generous as they possibly can, in order that UNRWA will be enabled to meet this great humanitarian challenge to the responsibility of the United Nations.

"I must emphasize that the increased requirements of UNRWA are not only to meet the special hardships of newly displaced persons and refugees, but also to make it possible for UNRWA to continue the services which it is already performing, and which are vital both to the present and future well-being of the refugees.

"As the Commissioner-General has pointed out in his report, the hostilities of June 1967 created a situation which has resulted in increased hardships for many of the existing refugees and the displacement of large numbers of other persons as well. This situation has in turn greatly increased the task of UNRWA and has also put an additional burden on the governments in the area, in particular on the governments of Jordan, Syria and the United Arab Republic. Since June 1967, further violent incidents, especially in the Jordan-Israel sector, have created a new displacement of refugees and other persons in Jordan, many of whom, having fled from the valleys, will be facing an even harder winter this year than they did last year, for they will be in tented camps on the hills where climatic conditions are severe.

"As Secretary-General, I would be derelict in my duty if I did not recall to the Special Political Committee the resolutions of the Security Council and of the General Assembly relating to humanitarian questions, and in particular to Security Council Resolution 237 (1967) of 14 June 1967 which, among other things, asked that the return of those inhabitants who have fled the areas since the outbreak of hostilities be facilitated. A similar appeal was made by the General Assembly in its Resolution 2252 (ES-V) of 4 July 1967, a resolution which also endorses the efforts of the Commissioner-General of UNRWA 'to provide humanitarian assistance, as far as practicable, on an emergency basis and as a temporary measure, to persons other than refugees in the area who were displaced and were in serious need of immediate assistance as a result of the hostilities'. This Resolution was reaffirmed by the General Assembly on the basis of the report of this Committee in Assembly Resolution 2341 (XXXII) B of December 1967.

"It cannot be questioned that the plight of many of the refugees could be best relieved immediately by their return to their homes and to the camps which they formerly occupied. For the displaced persons the only remedy that would appear to be at once acceptable and practical is their early return to their former places of residence. Although efforts have been made to secure such a return both for the refugees and the displaced persons, the results in terms of the numbers who have actually returned have been relatively small. I think it is necessary to state that if the camps on the West Bank could again serve their original purpose, and if the displaced persons could return to their former homes, a long step would have been taken towards reducing the hardships faced by a large number of the refugees and displaced persons in Jordan. At the same time, it would reduce the financial burdens on the Agency. I realize, however, that a major factor and a possible obstacle to such a

development from the standpoint of the displaced persons and refugees themselves, and conceivably of the Government of Israel as well, is the continuing occupation by Israel forces of the area concerned and the lack of any present indication as to when that occupation will be terminated and peaceful conditions prevail.

"May I conclude with a general comment. Of all the humanitarian situations with which the United Nations is concerned, the plight of the Palestine refugees should arouse the most active compassion of all the governments and peoples of the United Nations for we are dealing here with nothing less than a 20-year old tragedy for a group of people who considerably outnumber the whole population of a number of the states which are members of the United Nations. Members may differ upon the rights and wrongs of the situation in the Middle East, of which the Palestine refugees are the innocent and long-suffering victims. Efforts may be exerted through the United Nations or outside it to find solutions to the problems of the Middle East of which the refugee problem is a major one. I believe, however, that everyone will agree that the tragedy of the Palestine refugees, who three times in twenty years have known at first-hand the cruel blast of war, demands the United Nations should live up generously and without hesitation to its humanitarian duty towards them. I earnestly hope the action of this Committee collectively and of its members individually will allow the United Nations to meet this responsibility to the fullest possible extent."

## STATEMENT OF THE COMMISSIONER-GENERAL

Immediately following the Secretary-General, Mr. Laurence Michelmore, the Commissioner-General of UNRWA, introduced his Report to the Special Political Committee. Extracts from his statement are given below:

The human needs of the Palestine refugees, and of the other persons displaced since the hostilities of June, 1967, are great and pressing. Many thousands are living in extremely precarious conditions. Those who have sought shelter in the new emergency camps of Jordan and Syria, in particular, face the hazards of winter storms with severe winds, heavy rain, and cold.

In Syria, about 8,000 persons are living in four tented camps, and arrangements are now being made to accommodate a further 2,000 persons. These camps have been provided with water supply, roads, paths, storm water drainage, sanitation facilities, concrete bases for the tents, low skirting walls and tent covers. Despite these provisions, the inhabitants of these camps in Syria face a winter of hardship and suffering.

Talbiya Camp, near Zizia, east Jordan —  
the Iranian Red Lion and Sun Society's  
donation to the Jordanian Government  
for 3,000 Arabs displaced after  
the 1967 hostilities.



In Jordan, the camps have been moved several times during the year. In one camp, near Zizia, the Iranian Red Lion and Sun Society has erected solid buildings for residences for about 3,000 people, with schools, a health centre, baths, and other facilities. The facilities are excellent and the inhabitants are well protected. In the five other emergency camps, located between Amman and Irbid, about 75,000 persons are living. Work to improve these camps has been going on as rapidly as the situation in the area, and the funds available for the purpose, have permitted, and further measures are now being taken. Many non-governmental organizations have helped by contributing pre-fabricated buildings for schools and health centres, mobile health clinics and other facilities. Nevertheless, many of the schools and other services are still functioning in tents. The 75,000 people in these camps are living under canvas. Because of the danger that tents can be swept away by severe storms, UNRWA has wanted to replace them with more solid, but still temporary structures. It will be a race against the calendar to get as much of this shelter erected as possible before the worst of the winter. Even on the most optimistic forecast, many thousands of families will have only canvas tents to shelter them, and will face the danger of exposure and the risk of respiratory and other illnesses.

During the last year, additional food has been provided to refugees in special need, and UNRWA believes that it is essential to continue this assistance if malnutrition is to be avoided. However, if funds are insufficient, this may have to be curtailed.

The need for other services, especially health and education, and the cost of providing these services, have also increased. Even in the areas from which refugees have moved, the demand for health services has increased. In Gaza, where the refugee population has decreased by 10 to 15 per cent, and in parts of the West Bank, more persons are coming to UNRWA clinics than before. In Syria and in east Jordan, where the newly displaced refugees are living, demands for health services are much greater, and have necessitated new health centres, some operating in tents, to care for the population.

Despite the dislocation of the refugees, the demand for education has remained high. In the school year 1967-68, provision had to be made for some 20,000 children in east Jordan who had come from the West Bank or Gaza. This has meant double shifts in most UNRWA/UNESCO schools in that area, and the holding of classes in tents and in other improvised class-rooms.

Talbiya Camp, near Zizia, east Jordan — the Iranian Red Lion and Sun Society's donation to the Jordanian Government for 3,000 Arabs displaced after the 1967 hostilities.



"Even on the most optimistic forecast, many thousands of families will have only canvas tents to shelter them . . ."

The importance of education and training can hardly be over-emphasized. Half of the persons registered with UNRWA are aged 18 or under. These young people and their families realize the importance of education to their future, and show their interest by their constantly increasing demands for admission to schools and training centres. In view of this demand for more and improved education, the Committee may wish to note that although income to finance UNRWA's general programme continues to be critically short, additional funds have been provided by some governments and non-governmental organizations specifically for the purpose of erecting new school buildings and to establish new or expanded training facilities.

UNRWA has tried its best, and will continue to the extent that means are available to it, to meet the needs of the Palestine refugees who depend on it for shelter, food, other relief services, health care and education, both those who still live where they did before June 1967, and also those who fled



"Even on the most optimistic forecast, many thousands of families will have only canvas tents to shelter them . . ."

to other areas. For those newly displaced, UNRWA has said a number of times and on humanitarian grounds that it could provide better care, and at less cost, if the newly displaced refugees could return to the homes and camps where they were living before the hostilities, as envisaged in Security Council Resolution 237 and General Assembly Resolution 2252 (ES-V). This point is emphasized in the Report, and has been mentioned by the Secretary-General, but I feel it my duty to repeat it once again.

The events which I have mentioned, and which are described in more detail in the Report, have added materially to UNRWA's financial problem. In the years 1964 through 1966, and in 1967 so far as UNRWA's normal programme is concerned, the level of expenditure stayed at about \$37.5 million a year. The cost of some activities was increasing during this period, especially for education, but it was possible to offset these increases by reducing the number of international staff and by administrative and operational economies. Additional expenses consequent to the emergency could be met in 1967, and largely but not entirely in 1968 from the special contributions received last year. There will be a shortfall in 1968, and the Agency will have to draw on

its working capital. For 1969, however, we estimate that the continuation of the present programme of assistance to the refugees will cost about \$42.5 million - or about \$5 million more than the expenditure level prior to the emergency.

This increase is due to several factors, one of which I have already mentioned - the higher cost of assisting the newly displaced refugees under emergency conditions. It has also been considered essential to provide additional food, either as dry rations or in the form of hot meals, and other relief services, to certain groups in special need. Costs have also been increased due to the need to establish an additional field office because of the separation of the West Bank from east Jordan. Another factor has been the higher price level for goods and services which now exists, especially in Gaza and the West Bank, and the consequent need to increase the rates of compensation to UNRWA staff. The marked increase in the number of children enrolled in UNRWA schools has also added significantly to the budget.

I should make it clear that the figures I have mentioned, and those given in the budget which is part of the Report, include very little provision for the persons who were displaced after the hostilities who were not previously registered with UNRWA. The responsibility for these persons has been taken largely, almost entirely, by the several governments concerned. In Jordan, UNRWA has worked particularly closely with the Government, in what might be described as a combined operation. At the Government's request, UNRWA administers all the emergency camps, although some of the inhabitants are not refugees registered with UNRWA. UNRWA also acts as the agent of the Government in distributing food rations to the newly displaced persons authorized by the Government to receive this assistance. The financial responsibility remains with the Government, however, for food supplies (other than supplies received as WFP or other contributions such as those made in response to the joint appeal which the Secretary-General and the Director-General of FAO made on 29 April this year). The Government also meets the costs of distributing food and of health and education services as well. In the Syrian Arab Republic and the United Arab Republic, UNRWA has no role in the care of the newly displaced persons.

Compared to the estimate of \$42.5 million as the cost of continuing present UNRWA services in 1969, the income likely to be available on the basis of present information probably will not exceed \$37.5 million, or about \$5 million less than required. This prospective deficit could be reduced somewhat if settlement could be reached on the claims which are outstanding or which will soon be submitted to governments in the area. These claims are referred to in the Report, and are described in Part B of Annex II.

The present mandate of UNRWA extends until 30 June 1969, and it is, of course, for the General Assembly to decide whether it wishes to extend that mandate, and if so, on what terms and conditions. I trust that what I have said will not be regarded as in any way anticipating or pre-judging the General Assembly's decision. But if the General Assembly should decide to prolong UNRWA's mandate, and should wish the Agency to carry on its programme of services, I most earnestly urge that consideration be given to finding means to assure that necessary funds will be available. If adequate funds are not forthcoming, a reduction in services to the refugee population would be inescapable, with resulting human hardship and suffering. We earnestly hope that such an agonizing question can be avoided, and that the United Nations will respond to the plea which the Secretary-General has just made.

# UNRWA'S GRAVE FINANCIAL SITUATION THREATENS REFUGEE SERVICES

On 6 December 1968 the Ad Hoc Committee of the General Assembly met to announce governmental contributions to UNRWA, and a total of \$35,750,000 was pledged. This figure cannot be directly related to UNRWA's budgetary needs for 1969 (\$42,500,000) as it includes a number of contributions for the period 1 July 1968 to 30 June 1969 as well as a special contribution of \$2,500,000 from the Federal German Government for refugee projects to be funded outside the regular budget.

On 10 December the Commissioner-General addressed the Special Political Committee on the subject of UNRWA's financial situation. The following is an extract from his statement:

"My main concern today is to emphasize that the outlook for the next financial year, 1969, is still a matter of great anxiety. At the Pledging Conference on 6 December, 38 Governments announced that they would continue their financial support of UNRWA's programme, and the intentions declared by 11 of these Governments to increase their contributions are especially appreciated. Altogether, pledges made at the Pledging Conference totalled \$35,750,000, but \$2,500,000 of this total is intended for new projects and additional activities outside the basic budgeted programme. Some Governments were not yet able to announce their pledges, but assuming that they will ultimately be able at least to maintain their previous level of support, we might estimate that total income applicable to UNRWA's budgeted expenses, including non-governmental contributions and miscellaneous income, will amount to \$37.5 million. This is \$5 million short of what is needed if UNRWA is to maintain its present activities.

As has been explained in the Annual Report, reserves which have been drawn on in the past have now been depleted. This has two consequences. First, UNRWA's cash position has become more difficult, and consequently all Governments intending to make contributions to UNRWA are urged to arrange for their payments to be made as early in the year as possible. Second, and even more important, UNRWA cannot incur expenditures in 1969 beyond the income that it will receive. This means that we must secure additional income, or reduce expenditures - or devise some combination of both.

We shall hope that the urgent appeal of the Secretary-General on 11 November, and the appeals made by many speakers in the course of the Special Political Committee's debate, as well as the appeal which the General Assembly may issue after the present debate, will lead to further contributions, and that the threatening deficit will consequently disappear, or be significantly reduced.

While waiting to learn the result of these appeals, however, we shall have to consider the steps which must be taken, if, early in 1969, a deficit still remains.

As a first step, we shall review once again, as the representative of the United Kingdom has suggested, the Agency's expenditures on administration and operational services. These have been re-examined and reduced substantially over the last few years, but if any further economies can be made, this will be done.

Beyond any such possibilities, the questions which would have to be faced would be agonizing, for the impact would unavoidably fall on the refugees themselves.

In the field of health and sanitation, almost no reduction can be made without some increased risk to the health of the population. We could not contemplate any major curtailment of health services, as the consequent risk would be too great. Nevertheless, some services may have to be restricted even though some increased risk would result.

In the field of relief services, some reduction in the distribution of food rations and in providing supplementary meals would have to be considered. It should be noted that these possibilities are much more limited than might appear from a cursory review of the Agency's budget. A very large part of the resources which are used for food assistance do not come to UNRWA as cash, but in the form of commodities - especially flour, cooking oil, and milk powder. A reduction in the distribution of these commodities cannot be transferred to other purposes. It should also be noted that food rations are issued to only about two-thirds of the number of persons who are potentially eligible. Efforts to rectify the ration rolls will continue, but if any present recipients are found to be ineligible for this assistance, there is a moral case that the potential claims of others should be given consideration.

Within the narrower limits of possible action, any considerable budget deficit would require that consideration be given to the reduction of the content of the ration issue, nor could we avoid considering a reduction in the number of hot meals provided at present to especially vulnerable groups. UNRWA would have the greatest reluctance to considering a reduction in the content of the present ration, or the restriction of the supplementary feeding programme, and I am sure that the World Health Organization, which advises UNRWA on health and nutrition, would be extremely concerned at the possible consequences in increased malnutrition.

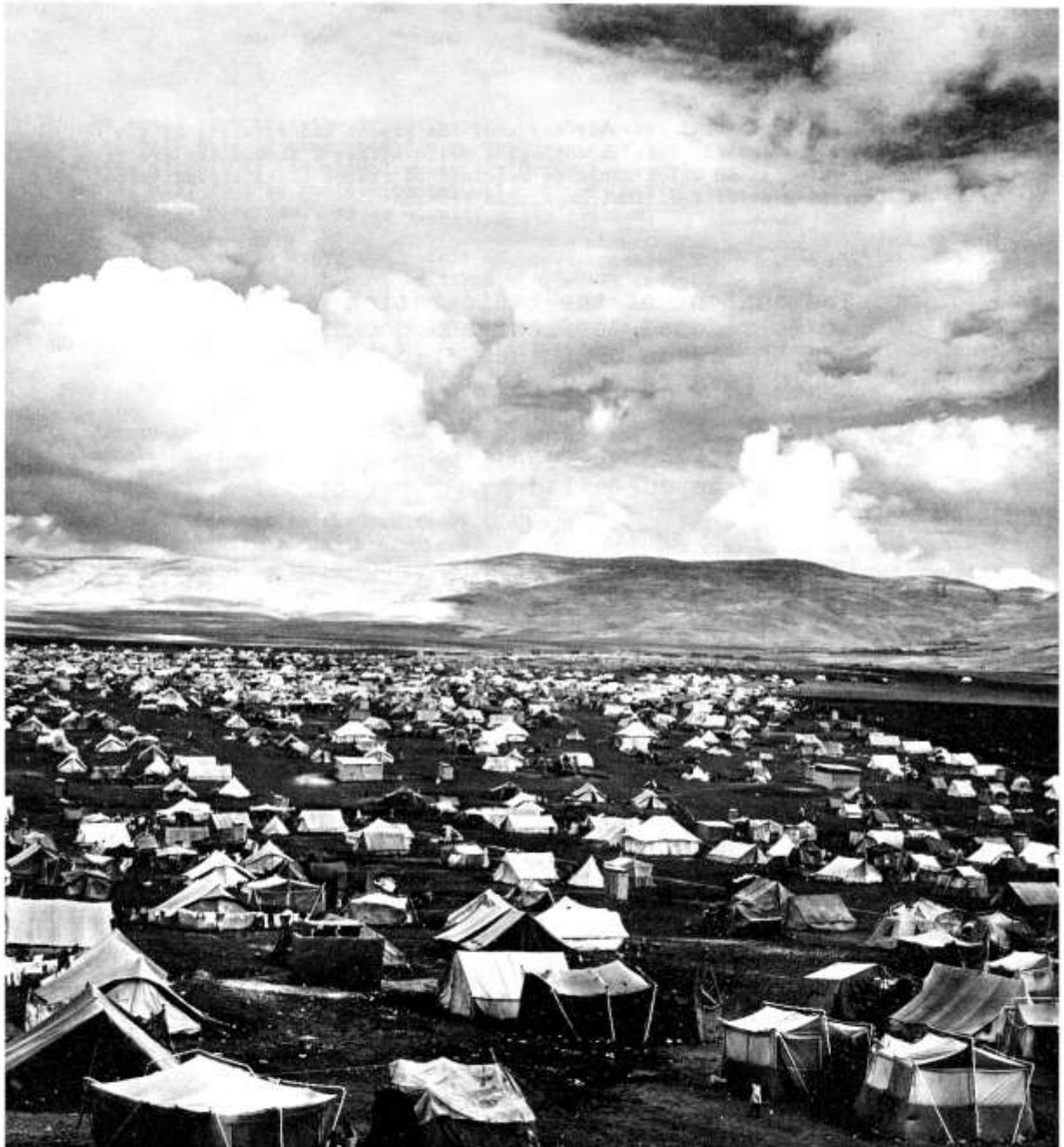
UNRWA shares the views expressed by some representatives that reductions in education and training should be avoided if possible, because the result would be to lessen the hopes for the future that are embodied in education and training.

Here, too, unfortunately, the financial situation may demand that some reductions in education and training also be considered. In particular, UNRWA may be forced to suspend, or discontinue the financial subsidies which have been paid in the past to Governments and to private schools for the education provided to Palestine refugees, particularly at the secondary and preparatory level.

In order that the General Assembly may know the extent and severity of the consequences of the deficit that threatens, I believe that I should declare with all frankness the actions which would be required to reduce UNRWA expenditures by \$5 million, if a deficit of that magnitude remains:

- a. The content of the basic ration would have to be reduced to flour and cooking oil only and the issue of pulses, rice, sugar and soap would have to be discontinued.
- b. The supplementary feeding programme would have to be curtailed by 35 per cent.
- c. Medical services would have to be reduced by 10 per cent.
- d. Environmental sanitation services would have to be reduced by 10 per cent.
- e. All construction of shelter, roads, and supplementary feeding facilities, and all construction and equipment provisions for health and sanitation would have to be eliminated from the regular budget.
- f. The normal programme of university scholarships would have to be reduced by half.
- g. All subsidies paid to Governments and to private schools for the education of refugee children would have to be discontinued.

These are the steps that we would have to contemplate, and that we would have to take, if additional income fails to materialize early in 1969. You will understand, Mr. Chairman, with how much reluctance and hesitation I submit this information to this Committee, but I see no alternative to setting forth the stark reality of the situation that confronts us."



Baq'a, the largest emergency camp for the newly displaced, where shelter construction has recently begun

# SOLID SHELTER FOR THE NEWLY DISPLACED

Two major problems facing UNRWA during the course of the summer of 1968 were inter-related. The first was financial and (as explained earlier) the Agency faced the prospect of a significant budgetary deficit in 1969. The second problem was how, in the light of this precarious financial situation, UNRWA could provide some satisfactory form of solid shelter for the 80,000 newly homeless Arabs living under canvas in east Jordan emergency camps before the worst of the winter was upon them.

The first winter following the June 1967 hostilities had been spent in similar tented emergency camps in the Jordan Valley, situated some six to nine hundred feet below sea-level. Despite rain and flash flooding, the winter temperatures there are relatively mild. But increasing military action along the Valley prompted the camp inhabitants first to dig trench shelters then, finally, to flee the area in February 1968. By the late summer, it had not been possible for them to return to their homes or to the UNRWA camps they had left on the Israeli-occupied West Bank, and the Government of Jordan gave its consent to a temporary shelter construction programme.

It was decided, in co-ordination with the Jordan Government, that a moveable shelter programme should be inaugurated in the five tented camps north of Amman. Examples of different types of shelter, made from systems using wood, corrugated zinc sheeting, asbestos and other suitable materials were erected in Baqa'a - the largest emergency camp with a population of some 36,000 people - to determine suitability for the climatic conditions.

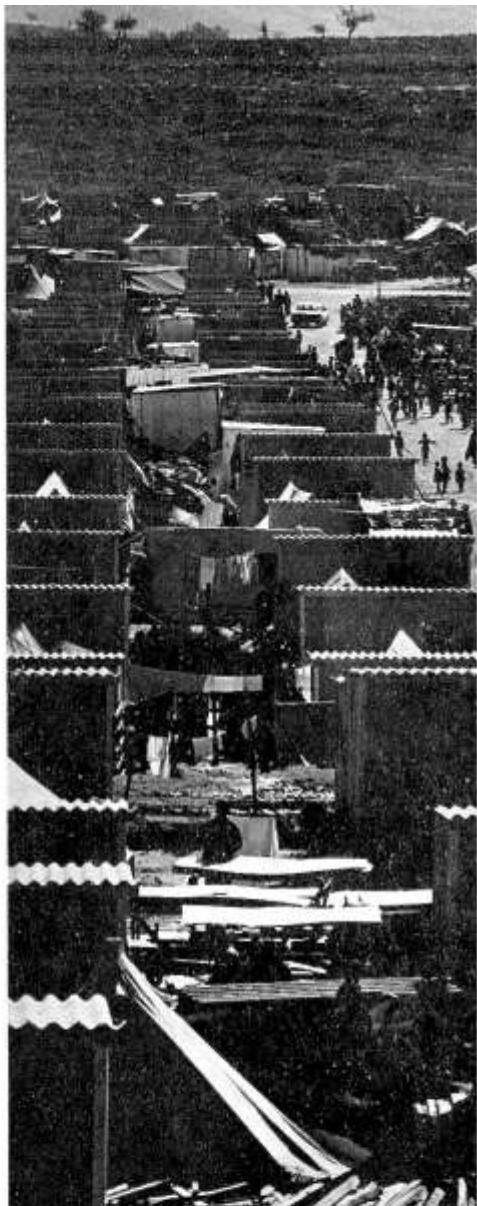
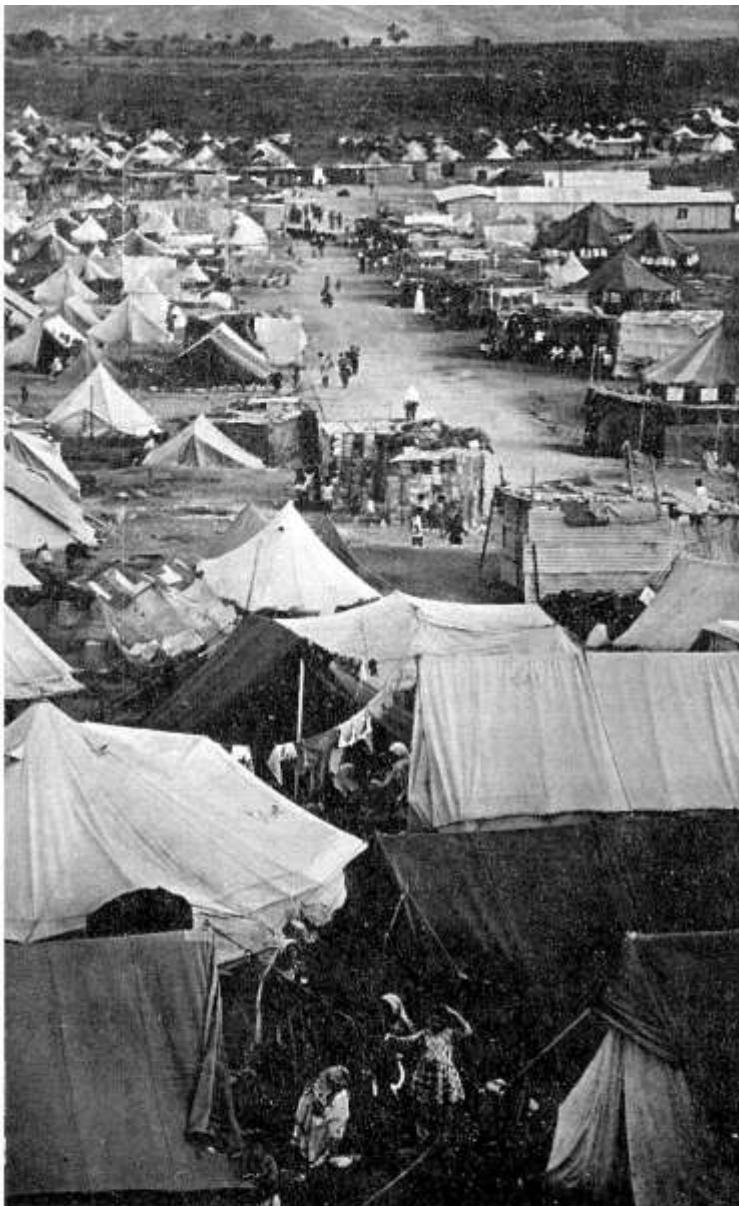
It was agreed with the Government that the floor area of the family shelters to be built should be about 11.5 metres and initially two different types of shelter were approved - UNRWA's own design, and a type produced by a British company, which could be shipped to the Middle East quickly.

Speed of construction and delivery now became factors almost as important as cost: both types of shelter were chosen to offer maximum protection coupled with swiftness of erection and delivery. The UNRWA shelters consist of outer walls of sheet asbestos, manufactured in Lebanon, on timber frames and concrete foundations, with roofs of corrugated asbestos and inner linings of masonite (hardboard) to provide some insulation in both summer and winter.

The British "Conport" shelters are made of galvanised sheet-steel and also stand on concrete foundations. They have inner linings of polystyrene for insulation, and come in twin-room units.

## Logistical problems

The logistical planning for this whole operation presented quite a problem in itself to UNRWA. Two thousand asbestos shelters were originally ordered for Jerash Camp: this involved transporting to Jordan 191,100 cut lengths of timber, 91,800



BEFORE . . . AND AFTER

Jerash emergency camp, east Jordan: these pictures were taken in July and December 1968 respectively.  
Tents have been replaced by NEED-financed asbestos shelters

cut asbestos cement sheets, over five tons of nails and more than a quarter of a million screws of different types. Some 35,000 steel angles and pieces (vital as corner supports) had also to be acquired.

All told, 140 truckloads of materials had to be despatched from Beirut through Syria to Amman so that components arrived on site at the right time. The same arrangements on a larger scale are now being made for a further 3,000 shelters, for Baqa'a Camp. The transport operation will be continuing throughout the first quarter of 1969.

#### Financial arrangements

At first, UNRWA had only a special \$500,000 donation from Near East Emergency Donations (NEED) with which to finance construction - enough for about 2,500 shelters or some 12 - 13,000 people.

The NEED donation was allocated to the erection of the 2,000 asbestos shelters at Jerash emergency Camp (which were virtually completed by 31 December 1968) and 250 Conport units (500 family rooms), on which work has now begun at Marka Camp.

As UNRWA's need for shelter funds became known, other donors came forward with offers of financial assistance. The Federal German Government has given UNRWA DM 4 million (\$ 1 million), which is being used to build 5,000 family shelters at Baqa'a Camp. The Italian Government has also announced its intention to contribute 50 million Lire (\$80,000), which will build a further 400 shelters in Marka Camp.

The World Council of Churches/Near East Council of Churches, associated voluntary agencies that have done much for Muslim and Christian refugees alike over the years, have raised \$400,000 to finance their own programme for 1600 Conport family units at Souf Camp, which are now nearly completed.

The Standing Conference of British Organisations for Aid to Refugees has donated 700 shelters to be erected at Husn, the northernmost of the emergency camps in east Jordan. The shelters are already en route to the Middle East.

A total of some 10,200 family shelters is therefore guaranteed, offering solid shelter to some 55,000 people. Donations of new tents to the Jordan Government by the French and American Governments will help those unfortunates who will be spending a second winter under canvas.

But the tents and the new shelters in UNRWA camps, and the temporary accomodation which many other displaced persons have found in east Jordan since June 1967, are but a miserable substitute for the homes and established UNRWA camps which have been left behind on the West Bank. UNRWA continues to stress that it can best serve the refugees who fled if they are allowed to return to their former places of residence in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip areas now occupied by Israel.

# THE SWEDISH FISHING VILLAGE, GAZA STRIP



Some of the damage done by the storm which made the villagers homeless in November 1968.

Gaza town, who agreed to bring their boats down the coast and work in partnership with the villagers. New nets were made, and the fishermen are now almost back to their pre-hostilities situation.

The story of the villagers, and their independent way of life, is not that of most Palestine refugees, as they had a means of livelihood, their boats, in which they fled in 1948 during the initial Arab-Israeli conflict. The fifty families built huts and new boats themselves, preferring to live by the sea, and because they could earn their living they did not draw UNRWA rations or live in an UNRWA camp.



Despite the loss of boats and equipment, the villagers keep fishing — working now with fresh vigour alongside friends and relatives from Gaza town

After the hostilities of June 1967, the "Swedish fishing village" near Rafah in the Gaza Strip was a desolate-looking place.

The houses were empty, for the fishermen and their families had taken refuge elsewhere. Much of their valuable netting was lost, and six fishing boats were missing.

But the villagers, all Palestine refugees, have lived through trials and tribulations before, and their response to this new challenge was immediate.

The boat shortage was made good by relatives living in



Despite the loss of boats and equipment, the villagers keep fishing – working now with fresh vigour alongside friends and relatives from Gaza town



New buildings given by the Swedes to replace the mud-brick huts

Their next testing time came in November 1964, when the fiercest storm to hit the Levant in many years wrecked most of their boats and damaged or destroyed much of their village.

The plight of the villagers came to the attention of the Swedish Battalion of the United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF) - the United Nations peace-keeping force in the Gaza Strip for a decade until the 1967 hostilities. The officers and men, through fund-raising among themselves and in Sweden, acquired enough money and supplies of cement to enable the villagers to live in simple but solid houses, free from fears of winter gale damage to their homes.

The response of the villagers to the Swedish aid was to help where they could, providing labour, demolishing the old houses and generally assisting on the site.



New buildings given by the Swedes to replace the mud-brick huts

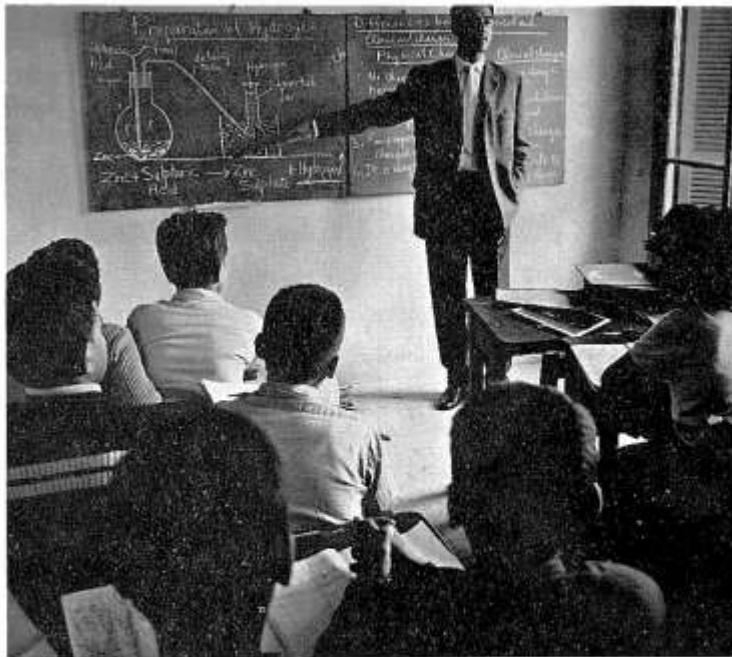
The Swedish aid, and their own contribution to the work, helped to give the villagers not only proper shelter, but also great pride in their new village.

The Swedish commemorative plaque in the village, damaged by gunfire in June 1967, still reads:

"Swedish Village, 1965. A donation from Swedes in the homeland  
and Swedish Battalions of UNEF 25 G and 27 G"

The refugees look after the plaque carefully, and remember the spirit in which they and the men from far-off Sweden joined together to rebuild the village. This spirit has sustained them through their more recent troubles.

Sound, practical science instruction can best be given in laboratories such as those planned with AUSTCARE funds. The scene shown above will become progressively less common in UNRWA/Unesco schools on the West Bank



## AUSTCARE GIVES SCIENCE LABORATORIES TO UNRWA: FURTHER AID PLANNED

AUSTCARE - Australians Care for Refugees - is a voluntary organization formed just over a year ago which has already donated over A\$100,000 to UNRWA. There is now the possibility of a further substantial donation following a nation-wide fund-raising campaign in May 1969.

AUSTCARE comprises a number of Australian national voluntary agencies concerned with refugees, including the YMCA and YWCA, the Lutheran World Federation, Australian Catholic Relief and the United Nations Association of Australia. The members of AUSTCARE are all organizations originally on the Australian Committee of the International Red Cross; they have united to conduct co-ordinated - and thus more effective - appeals on behalf of refugees all over the world.

The donation to UNRWA of A\$100,000 (US\$111,500) in 1968 is a mark of the success that has already been achieved. This money is being used to finance the construction of 21 much-needed science laboratories for Palestine refugee school-children on the West Bank of the Jordan. While such services are normal in the western world, they are still lacking in many UNRWA/Unesco schools.

Each laboratory will consist of one room approximately six metres by fourteen, with ten workbenches (two students to a bench) and one demonstration bench for the teacher. There will be built-in cupboards and sinks, and individual gas jets for bunsen burners.

The provision of suitably designed and well-equipped laboratories transforms the study of science subjects from a largely abstract process to one in which pupils conduct science experiments themselves and handle equipment and specimens, thus acquiring a better understanding of the science subjects they are taught.

The fitter-machinist workshop at  
UNRWA's Kalandia Vocational Training  
Centre, on the West Bank of the Jordan:  
Kalandia is one of the two projects  
submitted for funding by Austcare



#### Further Campaign in 1969

Two projects have been submitted by UNRWA to the Australian United Nations Association for possible consideration by AUSTCARE for its 1969 fund-raising campaign. With a view to reducing its prospective financial deficit as much as possible, UNRWA has proposed:

- (a) The "adoption" of a refugee camp: Deir-el-Balah, in the Gaza Strip; and
- (b) A contribution towards the operating costs of the Kalandia Vocational Training Centre, near Jerusalem.

These projects already form part of UNRWA's essential services, which are threatened by the deteriorating financial situation.

The adoption of Deir-el-Balah would involve contributing the annual operating costs of the camp's health centre (\$16,500), a supplementary feeding programme for infants and other vulnerable persons such as nursing mothers (\$40,500), and the camp's three elementary and two preparatory schools (\$100,000) which have an enrolment of 2,500. This makes a total of \$157,000 to provide all these services for the 7,000 inhabitants of UNRWA's smallest camp in the Strip for one year - an average of \$22 (A\$20) per person.

Contributing to the costs of UNRWA's Kalandia Training Centre for men will help to sustain UNRWA's efforts in training young refugees to take up useful and skilled trades in a labour market that increasingly demands some form of technical qualification. Opened in 1954, Kalandia is UNRWA's oldest vocational training centre, but its buildings and trainee-capacity have since been expanded. Some 370 trainees now board at the centre and learn such trades as fitter/machinist, electrician, builder/shutterer and blacksmith/welder, on two-year courses. Operating costs of this centre for 1969 will come to \$240,000.

The fitter-machinist workshop at  
UNRWA's Kalandia Vocational Training  
Centre, on the West Bank of the Jordan:  
Kalandia is one of the two projects  
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# GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTIONS ON REFUGEES

TEXT OF RESOLUTIONS 2452 A, B, C (XXIII) ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE UNITED NATIONS ON 19 DECEMBER 1968

"REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONER-GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND WORKS AGENCY FOR PALESTINE REFUGEES IN THE NEAR EAST"

- A -

The General Assembly,

Recalling Security Council resolution 237 (1967) of 14 June 1967,

Reaffirming its resolution 2252 (ES-V) of 4 July 1967,

Taking note of the appeal made by the Secretary-General of the United Nations in the Special Political Committee on 11 November 1968 1/,

Convinced that the plight of the displaced persons could best be relieved by their speedy return to their homes and to the camps which they formerly occupied

Emphasizing, consequently, the requirement for their speedy return,

1. Calls upon the Government of Israel to take effective and immediate steps for the return without delay of those inhabitants who fled the areas since the outbreak of hostilities;

2. Requests the Secretary-General to follow the effective implementation of the present resolution and to report thereon to the General Assembly.

- B -

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 194(III) of 11 December 1948, 302(IV) of 8 December 1949, 393(V) and 394(V) of 2 and 14 December 1950, 512(VI) and 513(VI) of 26 January 1952, 614(VII) of 6 November 1952, 720(VIII) of 27 November 1953, 818(IX) of 4 December 1954, 916(X) of 3 December 1955, 1018(XI) of 28 February 1957, 1191(XII) of 12 December 1957, 1315(XIII) of 12 December 1958, 1456(XIV) of 9 December 1959, 1604(XV) of 21 April 1961, 1725(XVI) of 20 December 1961, 1856(XVII) of 20 December 1962, 1912(XVIII) of 3 December 1963, 2002(XIX) of 10 February 1965, 2052(XX) of 15 December 1965, 2154(XXI) of 17 November 1966, and 2341(XXII) of 19 December 1967.

Noting the annual report of the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, covering the period from 1 July 1967 to 30 June 1968, 2/

1. Notes with deep regret that repatriation or compensation of the refugees as provided for in paragraph 11 of General Assembly resolution 194(III) has not been effected, that no substantial progress has been made in the programme endorsed in paragraph 2 of resolution 513(VI) for the reintegration of refugees either by repatriation or resettlement and that, therefore, the situation of the refugees continues to be a matter of serious concern;

2. Expresses its thanks to the Commissioner-General and the staff of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East for their continued faithful efforts to provide essential services for the Palestine refugees, and to the specialized agencies and private organizations for their valuable work in assisting the refugees;

1/ See A/SPC/SR.612.

2/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Twenty-third Session, Supplement No. 13 (7213).

3. Directs the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East to continue his efforts in taking such measures, including rectification of the relief rolls, as to assure, in cooperation with the Government concerned, the most equitable distribution of relief based on need;
4. Notes with regret that the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine was unable to find a means to achieve progress in the implementation of paragraph 11 of General Assembly resolution 194 (III), and requests the Commission to exert continued efforts towards the implementation thereof;
5. Directs attention to the continuing critical financial position of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, as outlined in the Commissioner-General's report;
6. Notes with concern that, despite the commendable and successful efforts of the Commissioner-General to collect additional contributions to help relieve the serious budget deficit of the past year, contributions to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East continue to fall short of the funds needed to cover essential budget requirements;
7. Calls upon all Governments as a matter of urgency to make the most generous efforts possible to meet the anticipated needs of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, particularly in the light of the budgetary deficit projected in the Commissioner-General's report, and therefore urges non-contributing Governments to contribute and contributing Governments to consider increasing their contributions;
8. Decides to extend until 30 June 1972, without prejudice to the provisions of paragraph 11 of resolution 194 (III), the mandate of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East.

- C -

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 2252(ES-V) of 4 July 1967 and 2341 B(XXII) of 19 December 1967,

Taking note of the report of the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, covering the period from 1 July 1967 to 30 June 1968,<sup>3/</sup>

Taking note also of the appeal made by the Secretary-General of the United Nations in the Special Political Committee on 11 November 1968,<sup>4/</sup>

Concerned about the continued human suffering as a result of the June 1967 hostilities in the Middle East,

1. Reaffirms its resolutions 2252(ES-V) and 2341 B(XXII);
2. Endorses, bearing in mind the objectives of these resolutions, the efforts of the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East to continue to provide humanitarian assistance, as far as practicable, on an emergency basis and as a temporary measure, to other persons in the area who are at present displaced and are in serious need of continued assistance as a result of the June 1967 hostilities;
3. Strongly appeals to all Governments and to organizations and individuals to contribute generously for the above purposes to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and to the other inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations concerned.

1749th plenary meeting  
19 December 1968

Draft resolution A was adopted by 101 votes to 1, with 6 abstentions  
Draft resolution B was adopted by 105 votes to none, with 3 abstentions  
Draft resolution C was adopted by 106 votes to none.

3/ Ibid. 4/ See A/SPC/SR.612.

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