

Jordan crisis

PALESTINE REFUGEES TODAY



UNRWA Newsletter No. 64
September October 1970



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

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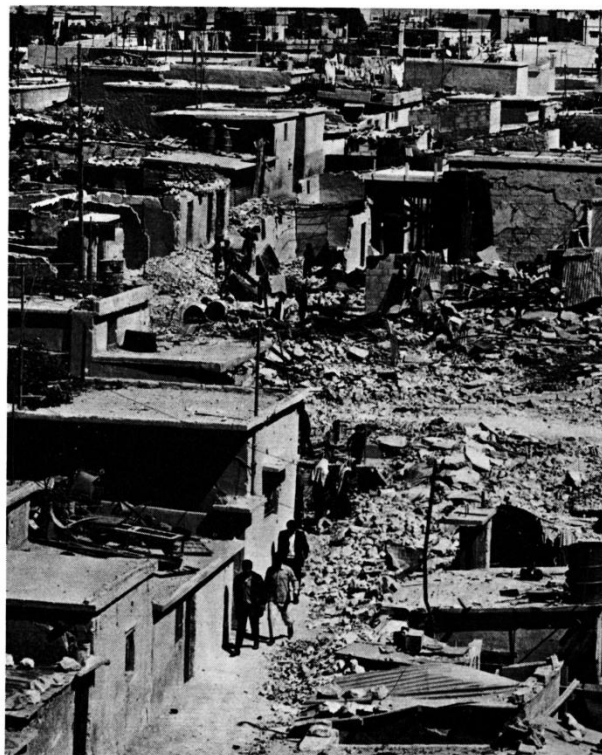
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FURTHER INFORMATION MAY BE OBTAINED FROM:

UNRWA Public Information Office
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Beirut, Lebanon

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COVER PICTURE AND ABOVE

*Refugees in Wahdat after the fighting
ended*

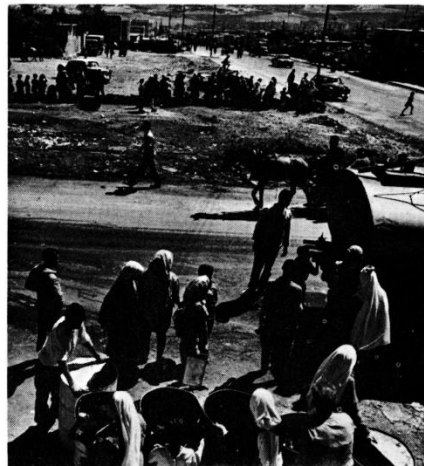
Commissioner-General Reports: 30 September¹

Every effort is now being made, and with the greatest urgency, to restore UNRWA services to the Palestine refugees in Jordan. Along with all other civilian functions in Amman, and in most other populated areas in the country, UNRWA's activities were brought to a virtual standstill by the fighting which erupted on 17 September.

Communications Still Difficult

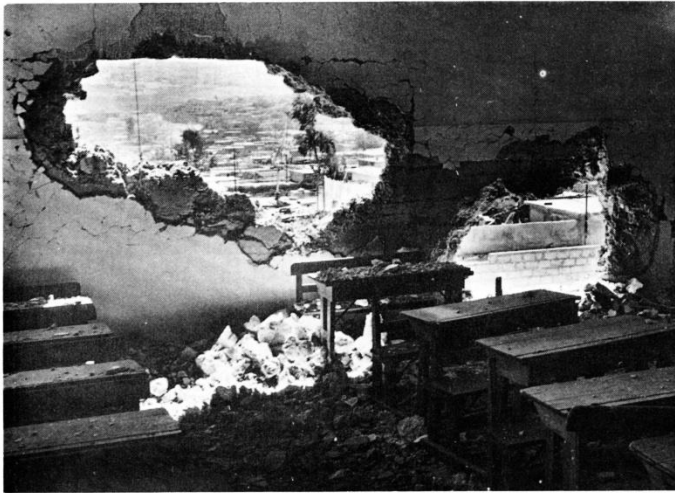
UNRWA officials and staff in Jordan were completely unable to communicate with each other or indeed with anyone else for 10 days. Telephone services had ceased and movement on the streets had been prevented by fighting and later by curfews. On 27 September the Commissioner-General, the Director of UNRWA Health Services, the Acting Director of UNRWA Affairs in Jordan and the UNRWA Chief of Supply and Transport for Jordan were able to meet with the Prime Minister and the Minister of Health who is also Minister for Reconstruction and Development and to start arranging the re-activation of UNRWA's services. Key Palestinian staff, reached by calls over the national radio, walked to a meeting at which actions were initiated to get operations started again.

In the following days, staff were able to reach some camps and UNRWA installations, and to appraise the effects of the fighting and the measures required to restore services. Communication is still difficult, public services such as electrical power are not operating, and some areas can still not be reached.



Bread and water, the two immediate necessities as the fighting stops and emergency relief begins.





The schools

Shelters, Schools and Other Buildings Badly Damaged

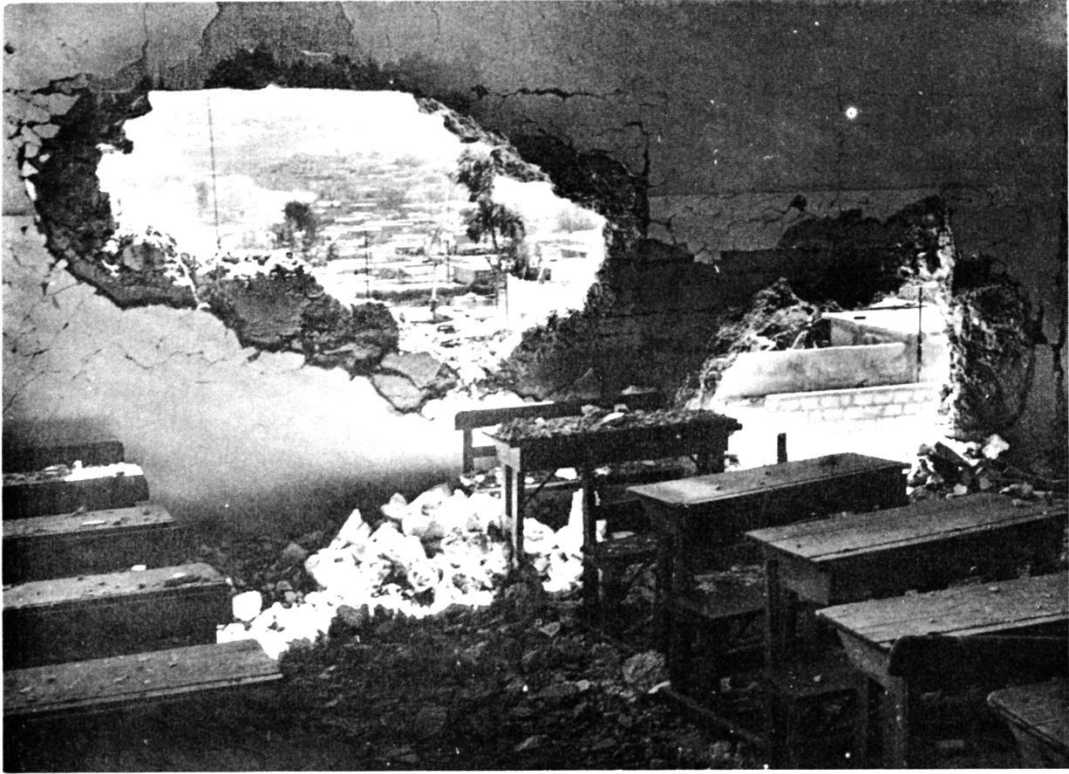
Damage in Amman and other areas was widespread and severe in some districts. The Palestine refugees were especially affected, and the two large "camps" in Amman, where some 70,000 refugees lived, suffered heavily. In Jebel Hussein camp, damage was described as serious, but not to the extent of complete devastation; dead and wounded had been removed; much shelter was damaged; schools and other central buildings were badly damaged; the food distribution centre was intact but disinfection was necessary; water was again being supplied.



The situation in Amman New camp was found to be far worse. Damage was very severe, and the outskirts of the camp were almost destroyed; 25 percent of the buildings were estimated to be beyond repair, another 25 percent extensively damaged and the remainder damaged in varying degrees. Equipment and supplies were gone. The normal water supply had not been restored and water was being brought by UNRWA tankers. Information so far available on other camps and installations outside Amman indicates less severe damage. No reports on damage are yet available from Irbid and some other locations.



Upper floors of the UNRWA field office were damaged, but the extent has not yet been assessed. The main UNRWA warehouse and contents are largely intact, but some UNRWA vehicles and equipment and supplies have been lost. No deaths of UNRWA staff have been reported as yet, but only a small fraction of the staff has been reached so far.



The homes

Efforts Concentrated on Resumption of Services

Efforts are now being concentrated on the resumption of health and sanitation services, where these had been suspended, and distribution of food rations. The lack of telephones and the continuation of curfews make communication extremely difficult, but all staff members are doing their best to overcome the difficulties.

UNRWA has been doing all it can to cooperate with the ICRC and others in bringing emergency assistance from sources outside Jordan, and to help these groups to coordinate their activities with each other. Meetings in Beirut of representatives of interested agencies were called by UNRWA on 25 and 28 September and other meetings and coordinating services will be arranged.

Time will be Required to Assess Needs Precisely

UNRWA has most of the food and medical supplies immediately required, although these will need to be replaced later. It will also be necessary to replace the trucks and other vehicles damaged or lost, and to repair the buildings and replace the equipment lost or destroyed. Some time will be required to assess these needs precisely, but it seems likely that the repair of schools, health centres, other installations and offices, and the replacement of lost and damaged automotive and other equipment and supplies may well run into several hundred thousands of dollars - perhaps as much as a million dollars.

An even more pressing need is sure to be shelter for those whose homes were destroyed. There will be an immediate need for thousands of tents.





The people

For the purchase of tents and the replacement of shelter in the camps in Amman - not including other camps or other housing needs - the cost might be on the order of \$2 million.

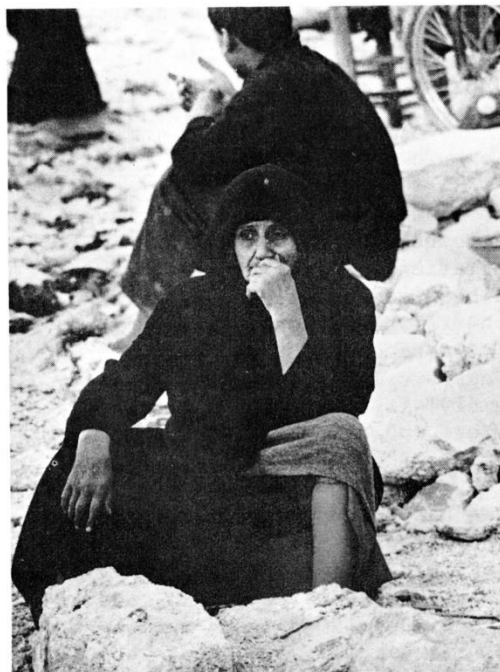
The Commissioner-General urgently appeals to governments, organizations and individuals for funds to enable UNRWA to restore its services and to meet the emergency needs of the Palestine refugees in Jordan east of the Jordan river. The situation in Jordan emphasizes the importance of maintaining UNRWA's programmes, which, as the Secretary-General has recently warned governments, are threatened with collapse in 1971 unless an additional \$6 million in annual income can be found.

If Refugees Could Return ...

The Commissioner-General believes it pertinent to call attention to the fact that in the Jericho area there are thousands of empty shelters, together with schools, health centres, food distribution centres and other installations which are unused. If Palestine refugees who moved to the East Bank in 1967 could return to their homes, as called for by the General Assembly and Security Council in numerous resolutions, the situation on the East Bank would be greatly eased, and the humanitarian distress dramatically reduced.

30 September 1970

- 1) United Nations General Assembly, Official Records, Twenty-fifth session (A/8084).



NOTE BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

The Secretary-General has received from the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) a special report on UNRWA's operations in Jordan dated 30 September 1970 (The Annual Report of the Commissioner-General of UNRWA for the period 1 July 1969 to 30 June 1970 (Official Records of the General Assembly, twenty-fifth session, Supplement No.13 (A/8013)) is now in print and will be circulated shortly.)

As indicated in the special report, UNRWA urgently requires additional funds to enable it to restore its services and to meet the emergency needs of the Palestine refugees in Jordan. In particular the Commissioner-General has mentioned that there is an immediate need for thousands of tents and that, for the purchase of tents and the replacement of shelter in the camps in Amman alone, the cost might be on the order of \$2 million.

The Secretary-General fully endorses the appeal of the Commissioner-General. It will be recalled that on 24 September 1970, the President of the General Assembly and the Secretary-General made a joint appeal (A/8077) in which they expressed their profound distress at the bloodshed and suffering resulting from the recent fighting in Jordan and urged all Members of the United Nations and of the specialized agencies, non-governmental organizations as well as private individuals, to provide the needed humanitarian aid. The Secretary-General certainly hopes that Governments as well as non-governmental organizations and private individuals will make a special effort to respond to these appeals in order that the Palestine refugees and victims of the recent fighting in Jordan may receive the humanitarian assistance they so desperately need in the present tragic circumstances.

2 October 1970

Commissioner-General Reports:

The Commissioner-General reports with regret that eleven local staff members of UNRWA were killed in the fighting which took place in Jordan east of the Jordan River in the last half of September. The total number of deaths among the refugees registered with UNRWA is not known, but it is now believed to be lower than estimates reported in the press at the time of the hostilities. The lower casualty rate was due in part to the fact that many refugee families left the congested camp areas in Amman before or in the early stages of the fighting.

Emergency arrangements for medical care for the wounded, and the provision of foodstuffs and water to those in urgent need which had begun in September were continued in October while normal facilities were being restored. The International Committee of the Red Cross had a leading role in these arrangements and many governments and non-governmental organizations participated generously. UNICEF was an early and effective contributor. UNRWA gave supply and transport assistance to these efforts, and UNRWA and its staff (working also as individual volunteers) helped organize food convoys from the West Bank. UNRWA sent ambulances, water tankers, trucks and other vehicles into east Jordan from other areas.

Services Restored Rapidly

The restoration of regular UNRWA services in Jordan, east of the Jordan River, which had begun at the time of the Commissioner-General's earlier report of 30 September 1970, made rapid progress in the early days of October. Health and sanitation services were already functioning, water was being distributed to the most needy areas, and regular food distribution was resumed from 1 October onwards. Over 5,000 tons of foodstuffs were distributed during October; full distribution was made to all authorized recipients for that month, as well as for a large part of the backlog for the last half of September. By 13 October, all UNRWA relief and health services, including supplementary feeding and milk distribution, were operating fully.

Schools to Open in Tents

UNRWA/Unesco schools will be re-opened at the same time as Government schools, hopefully by mid-November. School buildings, especially in the Amman area, were badly damaged. Until repairs can be carried out, many classrooms will be unusable. Some 30,000 school children will be affected. The only way in which classes can be arranged for many of them will be in large (marquee) tents. An appeal for such tents has been launched, and there are hopes that at least a good part of the number required will be forthcoming.

The cost of repairing UNRWA schools, training centres, clinics and other installations (but excluding shelter) will be about \$200,000, and the cost of replacing furniture, equipment, supplies and vehicles will require a further \$200,000. If it should be necessary to purchase large marquee tents for classrooms, this could amount to as much as \$300,000 more. As mentioned above, it is hoped that this need will be met, at least to a large extent, by contributions of tents. Other costs may have to be met, possibly including compensation for the injury or death of any staff member which is found to be attributable to UNRWA service.

1

6 November

The Commissioner-General's report estimated that the cost of repairing and re-constructing refugee shelter and of providing family tents in the meantime "might be in the order of two million dollars". Since then, the refugees themselves have been very active in clearing away the debris and repairing their damaged shelters. They are being assisted by a self-help project operated by one of the non-governmental organizations. Some family-sized tents have been donated by other organizations and further contributions are expected.

UNRWA Unable to Commit Funds for Rebuilding

It is hoped that the efforts of the refugees themselves and the assistance being provided by other organizations will go far to meet the shelter need. UNRWA has not so far committed any funds for this purpose, and would be unable to do so from its existing resources.

Even though some of the requirements foreseen in the Commissioner-General's previous report are now being met in other ways - by the refugees themselves or by other organizations - the financial impact of the events in Jordan on UNRWA will still be very considerable, and additional contributions for this purpose are required.

The Agency is already facing a deficit of \$5 million during 1970, and faces an estimated shortfall of some \$6.5 million in 1971. Therefore, unless adequate additional funds are made available now, UNRWA will be unable to maintain during 1971 its programme at the present level. As the Secretary-General has warned Member States (A/8040) reductions in UNRWA's programme would inevitably, in the disturbed conditions of the area, have a profoundly unsettling effect.

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United Nations General Assembly, Official Records
Twenty-fifth session (A/8084 add. 1)

UNRWA in East Jordan_ 1970

The Palestine refugees are Arabs who fled from the part of Palestine which became Israel in 1948. Some went to Syria and Lebanon, others crowded into the Gaza Strip. But most went to the new Kingdom of Jordan - some remaining in the "West Bank" (formerly Palestine) and others crossing the River Jordan to the "East Bank" (TransJordan).

In 1967, as a result of the renewed Arab-Israeli hostilities, the Jordan River was the scene of another massive exodus. Arabs fleeing the Israeli-occupied West Bank and the Gaza Strip went to Jordan east of the River Jordan. Some were UNRWA-registered refugees from 1948 who now fled for the second time in their lives.

Others, non-refugee residents of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, also fled - for the first time. These "other displaced persons" receive some special assistance from UNRWA on the basis of a special, annually extended authorization by the General Assembly,* but the burden of caring for them has largely fallen on the Jordan Government.

For the purpose of UNRWA operations, the Jordan "field" had to be split into two as a result of the Israeli occupation of the West Bank. The Director "of UNRWA Affairs" in Jordan has his office in Amman. In the occupied West Bank (as in the Gaza Strip) there is a Director "of UNRWA Operations" who treats day-to-day matters with the Israeli military authorities .

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NUMBER OF REFUGEES: The estimated population of east Jordan is 1.3 million which includes:

304,333 registered refugees who were located in east Jordan before 1967
180,871 registered refugees who have come from the West Bank since June 1967
31,932 registered refugees who have come from the Gaza Strip since June 1967

517,136 REGISTERED REFUGEES. EAST JORDAN CONTAINS MORE THAN 35% OF THE
1.4 MILLION UNRWA-REGISTERED REFUGEES IN THE MIDDLE EAST.

250,000 other displaced persons. This figure is a Government estimate. For rations and supplementary feeding this category of persons, who are registered with the Government, the Jordan Government largely reimburses UNRWA, paying in commodities and cash (to a total of approximately \$3.5 million in 1969). Some 40,000 DPs live in the emergency camps, where UNRWA provides shelter, environmental sanitation and health services for them. DP children can attend UNRWA/Unesco schools wherever it is convenient; the cost is offset against the education costs of an equivalent number of refugee children who are admitted free of charge to government schools in localities where there are no UNRWA/Unesco schools.

BUDGET: Of UNRWA's total budget in 1969 of \$46.2 million, nearly one third - over \$15 million - was spent on operations in east Jordan.

SHELTER: 102,199 registered refugees live in four areas in Amman, Zerka, Irbid, which were recognized by UNRWA as "camps" after 1948. The original camps have become, in effect quarters of the towns, although UNRWA continues to provide certain services there.

*

most recently, resolution 2535 C (XXIV)

103,678 displaced persons (registered refugees and other) live in six emergency camps, where UNRWA has provided 14,184 temporary family shelters to replace the tents erected in 1967.

FOOD RATIONS: in a typical month in 1970, registered refugees received 346,427 basic food rations (consisting of 10 kilos of flour and some sugar, pulses, rice and edible oil), including nearly 40,000 rations paid for by the Jordan Government and distributed to infants eligible for UNRWA rations but excluded by the ceiling UNRWA was obliged to impose on the total number of rations issued.

In addition, in a typical month UNRWA distributed 217,418 food rations to displaced persons, on behalf of the Jordan Government.

COUNTING THE RATIONS IT HANDLES ON BEHALF OF THE GOVERNMENT, UNRWA DISTRIBUTES MONTHLY FOOD RATIONS IN EAST JORDAN TO MORE THAN 560,000 PEOPLE - OVER 40% OF THE POPULATION.

Efficient and economical distribution of a half-million rations (involving 5600 tons of flour alone) a month - more than the combined total of all other fields of UNRWA Operations - is a major supply operation, which involves a complex machinery of procurement, transport, warehousing and distribution and a system of safeguards against abuse.

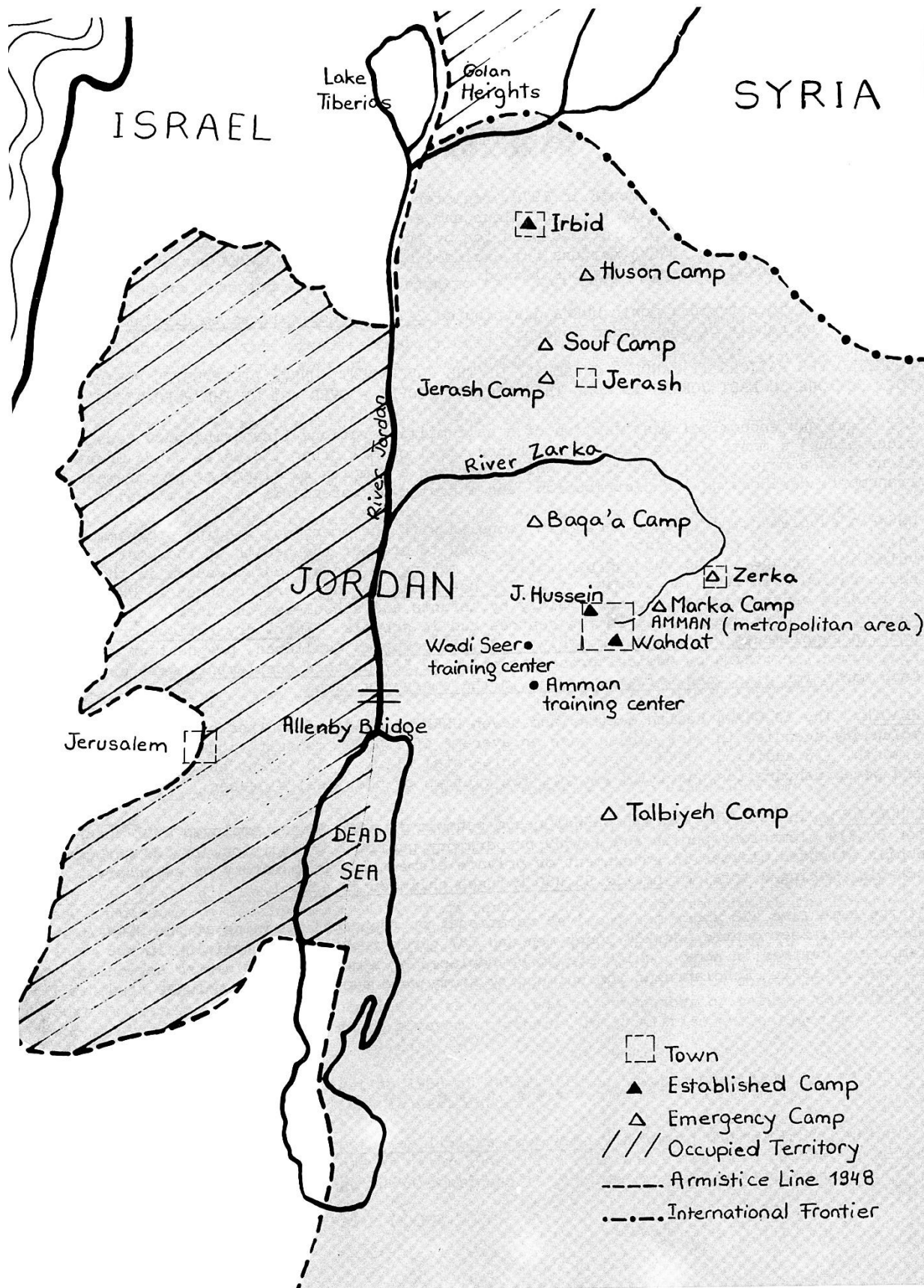
UNRWA's supplementary feeding programme, coupled with the emergency feeding programme which has been in effect since 1967, is designed to protect the health of the most vulnerable groups in the refugee population by making up dietary deficiencies in the basic ration. In 1969, an average of 23,728 hot meals per day were consumed in UNRWA's 15 feeding centres in east Jordan, mainly by infants and school-age children. 33,932 cups of milk were drunk daily in the centres and in schools. Extra dry rations or protein supplements were issued monthly to 38,669 refugees (children, pregnant or nursing women, or others on medical prescription), 32,587 protein supplements were provided each month for displaced refugees living in the emergency camps.

HEALTH: The 10 UNRWA health centres and seven UNRWA-subsidized centres operated by voluntary agencies in east Jordan gave an average of 120,000 consultations and treatments a month. In addition, UNRWA operated 10 ante-natal clinics, 10 infant health clinics and seven rehydration/nutrition centres for victims of diarrheal diseases.

EDUCATION: In 1969-70, the 136 UNRWA/Unesco schools in east Jordan employed 1991 teachers for 60,314 elementary pupils and 13,839 preparatory pupils. In addition, 18,527 refugee pupils attended classes in government or private elementary, preparatory or secondary schools, making a total of nearly 93,000 refugee children in school.

At the same time 423 young men received vocational or technical training at the UNRWA/Unesco Wadi Seer centre and 234 young men and 137 girls took teacher training in two temporary centres in Amman, which are to be replaced by a new combined centre scheduled to open in 1971. Scholarships for university study were awarded to 316 refugee students by UNRWA.

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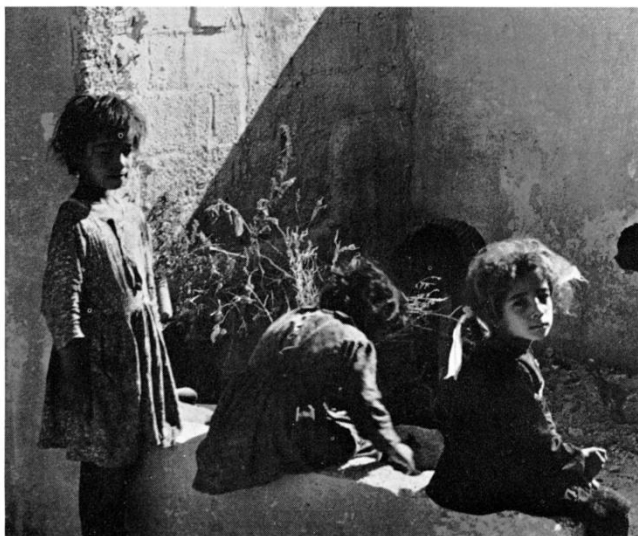
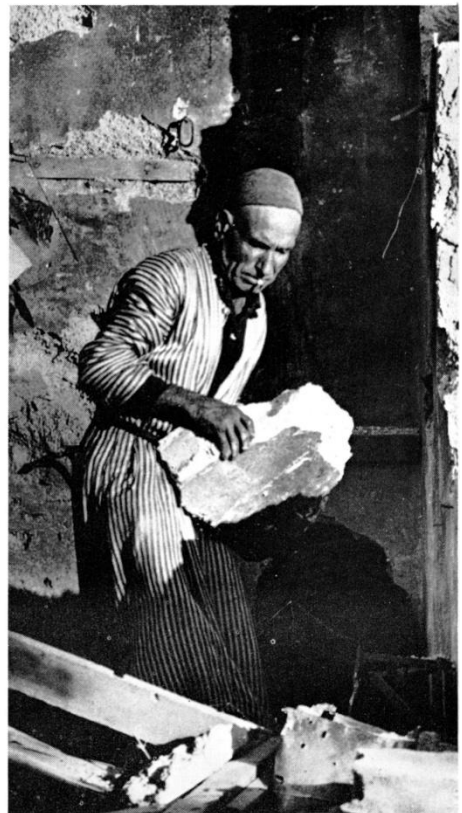
Conflict in Jordan Highlights Importance of UNRWA

The conflict which convulsed the eastern part of Jordan for 10 days in late September was a traumatic ordeal for the people there, particularly for thousands of Palestine refugee families. Their predicament throws into harsh relief the importance of UNRWA's programme in Jordan.

Invariably in a crisis of this sort, it is the poorest people - lacking reserves to tide them over - who suffer most severely, and in east Jordan the great majority of the most needy people are Palestinians - 500,000 refugees registered with UNRWA and an estimated 250,000 other people displaced from the West Bank and Gaza as a result of the Arab/Israeli hostilities in June 1967. Of these 750,000 refugees and DPs, two-thirds live in the Amman area, where normal life was brought to a standstill for many days by the fighting, particularly in and around the heavy concentrations of refugees in Jebel Hussein and Wahdat quarters. Fortunately, casualties were less than had at first been feared. However, the sufferings of the civilian population during the battle and the problems of recovery they face now, were and are immense.

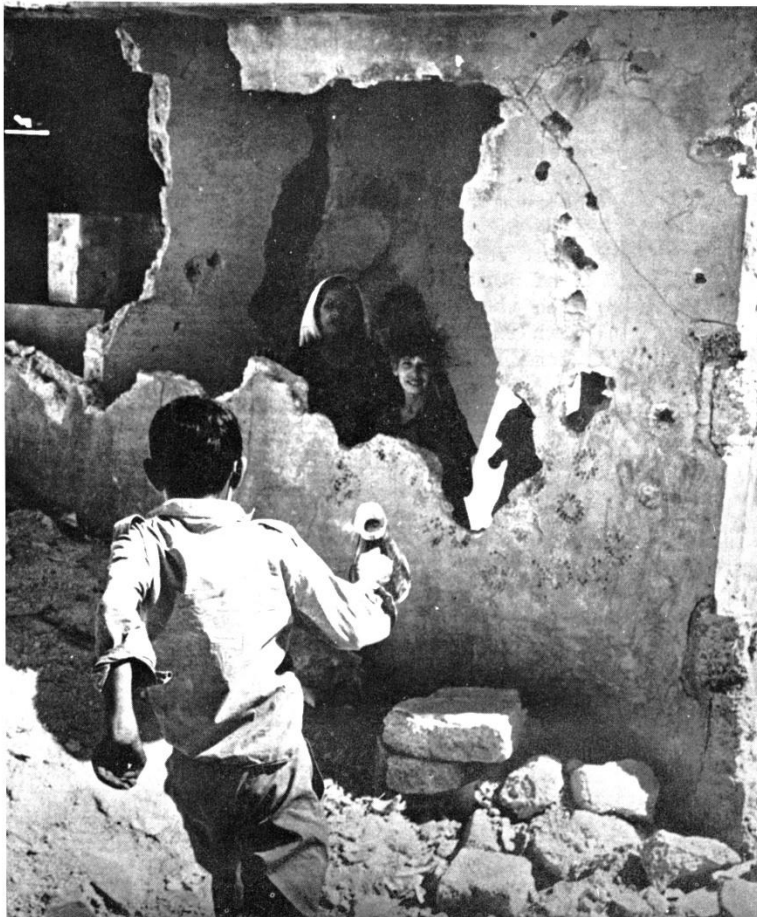
All over Amman, during the 10 days' continuous fighting, civilians were pinned down in homes, mosques or other public buildings. When the shooting stopped, they emerged to find themselves in a city without communications or transport and with little food. Many dwellings, particularly those of refugees, had been destroyed, damaged or looted. Members of families separated when casualties were evacuated had no immediate way of finding one another. When it could be had, food was selling at three times normal prices. Above all, there was no water for washing, for sanitation, for cooking - even for drinking, to restore body fluids lost through dehydration from diarrhea (rife after 10 days in overcrowded, unhygienic emergency conditions). Although outside Amman and the surrounding area there had been few non-combatant casualties and only slight damage, normal life was paralysed throughout the country. Hunger and exposure threatened to take a heavier toll than the fighting.

Suffering and civilian casualties were severest in the capital, Amman, where the hardest hit area was Wahdat, also known as New Amman Camp. "Wahdat" is the Arabic word for "the units", referring to the rows of 10-foot square box-like cement houses which UNRWA built in the nineteen-fifties to rehouse refugee families from a slum area in Amman. Families of five persons received one unit, larger families got two; as their means allowed, the occupants added rooms. Built outside the then city limits, Wahdat was gradually engulfed by Amman and, although UNRWA continues to provide certain services, the original "camp" has become, in effect, a congested urban neighbourhood. Running water and electricity have been installed by the municipality; the souk is a bustling market place; taxi, bus and car traffic run noisily past on hard-surfaced roads. As more refugees and DPs crowded in, attracted by the proximity to Amman and work opportunities, concrete-block or mudbrick rooms were added to the original "units" to the limits of physical tolerance. The population, planned first for 5,000 and later expanded to 12,000 refugees, has swollen to over 40,000 people, virtually doubling after 1967. Wahdat adjoins the quarter of Ashrafieh, also heavily Palestinian, and the two together form the heartland of the poorer Palestinian community in Amman. The human density there made observers fear the worst when fighting raged over Wahdat, especially as, unlike the



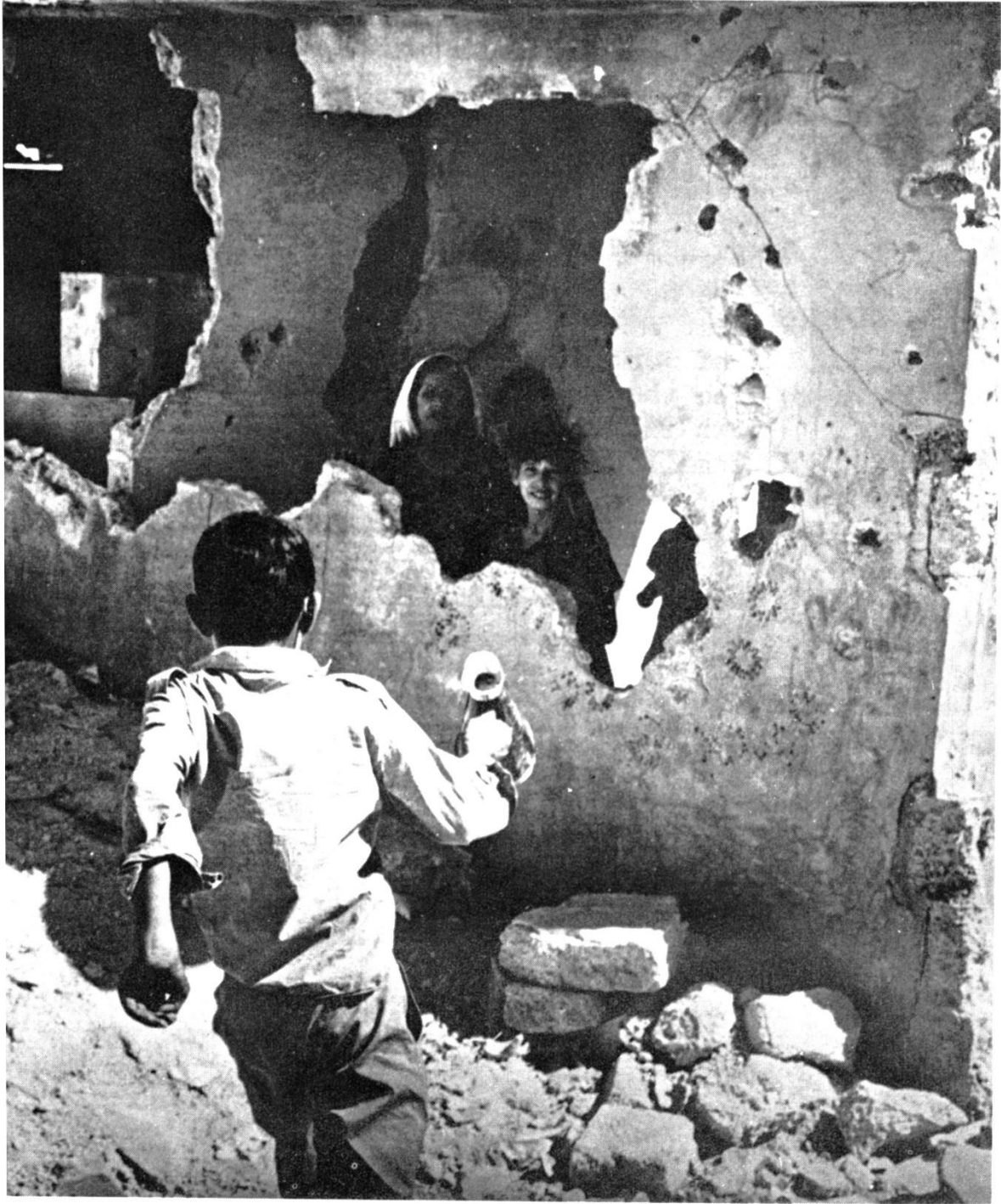






The hardest hit area was Wahdat, also known as New Amman Camp... As the survivors emerged after the ceasefire, and those who had left started streaming back, formidable problems of water, food and hygiene arose, which UNRWA was able to help solve.



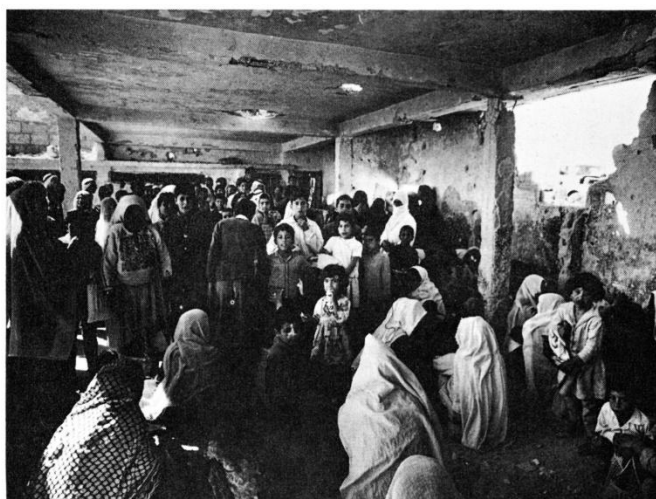




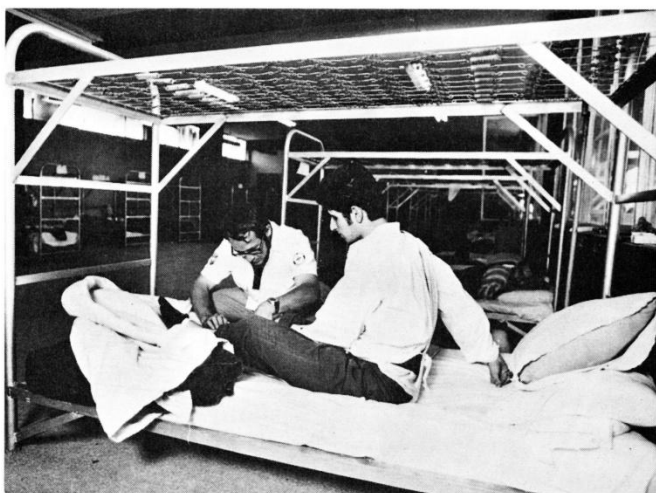


more prosperous sections of the city built in yellow limestone quarried from Amman's hills, the refugee dwellings offered little protection against shellfire or even bullets.

It was later learned that most of the inhabitants of Wahdat left when heavy firing started, perhaps leaving one member of the family behind to guard their property. Other families hid safely in caves, underground shelters or the solidly-built UNRWA installations (schools, clinics, feeding centres). As a result, casualties were less than early reports had indicated. As the survivors emerged after the ceasefire, and those who had left started streaming back, formidable problems of water, food and hygiene arose, which UNRWA was able to help solve.

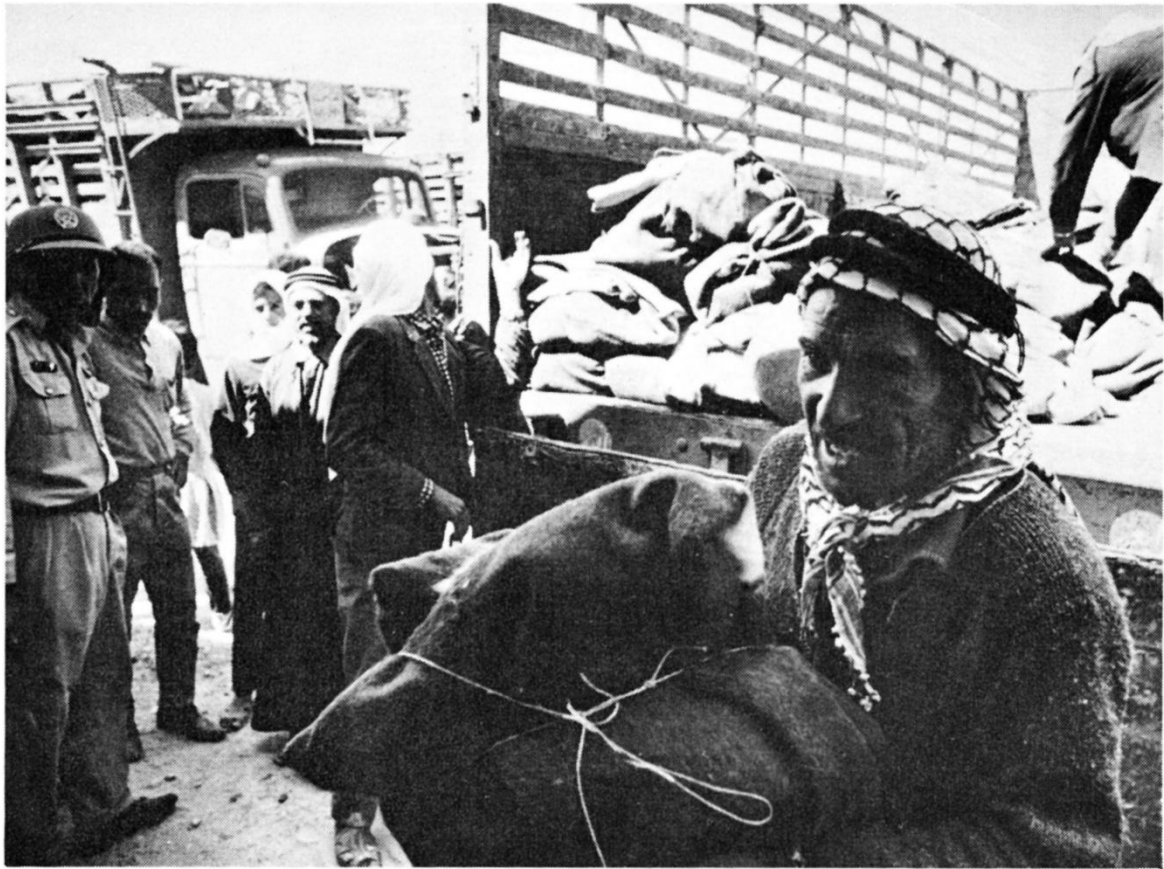


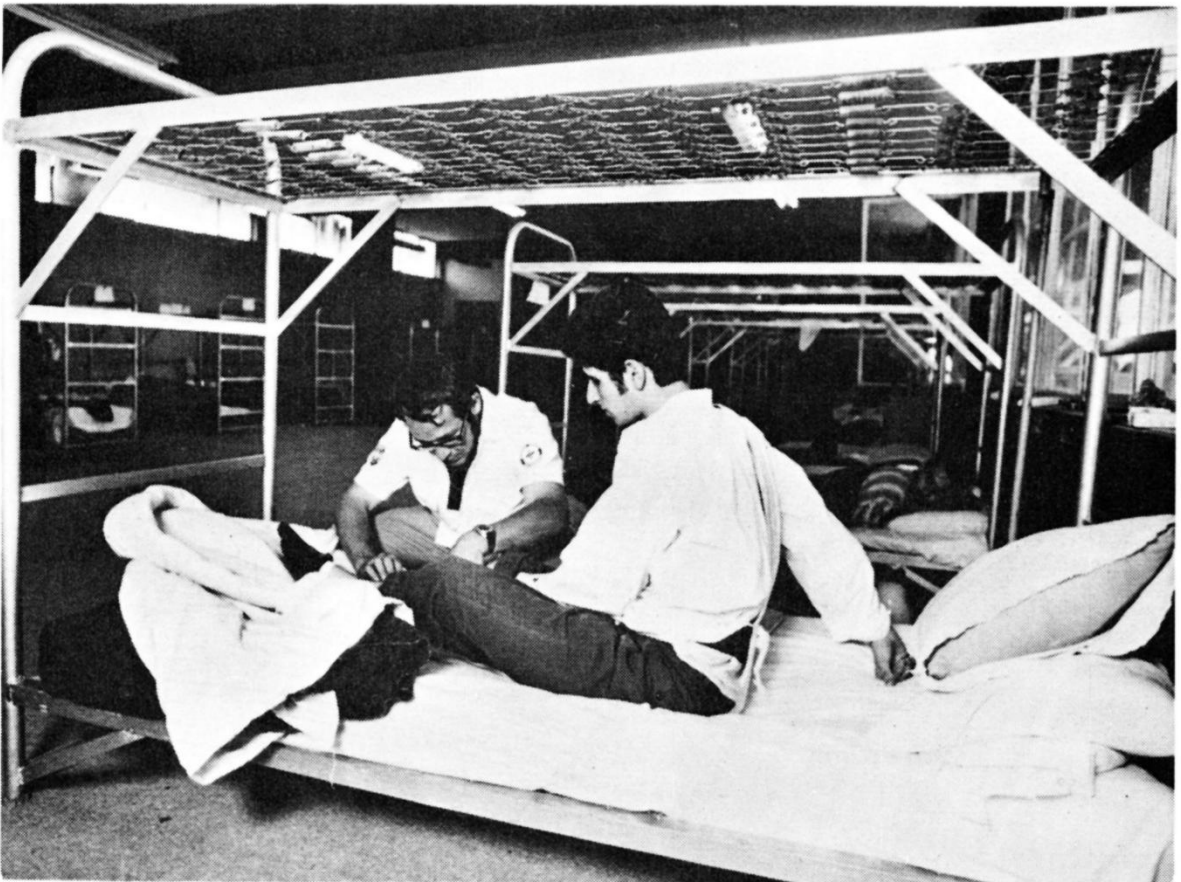
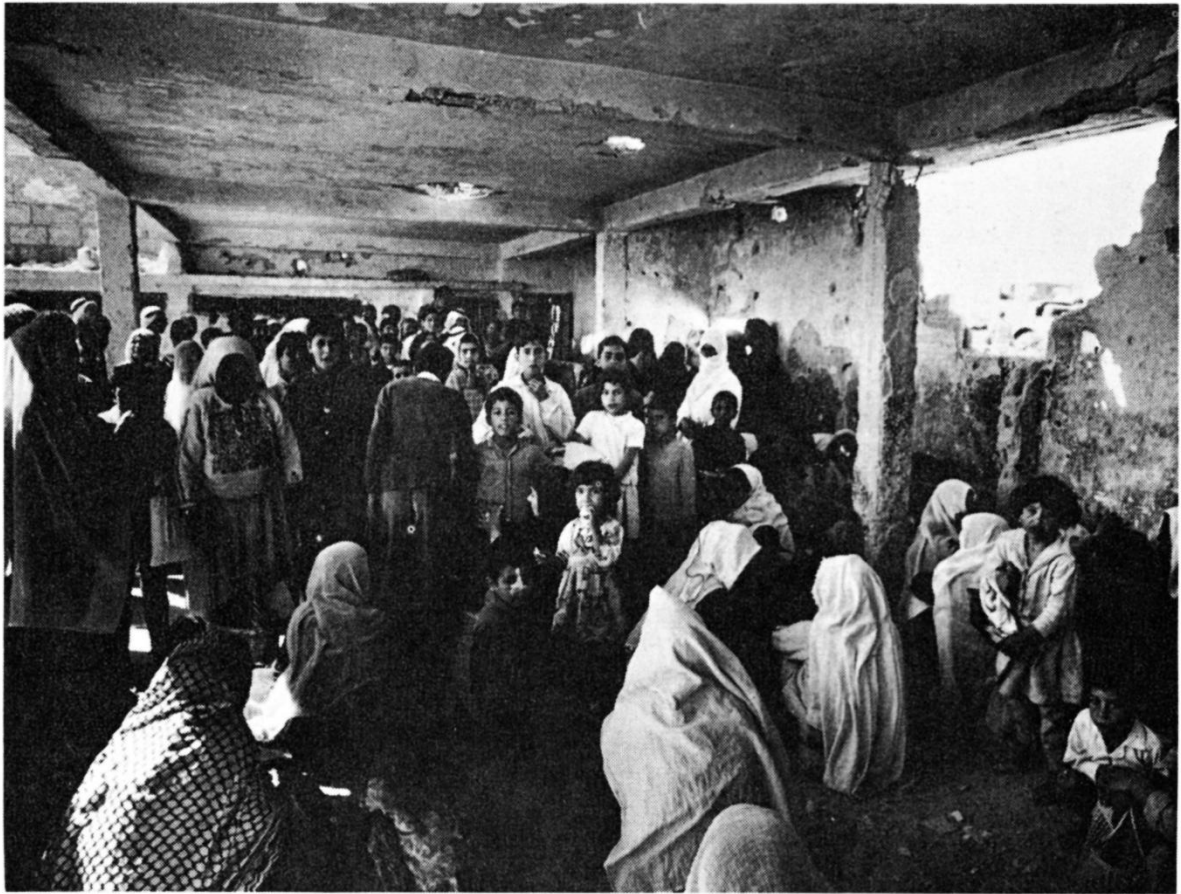
Like all other civilian enterprises, UNRWA was virtually paralysed from the outbreak of fighting on 17 September. Staff were unable to move about, telephones were cut, refugee areas in Amman, Zerka and Irbid were under fire. UNRWA operations picked up from 27 September, when the ceasefire became widely effective and the first UNRWA convoy bringing food into east Jordan crossed the Jordan River from the Israeli-occupied West Bank, with the assistance of the International Committee of the Red Cross.



UNRWA field staff, most of them Palestinians, had been exposed to the same hardships and dangers as the rest of the population: 11 were killed, and many were in a state of shock. But they responded promptly to the crisis. As soon as it became safe to move about in Wahdat, sanitation workers, with other health staff assisting, moved in to begin a massive clean-up. Bodies had been left in the rubble or buried in shallow graves in the rocky soil.

Emergency relief - blankets for the homeless, food distribution in a damaged distribution centre and the Wadi Seer Vocational Training Centre transformed into a recuperation centre for the wounded.





Refuse had accumulated everywhere, but attempts to burn it had to be stopped because of the danger of unexploded shells. The 70-man sanitation team carefully raked together heaps of refuse which were then sprayed with chlorine and DDT and kept until an Army team arrived to remove any remaining explosives.

FAST RETURN OF VITAL UNRWA SERVICES

From its previous experience during the civil war in Lebanon in 1958 and again after the widespread hostilities of June 1967, the Agency knew that the most valuable contribution it could make in the emergency would be to resume normal relief and health services. As quickly as possible, therefore, UNRWA set about restoring the essential food, medical and relief services on which nearly half of east Jordan's population - the needier half - are to a greater or lesser degree dependent.

In the crisis, UNRWA was also able to help in several other ways: by advising and helping other agencies engaged in emergency work and by lending supplies, vehicles and an established system of distribution. The lesson of Jordan, however, is that while emergency relief is indispensable for the worst-hit few, UNRWA's normal services are essential to the lives of many and prolonged interruption would produce widespread hardship.

Particularly important was the resumption of regular, orderly distribution of food rations. Some of the supplies which UNRWA had moved into ration distribution centres when an outbreak of fighting seemed imminent had been looted, and UNRWA had to act quickly to replenish stocks and resume distribution. UNRWA drivers, mechanics and foremen were summoned by broadcasts on Amman radio, trucks were fueled and tires reinflated by hand (electric power was still cut) and the first flour rations loaded. On 1 October, while most of Amman's citizens were still marooned in their homes, 340 tons of flour were delivered to distribution centres in Amman, and supplies continued to reach the refugees and DPs at the rate of 250 tons a day, representing 25,000 10-kilo monthly flour rations. In addition, UNRWA flour was made available for distribution to needy Jordanians against replacement by the Government. With supplies being distributed on this scale, hunger was never widespread or prolonged. Within days, the first trainloads of flour to replenish UNRWA's stocks in Amman arrived from the southern Jordan port of Aqaba.

At the beginning of the emergency, prepared meals were needed. The main bakeries were inoperative as there was no electric power for their ovens, and many people had no stove, fuel, water or time to bake bread from their flour ration. UNRWA had lost its facilities for cooking and distributing the hot meals it normally provides for refugee children. Recognizing the need, Palestinians in the West Bank towns of Nablus, Hebron and Jericho volunteered to make sandwiches for the refugees in east Jordan. So the first UNRWA-relief convoy, which came under ICRC auspices from the West Bank, brought sandwiches -- 6,000 of them, with the same number of portions of fresh fruit -- which were handed out in Amman by schoolteachers from the UNRWA/Unesco schools. These convoys, which later also brought hot meals and other victuals, ran from 27 September to 13 October and benefited from gifts and voluntary work by many groups, including UNRWA staff. Less than fifty miles from Amman via the Allenby Bridge over the River Jordan, the West Bank team of UNRWA also brought in some 276,000 loaves of bread, thousands of kilos of fresh vegetables and five ambulances -- with maximum effect and at minimum cost.

Water -- even more vital than food -- was brought to the parched refugee areas by UNRWA tankers. With pumping stations crippled by gunfire and pipes mangled by tank treads, parts of Amman had been without running water for over a week. At first, the arrival of a water tanker would touch off frenzied struggles, but within a day or so a measure of calm had returned. Waiting for the tanker's arrival, refugee children would align their empty five-litre tins in a neat row, to be filled in turn and carried back to the youngsters' families.

Food and water were in short supply in all the refugee communities. The Irbid area in the north, for instance, was cut off from Amman. To meet the refugees' need for UNRWA supplies there, UNRWA trucks -- first a convoy and then a shuttle service -- brought in a total of 440 tons of flour (together with fuel) from UNRWA stocks in Syria.

USUAL HEALTH PROBLEMS AGGRAVATED

As UNRWA clinics in Amman came back into service, doctors found that their most extreme fears -- for instance cholera, which had been present in the area earlier -- had not materialised. But people needed treatment for the usual summer diseases and accidents such as dysentery and infected cuts, which were aggravated by exposure and lack of treatment. As the lines of patients grew, the doctors faced difficult conditions. The lack of water was acute. Medical supplies were temporarily hard to replace (because of transport restrictions). Refugees suffering from shock and stress (particularly where there had been a death in the family) had sometimes sunk into apathy. There was the pressure of casualties, too.

Wounded refugees were treated in the various field hospitals set up in and around Amman under the auspices of the International Committee of the Red Cross. For weeks after the fighting was over, these units continued to be busy: many children had to be treated for injuries suffered while playing with munitions unearthed in the rubble. Desperate people unable to find a doctor during this chaotic period also turned to the field hospitals -- which were usually army units -- for help on some very unmilitary but very important cases such as deliveries of babies.

Discharged as quickly as possible in order to free badly needed beds, refugee patients from hospitals and the mobile medical units came to UNRWA clinics for follow-up treatment. A week after the ceasefire, UNRWA clinics in Wahdat and Jebel Hussein in Amman were each treating over 400 casualties a day -- mostly burns or small shrapnel wounds, many of them septic after periods of unavoidable neglect. In a further effort to help clear the mobile Red Cross surgeries' wards, the UNRWA/Unesco Wadi Seer vocational training centre just outside Amman was opened as a temporary convalescent home for civilian casualties. UNRWA made available Wadi Seer's dormitories and kitchen, sanitation and office facilities and staff; the International Committee of the Red Cross provided a mixed medical team from Switzerland and the Arab Gulf State of Dubai. By the end of the first week, the number of patients was approaching 150.

ONE THIRD OF SCHOOL PUPILS WITHOUT CLASSROOMS

Of UNRWA's services, education was the worst hit by the crisis. UNRWA/Unesco school buildings, exposed by their height (many of them have three storeys) were hit by shells and heavily damaged by explosion or fire. More than one-third of the 600 Agency-built classrooms in east Jordan were put out of service until repairs could be made. And, because the fighting broke out just before the start of the school year in Jordan, stocks of textbooks and other school supplies were destroyed or looted.

Funds are being sought to replace the lost equipment and repair damage. As a temporary solution, 300 large tents have been obtained for use as classrooms; with classes double-shifting in them and in the remaining school facilities, the refugee pupils can be taken care of. But the impact of recent events on staff and students -- and the hardship of tent schools in the rain and snow of winter in Amman -- will certainly have an adverse effect on studies.

INTERNATIONAL RELIEF

Housing for homeless families is another problem. In the Amman area, approximately 1400 refugee shelters were destroyed. A further 3000 shelters were badly damaged. For these people, UNRWA has appealed for tents and blankets, together with "family kits" costing \$13 and providing basic household equipment such as a lamp, primus cooking stove, pots and pans and cutlery.

UNRWA's acute shortage of funds for normal programmes meant that the cost of coping with the emergency had to be borne by special contributions or by other relief agencies. Some of them channeled cash or commodities through UNRWA. The Canadian and British Governments pledged special contributions; bedding came from Diakonisches Werk; clothing and cash for family kits, from the Mennonites; clothing and milk, from Oxfam; cash, from Rädde Barnen; blankets, medicine, food and tents from the Pontifical Mission for Palestine. The International Committee of the Red Cross were given cash and supplies for their mercy flights by many groups, including two United Nations agencies, UNHCR and UNICEF. From the start of the relief operation in Jordan, various government missions supplied assistance on a large scale, including hundreds of tons of foodstuffs and mobile hospitals. As the crisis eased and emphasis shifted to re-opening the country's essential services, voluntary agencies which have a permanent presence in the area, like the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and the Near East Council of Churches, began to phase out their emergency action and concentrate on the longer-range problems of reconstruction and recovery.

REFUGEES REBUILDING

The refugees themselves did not wait for outside help or political certainties before they started rebuilding. A landscape of ruin changed out of recognition from one day to the next. In the congested and densely overbuilt refugee areas, choking rubble had to be cleared before there was room to pitch a tent or even to lie down. Wielding hammers and lengths of pipe, whole families worked together to break up dangerously leaning sections of broken walls, carrying off the debris on tin plates or in rubber buckets made from tyre inner-tubes.

Gradually the labyrinth of truncated walls and hanging slabs of ceiling was dismantled, and people began to build again. Shell-holes were stuffed with rags, canvas spread to make roofs, corrugated roofing-sheets propped against each other to make a lean-to shelter where there had been a house. The LWF has now set up machines in Wahdat to make concrete blocks and, as fast as the blocks are produced, the refugees carry them off for more substantial rebuilding. UNRWA now needs sizable cash donations if it is to provide roofing for refugees to complete their repairs.

But patching up a shelter is only the beginning of recovery. Families who depend on daily wages feel the effects of any halt in economic life immediately, and thousands of breadwinners employed in small workshops have not earned anything for nearly two months because of shutdowns due to lack of power, transport and orders. A rebuilding boom may bring profits to some, but it carries the risk of inflation, and the refugees will then be more dependent than ever on the direct assistance which UNRWA provides. Among the last to benefit from prosperity and the first to suffer in an economic crisis, the Palestine refugees and displaced persons to whom UNRWA's programmes are directed will need all the help they can get, both from the Jordan Government and from UNRWA, in order to rehabilitate themselves economically.

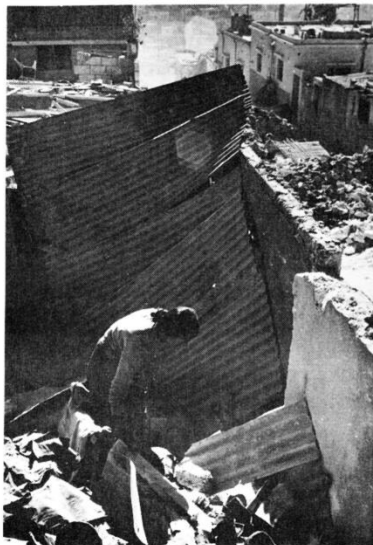
Digging out



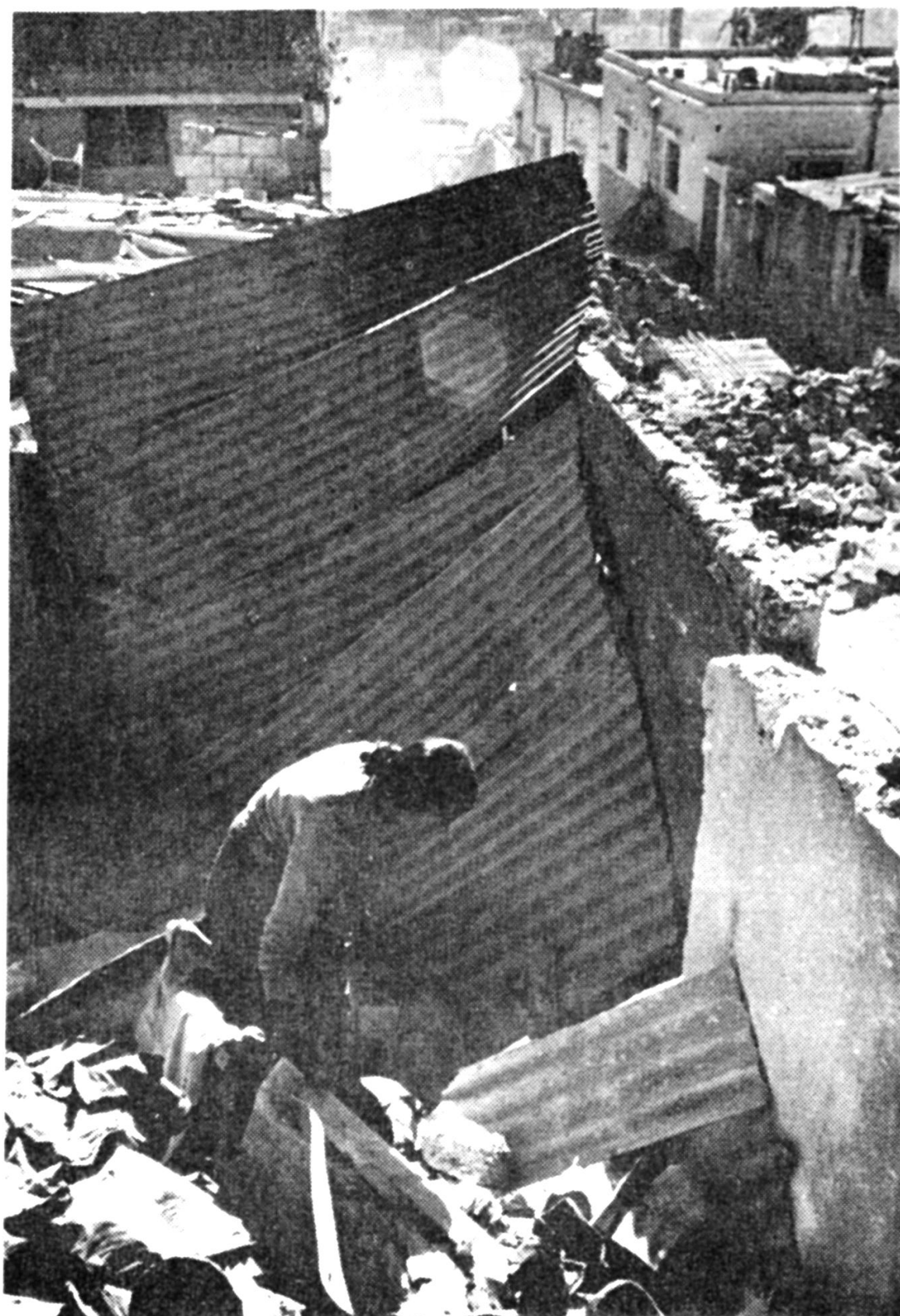
ECONOMIC HARDSHIP

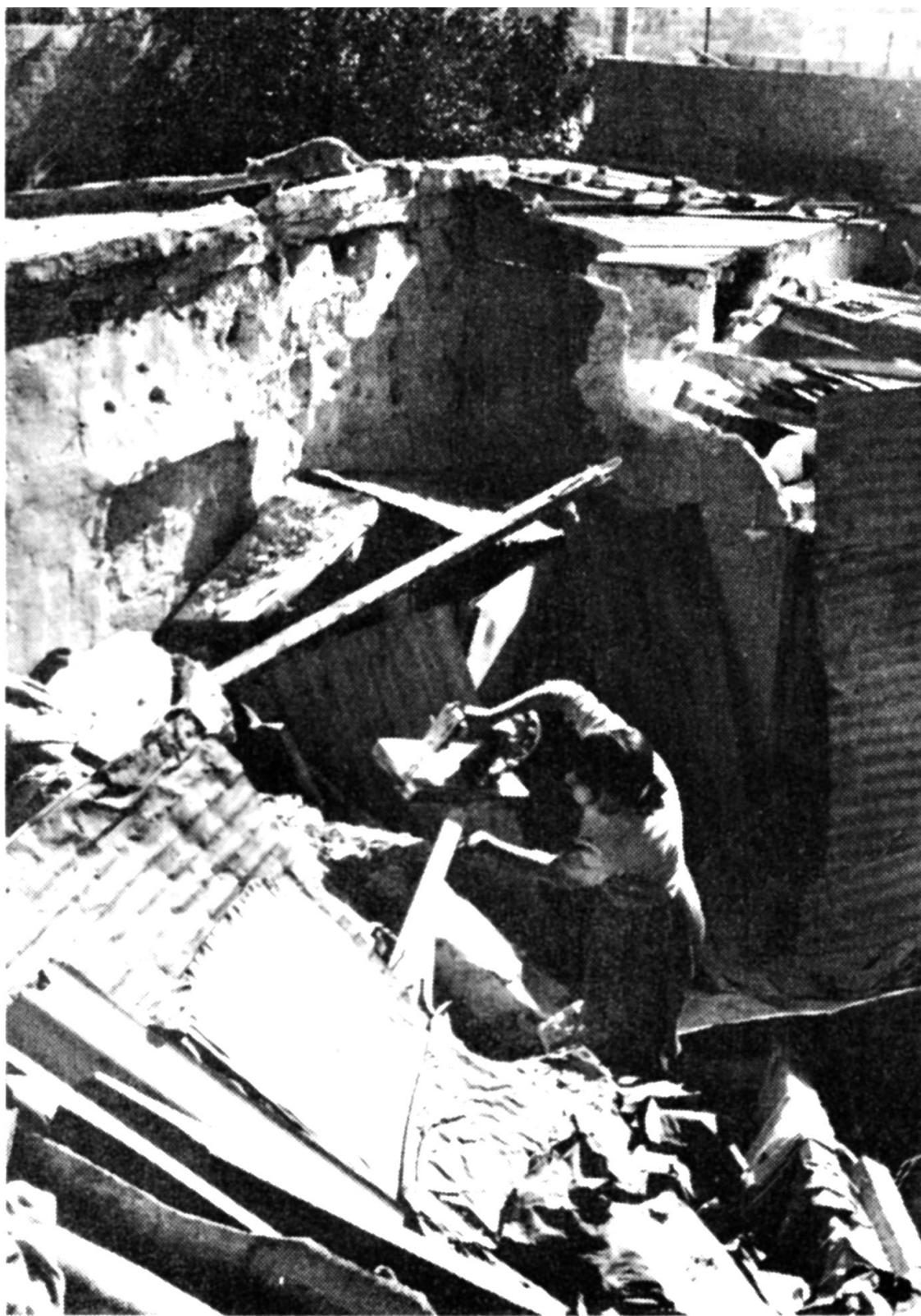
Jordan, in which the area east of the Jordan River is 95% desert, has scant or unexploited natural resources and its vulnerable economy has always been dependent on outside support. In the 1960s, a booming tourist trade and successful development projects gave Jordan one of the highest economic growth rates in the world. But, when Israel occupied east Jerusalem and the rest of the West Bank in 1967, the resulting loss of tourist revenues, the suspension of development programmes and the severance of Amman from its agricultural and economic hinterland on the West Bank - combined with an influx of destitute, jobless refugees to east Jordan - stopped that trend abruptly.

In recent years, subsidies from other Arab governments have helped the Jordan economy avoid the slump which had been forecast after 1967. But fighting around the irrigated parts of the Jordan River valley earlier this year halted farmwork there, depriving many refugees of employment and curtailing crop production. A severe country-wide drought ruined agricultural prospects elsewhere. Jordan had already been forced to resort to wheat imports in the spring this year, bringing a rise in food prices. In the present political and economic circumstances, the outlook for the poorest sections of the population -- notably the refugees -- is uncertain, at best.











FINANCIAL THREAT TO UNRWA

As winter approaches, UNRWA's relief and other services in east Jordan are more vital than ever to the refugees. UNRWA assistance in east Jordan is worth more than \$15 million a year. This assistance differs from many other types of aid by taking the form of goods and services -- food rations, health care and education -- which are delivered directly to the beneficiaries for their personal consumption. As effective humanitarian relief for needy people, it has become a factor of stability in a country going through a prolonged economic and political crisis.

Even before the recent events in east Jordan, UNRWA's Commissioner-General, Mr. Laurenc Michelmore, had reported to the United Nations General Assembly that the Agency could not continue without better financing. Increased expenditures in recent years have run down the Agency's operating reserves, and UNRWA -- which faces a \$6 to \$7 million deficit in 1971 -- must either have more money or else cut its services.

As a result of the fighting in Amman, UNRWA now needs about \$400,000 for capital expenditure on the repair and re-equipment of damaged buildings and replacement of vehicles. Refugee shelter is another problem. Even more serious, however, is the threat to UNRWA's normal programmes in 1971. If income cannot be increased very substantially (by about 15%), reductions in expenditure will become necessary. The cuts will have to be made in services which cost UNRWA cash to operate, not in services such as rations for which UNRWA receives donations in kind that cannot readily be converted into cash. These reductions would be so large that UNRWA could not maintain its education programmes in their present form.

The consequences could be as painful to the refugee community and as far reaching as the recent tragic eruption of violence in east Jordan, and they would affect the children most of all.



24 September 1970

JOINT APPEAL BY ASSEMBLY PRESIDENT AND SECRETARY-GENERAL
FOR HUMANITARIAN AID TO JORDAN

Following is the text of a joint appeal made today by the President of the General Assembly, Edvard Hambro (Norway), and the Secretary-General, U Thant, at Headquarters to all members of the United Nations, the specialized agencies, non-governmental organizations and private individuals, to provide humanitarian aid to Jordan:

The President of the General Assembly and the Secretary-General have been profoundly distressed at the bloodshed and suffering that have afflicted Jordan in the present tragic situation. They are aware of the many efforts being made to restore peace, and naturally hope that they will be successful.

They feel that the United Nations and its family of agencies and non-governmental organizations will wish to offer immediately all possible assistance that may be needed to prevent further loss of lives and to alleviate the afflictions and the anguish that have become the sudden lot of so many thousands of human beings.

They join in appealing to all members of the United Nations and of the specialized agencies, to non-governmental organizations, as well as to private individuals, to provide the needed humanitarian aid.

The United Nations and the specialized agencies have always been ready to come to the assistance of those stricken by harsh events, and will, beyond doubt, add another chapter to this generous record.

* *** *

U Thant alerts U.N. Member States to UNRWA's Financial Crisis

ON 17 AUGUST 1970 THE SECRETARY-GENERAL SENT
THE FOLLOWING LETTER TO U.N. MEMBER STATES¹

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith a statement by the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East on the financial situation of the Agency. I trust that this statement will be brought to the attention of your Government as a matter of urgency.

I share the concern of the Commissioner-General that it has been necessary already to curtail expenditures both by discontinuing certain subsidy payments to Governments, especially for health and education services, and by reductions in other parts of the Agency's programme. I also share his concern that further reductions in the Agency's services may have to be made unless its financial situation can be improved. Such reductions would inevitably, in the disturbed conditions of the area, have a profoundly unsettling effect.

In the present circumstances, the Agency will be unable to meet its cash obligations beyond the first months of 1971, and its obligations will in effect exceed its cash assets by the end of this year. I earnestly hope that Governments will give urgent attention to this vital matter so that it will be possible for the General Assembly to act at the twenty-fifth session in such a way as to enable the essential work of the Agency to be maintained in the coming year.

THE FINANCIAL SITUATION OF UNRWA AS OF JULY 1970

STATEMENT BY THE COMMISSIONER-GENERAL

During the first half of 1970, the financial situation of UNRWA continued to deteriorate, and the threat of a breakdown in the Agency's services for the Palestine refugees became more imminent.

Appeals for additional funds, both within and outside the United Nations, and special efforts by the Secretary-General have brought a helpful response from a few contributors which is greatly appreciated, but the total result has been quite inadequate. The income provided to the Agency is still nearly \$5 million less than its total requirements. Since 1967 contributions have been at a higher level than they were before, but the cost of providing essential services to the refugees has grown even faster.

Since 1967, the pattern of the Agency's expenditures to meet the recurrent costs of the principal programmes has been developing as follows:

¹

United Nations General Assembly, Official Records, Twenty-fifth session (A/8040)

	<u>1968</u>	<u>1969</u>	<u>Est</u> <u>1970</u>	<u>Est</u> <u>1971</u>
	(in millions of US dollars)			
<u>Recurrent costs</u>				
Relief services	19.0	19.7	18.7	18.9
Health services	5.4	5.5	6.0	6.3
Education services	<u>16.2</u>	<u>17.6</u>	<u>20.3</u>	<u>21.8</u>
Total	40.6	42.8	45.0	47.0

(Excluded from these figures are non-recurrent costs for buildings, replacement of motor vehicles and other equipment, etc. Expenditures for school buildings, health centres, shelter and other improvements in the emergency camps are now made only if special contributions are received for these particular purposes.)

As the above figures show, there has been very little change in the cost of maintaining basic relief services (monthly food ration, supplementary feeding, shelter, and special hardship assistance) at the minimum level. This is mainly due to the receipt of basic foodstuffs in kind and the restriction imposed by ration "ceilings". Health costs have increased (and in 1971 will be about 19 per cent above the 1968 level)

because medical and sanitation services must be provided to more people, and the costs of supplies and wages have risen as well.

By far the most significant increase in expenditure has been in respect of education, which will have increased by 34 per cent in a three-year period. This is principally due to the increased enrolment in UNRWA/Unesco schools, largely as a result of the natural increase in the refugee population; for the school year 1970-71 enrolment is expected to be 37 per cent above what it was at the end of the 1967-1968 school year. The level of teachers' salaries has also risen.

As income has fallen short of needs, the Agency has examined all possibilities of curtailing expenditure. In a sense this is a continuous process and savings have been achieved whenever possible from administrative economies or from reductions in programmes where feasible. Cumulative savings over recent years would amount to well over \$1 million annually.



Loading supplies at the UNRWA warehouse in Beirut

As foreseen in reports distributed to the General Assembly last year (A/7577, A/7614), much more far-reaching reductions have had to be considered. Some of them have been put into effect, at least provisionally until the General Assembly can once again review the Agency's programme and financing.

Expenditures have been curtailed by discontinuing certain subsidy payments to Governments, especially for health and education services, by discontinuing the distribution of soap with the monthly ration (except in the emergency camps), by reducing certain elements of the supplementary feeding programme, by reducing the number of university scholarships and by a number of other small economies. In total, these reductions would amount to nearly \$2 million on an annual basis, and about \$1.5 million up to 31 December 1970.

The possibility of proceeding with other reductions mentioned in the above-mentioned reports to the General Assembly has also been explored. In some cases, it was hoped that alternative ways could be found by which services could be maintained for the refugees but at lower cost to the UNRWA budget. These efforts did not succeed.

In view of the disturbed conditions in the area and the unsettling effect of further reductions in the Agency's services, the Commissioner-General, in consultation with the Secretary-General and on the strong advice of the host Governments, has deferred the implementation of these further reductions in the UNRWA programme until the General Assembly can once again examine the problem.

Even if there are no adverse developments, and if contribution payments are received as and when anticipated, the Agency's obligations will, by the end of this year, exceed its assets in cash, or in a form readily convertible to cash; in fact, the Agency will not be able to meet its cash obligations beyond the first months of 1971.

Various possible means of providing additional funds to UNRWA were outlined in a note submitted by the Commissioner-General at the twenty-fourth session of the General Assembly (A/SPC/134). Members may find it of interest to review this paper in the course of formulating their views for the twenty-fifth session.

Unless the General Assembly acts at the twenty-fifth session, the likelihood is that the structure of the Agency will have disintegrated before the next session, either for lack of cash or, in the alternative, under the stresses caused by the dismantling of a major part of the structure in order to reduce expenditure.

"For the school year 1970-71 enrolment is expected to be 37 per cent above what it was at the end of the 1967-68 school year."





UNRWA's Log of Recovery

September 27

Ceasefire in effect. Commissioner-General flies to Amman and meets with Jordan's Prime Minister and Minister of Reconstruction and Development.

Convoy arrives from West Bank carrying flour and other supplies.

In response to a broadcast, senior UNRWA staff in Amman gather at home of UNRWA Field Director: first contact for 10 days.

Sept. 28

Still some firing, but curfew lifted for short time in different sections of city. Essential transport collected.

Sept. 29

UNRWA health and transport officers summoned to work by Amman radio. Damage in Amman area inspected.

Red Cross (ICRC) convoy from West Bank (including three UNRWA vehicles) mobbed by hungry people and has to withdraw after being stripped of half its load of food and blankets.

Water tanker arrives from West Bank and is put into operation.

Shipment of blankets and foodstuffs arrives from the Lutheran World Federation on the West Bank.

Sept. 30

UNRWA's Amman warehouse evacuated by Jordan Army guards and put in operation: 340 tons of flour loaded. Director of Security promises vehicles and men to protect distribution.

6,000 sandwiches received from West Bank through good offices of Red Cross (ICRC).

Two mobile clinics accepted by UNRWA from LWF for Amman.

Two UNRWA water tankers and one commercial tanker go into operation in Amman.

Clean up begins at UNRWA Field Office, top floor of which was gutted by fire. Flour issued to bakers by Government and free bread given out in the streets.

Banks remain closed, cash a problem. Preliminary checks on casualties among staff (final report was 11 staff members killed).

October 1

Field Office opened with 20% of the staff. UNRWA officials attend meeting of Jordan Government coordinating committee with representatives of other aid groups such as International Committee of the Red Cross, Jordanian Red Crescent Society, Lutheran World Federation, Caritas.

Oct. 2

Distribution of food rations begins in Amman.

Clinics open, but not full strength. Seriously-injured persons being taken to hospitals by the Red Cross or the Red Crescent.

UNRWA offers use of Wadi Seer training centre as a convalescent hospital.

In Amman, UNRWA distribution centres functioning normally. Garbage removal a problem due to presence of explosives.

Zerka contacted: distribution centre there still has stocks of food and distribution to resume on 3 October.

First reports from elsewhere in Jordan: in Baqa'a camp, some shelters hit, school tent-compound destroyed.

Non-military travel forbidden between Amman and Irbid in north Jordan, but records indicate that supplies urgently needed there. Decision taken to supply Irbid area from UNRWA stocks in Syria.

Oct. 4

All clinics operating.

Water supply still a problem in Amman.

Oct. 5

With help from Palestinian Red Crescent, UNRWA convoy with 20 tons of flour and 1,000 litres of fuel arrives in Irbid from Damascus.

Oct. 6

Family kits (primus stove, cooking pots, cutlery) distributed to 900 families in camps whose dwellings were destroyed.

Oct. 7

All UNRWA staff at work, although telephones, electricity and transport largely out of action. Food convoys continuing from West Bank.

Situation rapidly returning to normal.

By October 13, the UNRWA Field Office had distributed, in accordance with established ration lists: 2,500 tons of flour, 300 tons of rice, sugar and soya bean oil, 24,200 tins of corned beef, and miscellaneous items.

UNRWA in the S.A.R. had transported 400 tons of flour as well as quantities of fuel to the Irbid area.

Food convoys from UNRWA and voluntary agencies in the West Bank had brought in and distributed some 27,000 hot meals, over 250,000 loaves of bread, 49,000 sandwich packs and quantities of fruit, vegetables and tinned food

Also, as an emergency measure, 25 tons of foodstuffs were made available by UNRWA in Lebanon to Caritas and to the ICRC for air freighting into Jordan.

All UNRWA services in Jordan fully operational, except education.

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