

# **PALESTINE REFUGEES TODAY**

**NEWSLETTER No. 82**



**UNRWA AT THE UNITED NATIONS**



NEWSLETTER NO. 82  
Issued : March 1976

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#### Cover photos

- (front) : The boys of Askar school in the West Bank. There are more than a quarter of a million Palestine refugee children in UNRWA/Unesco schools.
- (back) : Refugees waiting for treatment outside an UNRWA clinic in Amman New Camp, Jordan.

(above) : Sir John Rennie, UNRWA's Commissioner-General, informing the XXXth session of the UN General Assembly of the latest developments regarding the Agency's finances and work.

# FOREWORD

Each year an issue of the Newsletter covers the proceedings of the General Assembly session relating to the work of UNRWA. This year Newsletter No. 82 reproduces the relevant documentation of the General Assembly's thirtieth session, including excerpts of statements of the Commissioner-General.

The Commissioner-General's Annual Report for the 12 months ending 30 June 1975 was considered under General Assembly agenda item 56. In his report, Sir John Rennie again emphasized UNRWA's persistent financial difficulties.

In his 11 November statement to the General Assembly's Special Political Committee, the Commissioner-General expressed the hope that greater financial stability could be provided for UNRWA by Member States because, apart from the general undesirability of reductions in services to refugees, there were serious practical difficulties in, for example, eliminating schools or reducing such essential environmental sanitation services as water supplies and refuse and sewage disposal. Sir John also referred to the effects on UNRWA operations of the prolonged civil strife in Lebanon (see Excerpts from the Statement of the Commissioner-General, page 4).

At the 26 November "Pledging Conference" during which 44 governments announced their contributions in support of the 1976 activities of UNRWA, the Commissioner-General expressed appreciation of the pledges announced. Later, addressing a plenary meeting of the General Assembly, Sir John again felt obliged to warn Member States of the risk of reductions in UNRWA's services in 1976. (See Summary of Pledging Conference, page 20).

The complete texts of four resolutions also appear in this Newsletter (page 22). Resolutions 3419 A, B, C and D (XXX) endorsed the continuation of assistance by UNRWA to persons displaced as a result of the June 1967 hostilities; took note of the Annual Report of the Commissioner-General and called upon all Governments to make the most generous efforts possible to meet UNRWA's forecast needs; called once more upon Israel to take immediate steps for the return of the displaced inhabitants of territories occupied since 1967; and requested the Working Group on the Financing of UNRWA to continue its efforts for a further year.

Two other resolutions directly affecting Palestinians were adopted by the General Assembly: Resolution 3375 (XXX) called for the invitation of the Palestine Liberation Organization to participate in the efforts for peace in the Middle East. Resolution 3376 (XXX) on the Question of Palestine contained a decision to establish a Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, composed of 20 Member States.

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# COMMISSIONER-GENERAL'S 11 NOVEMBER STATEMENT

(Excerpts from the statement to the General Assembly's Special Political Committee.)

It has been sad to record that the year of report has again been one of distress for many of the Palestine refugees. Since the Annual Report was written there has been a further, prolonged outbreak of civil strife in Lebanon in which the refugees, like the population among whom they live, have been exposed to fatal hazards and deprivations.

The Agency's operations have been very seriously disrupted, both the Lebanon Field Office and the Agency's Headquarters being affected. Beirut is also the main port for the entry of supplies for the eastern sector of operations - Lebanon, Syria and Jordan. The standstill in the port over many weeks and the danger of movement from the port through the city have created supply difficulties. Alternative routes have been used to the extent possible but have involved in some cases extra expense. The bulk of rations have been distributed and field stocks have so far been sufficient to cover general stores and medical requirements but the effect of disruption is cumulative and once these stocks are exhausted there will be an acute shortage.

The effect on work in Headquarters has been severe, and we estimate that by the end of October more than 17,000 man-days have been lost in 1975. It has not been possible to revise budgetary data since the middle of September and the preparation of operating estimates for 1976 is far behind schedule. Serious problems have arisen owing to the inability of the Data Processing Division to produce registration data, ration rolls, budget records and accounts and supply data. There is also a vast accumulation of work on personnel and administrative matters. Plans for 1976 activities in education have been delayed and lack of normal communication with other fields has caused a disturbing lack of Headquarters guidance. In health activities the handling of perishable medical supplies like sera, vaccine and antibiotics and the procurement of medical supplies generally have been dislocated, and the breakdown in regular supervision and control of field health activities will adversely affect the long-term efficiency of the whole health programme if it continues.

The Lebanon Field Office and the Central Lebanon Area Office have been closed nearly every day for the past eight weeks. Programmes of maintenance and improvement in camps have not been implemented and no progress has been made with shelter reconstruction. Most schools have been closed and those operating in the north and the south could not receive new books or other instructional material. Sibling Training Centre lost a further six weeks of training time and the selection of the new first-year intake for 1975-76 could not be made. The difficulty and danger of travel gravely hampered first aid, the evacuation of injured and the despatch of surgical supplies. Camp medical staff were reduced to a skeleton basis for the same reason, the hospitalization of the seriously ill has been hindered by lack of beds in the government and private hospitals used by UNRWA, and camp sanitation conditions cause concern.

This is a serious situation, but there is little the Agency can do to improve the situation as regards operations in the Lebanon Field. Agency staff have long



In addition to basic food rations UNRWA provides for about 827,000 of the 1.6 million registered Palestine refugees, the Agency also distributes kerosene to a limited number of them for heating during the winter months.

experience of operating in adverse conditions, of making the best of them and of improvising, but they are being sorely tried. The strain on them and on the refugees may be imagined, especially in view of what has preceded the most recent events and is referred to in my report.

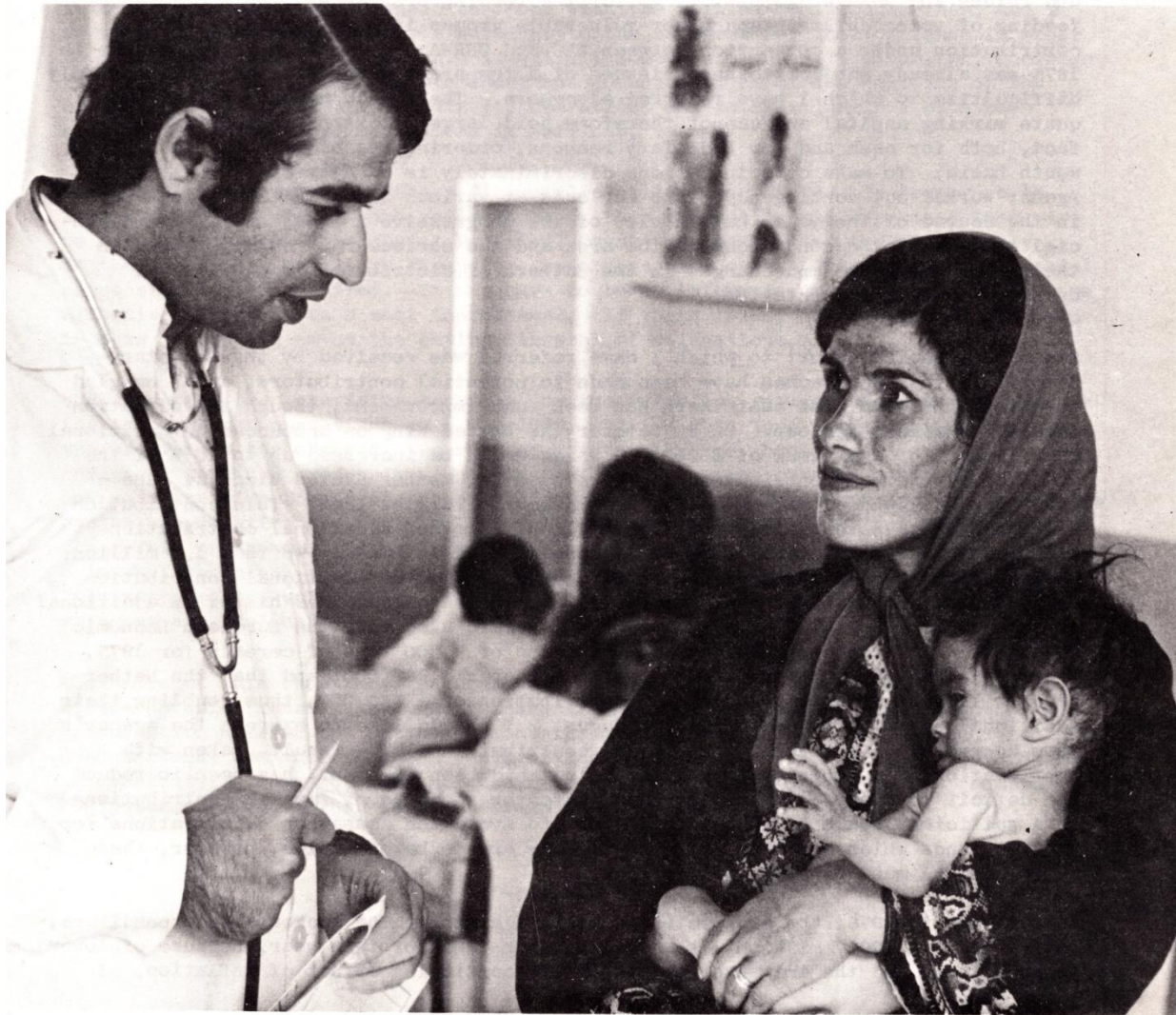
The Agency must, however, continue to maintain its services in the other fields - Syria, Jordan, West Bank and the Gaza Strip - which depend on Agency Headquarters both for guidance and for vital services provided on a centralised basis. An attempt is being made to provide guidance by redeploying professional staff on extended mission to fields, but unless there is sustained improvement in the situation in Beirut which offers reasonable prospects of normal security I may have to take more radical measures to enable Agency Headquarters to carry out its work. As the Committee will appreciate, the situation I have described will affect to some extent the estimates of expenditure in Chapter II of my report. If it becomes necessary to move staff temporarily on any large scale in order to enable Agency Headquarters to perform its functions, the effect could be significant.

It is in the conditions I have described that UNRWA has been going through the worst financial crisis in its history.

Paragraph 7 of my report describes briefly the development of the Agency's financial situation during 1975 and ends by saying that - when the report was completed, at the beginning of September - there remained a deficit of about \$ 13 million and the level of income was still inadequate to maintain the programmes in full until the end of the year. This situation remained unchanged at the end of September, and the Agency was approaching the situation referred to in paragraph 13 of my report in which the Agency would default on its obligations and I should be in breach of the Agency's financial regulations. I therefore came to New York on 7 October and after discussions with members of the Secretariat I submitted a special report to the Secretary-General. It was of necessity a most alarming report, because it informed the Secretary-General that unless sufficient additional contributions were received by 15 November, the Agency would have to cease operations after 30 November, with all that would entail in hardship for the refugees, termination of thousands of employees and serious repercussions on the stability of the host countries. It may seem absurd - it is absurd - that the Agency's operations should have to cease entirely for lack of \$ 13 million in a budget of over \$ 120 million.

In the absence of sufficient income, the budgetary gap can only be eliminated by reductions in expenditure, i.e. by reductions in services. But as the year goes on, the size of the reductions required to eliminate even a smaller deficit than existed early in the year increases until they comprise almost the whole of the Agency's services, although they may now represent only one-quarter, or one-sixth or one-twelfth of the annual cost of the service to which they relate, instead of one-half or even more. It may be asked, then, why some reductions are not made earlier in the year if it appears doubtful whether sufficient income will be obtained to cover the whole budget. There is, however, very strong resistance to reductions at this stage - the attitude of the host governments and of the UNRWA Advisory Commission as a whole can be seen from paragraphs 11 to 14 of my report. The Commissioner-General would certainly be regarded, with some plausibility, as prejudging the outcome of fund-raising efforts, the Agency could not count on co-operation in putting the reductions into effect, and there could very well be broader repercussions of one undesirable kind or another. It becomes almost

In an UNRWA rehydration/nutrition centre, a doctor, himself a Palestine refugee, advises a refugee mother on how to help her dehydrated, under-nourished child recuperate. UNRWA, in co-operation with WHO, provides medical care for 1.4 million Palestine refugees in Lebanon, Syria, east Jordan, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.



axiomatic that reductions cannot be made until they become inevitable because funds are on the point of running out, with the consequence that when made they must assume dramatic proportions.

Moreover, when one considers in detail what reductions should be made, the practical difficulties become apparent. I should here repeat that UNRWA operates on-going programmes, much of them services of a quasi-governmental nature, and not more easily terminable projects. How does one "reduce" an education programme in any significant way without serious consequences; one cannot simply eliminate schools or classes in schools at random; but if not, how to discriminate? How does one reduce a health programme that is already conducted on a most austere basis and the only financially important elements in which are direct medical care in clinics and hospitals and such essential environmental sanitation as water supplies and refuse and sewage disposal? As for the feeding programmes, the supplementary feeding of young children and other vulnerable groups is paid for by a special contribution under a convention between EEC and UNRWA; and the ration programme in 1975 was already subject to short issues of a temporary nature because of the supply difficulties to which I have referred elsewhere. The Agency has now quite inadequate working capital and cannot therefore hold large stocks of commodities. In fact, both for cash and for budgetary reasons, ordering has had to be on a hand-to-mouth basis. To make cuts in rations discriminately is a major operation. The Agency worked out contingency plans for cuts at various times and on various bases in the course of the year, but in view of the progressive improvement in the financial situation, the conditions in the area and the serious repercussions cuts in the ration programme and changes in the pattern of distribution would have, I deferred their implementation.

Since the special report to which I have referred was received by the Secretary-General further approaches have been made to potential contributors, and I am glad to inform the Committee that there has been some improvement, though the situation remains extremely serious. On 20 October the United Kingdom announced an additional contribution of a minimum of £ 200,000 which would be increased up to 10 % of the total of additional contributions pledged by other Member States since 24 June - when a special appeal was made - with a maximum of £ 1 million. This contribution has therefore a potential of over \$ 2 million, if other additional contributions since 24 June reach a total of \$ 20 million, and it is already worth \$ 1.5 million. On 4 November Sweden informed the Secretary-General of an additional contribution of \$ 675,000 and on 5 November the United Arab Emirates informed him of an additional contribution of \$ 2 million. I have been informed also that the European Economic Community will make an additional contribution of 5,000 tons of cereals for 1975, providing about 3,600 tons of flour valued at over \$ 900,000, and that the Netherlands will make a further additional contribution of \$ 380,000, thus doubling their additional contribution announced in August. I should like to express the Agency's deep appreciation for these most timely contributions. The result, taken with confirmation of a contribution of flour that had been in doubt, has been to reduce the deficit to about \$ 7.2 million and to foster the hope of further contributions on a sufficient scale to enable the Agency to avoid the cessation of operations for lack of funds which had been feared. If they are to be effective, however, these contributions must be pledged very soon.

To turn now to 1976, the prospects are again alarming. The increase in expenditure, estimated at \$ 139.7 million, is much less than that for this year, because of lower flour prices, and the increase represents the continuing effect of inflation. I

understand why Member States frequently make special contributions - indeed they are urged to do so - but it would be most helpful if, recognizing that the maintenance of UNRWA's services, and therefore of the income on which they depend, is essential, they would incorporate into their regular contributions for the next year the amount of special contributions made during the previous year, or, alternatively, pledge similar special contributions at the time of pledging their regular contributions.

The estimated deficit for 1976 on this basis is \$ 55 million, that is to say \$ 9 million more than the estimated deficit at the beginning of 1975, which has not yet been fully eliminated. A new cycle of financial anxiety is thus about to begin - if the present cycle can be completed without collapse.

Assuming that sufficient funds can yet be obtained to keep UNRWA's operations going into 1976, I fear I shall again be faced with the painful decision whether, and if so when, to reduce the Agency's services to the refugees for lack of funds in order to avoid breakdown or cessation. It will, I hope, be abundantly clear, Mr. Chairman, from my report and from this statement how conscious I am of the delicacy of the situation in which UNRWA conducts its operations and to what length I have been prepared to go to avoid reductions in services.

The remedy is to provide greater financial stability for UNRWA. In paragraph 16 I have permitted myself some reflections on this subject in the hope that they may be of assistance to the Special Political Committee and to the General Assembly. In the absence of mandatory financing, some consensus on the allocation of financial responsibility is required. It may have to be an informal consensus but, if it were effective, it would be a vast improvement. If there is any way in which I can help in this respect, I am at the entire disposal of delegations.

UNRWA has now been providing services for the Palestine refugees for over 25 years - the Agency began operations on 1 May 1950. During this long period the emphasis of the programmes has changed. Apart from maintaining the physical well-being of the refugees, with the professional guidance of WHO, the most notable achievement, in co-operation with Unesco, has been the establishment and development of an impressive system of education and training for well over a quarter of a million refugee children. This programme, and parts of UNRWA's other programmes, too, can be regarded as a form of technical assistance within the framework of a necessary United Nations holding operation until there is a solution to the political problem in which the refugees are implicated.

Much more of this constructive work could be done if attention were not pre-empted by the chronic financial problem. There are now new problems of administration and organization arising out of the current threat to the viability of the Agency's headquarters, and therefore the whole of its operations. If they are to be tackled successfully, the Agency must not again be plunged into financial crisis from the beginning of 1976. Otherwise the strain may be too great.

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# THE PROFESSIONALS

In Amman, Jordan, Iaurice Hlass, special advisor to the Minister of Tourism, makes a final check of a feasibility study she will present to the Minister the following morning. To the north, in a TV studio of the Syrian Television Service in Damascus, Selwa Kurdasi makes a last minute change in her script before going on camera to read the evening news. Some 70 kilometres to the west, Lizzy Nasir meets the other members of the board of the Jerusalem YWCA. On the Mediterranean coast in Beirut, Lebanon, Nada Hassan - a qualified engineer - works over a blueprint for a network of street lights. Dr. Riad Boudeir, a pediatrician, completes a busy day of consultations with Palestine refugee children at UNRWA's Polyclinic in Beirut. To the south, in Gaza, Leila Quleibo plans a schedule of visits, in her capacity as supervisor in UNRWA/Unesco elementary schools.

Living in different cities in the Middle East, these women are all Palestine refugees whose success in careers reflects the economic and social developments which are helping to free Palestine refugee women from some outworn values.

A major factor in this success has been education, one of the three basic services which UNRWA has provided for both male and female Palestine refugees since its inception in May 1950. With an education, sometimes including vocational or trade skills, Palestine refugee women have been able to find jobs and thereby attain a higher standard of living for their families. In doing so, they have gained a greater degree of independence and a stronger voice in family affairs, including the choice of their own husbands. The economic need to help support large families, in which the father was often unskilled and unable to find work, lowered the barriers against education for women and made possible the break with a tradition that prevented them from following most careers, particularly those which might bring them in contact with men.

With increased earning power and a greater social independence, more and more Palestine refugee women are moving in the direction of social and economic equality with men. Among the women who have been in the forefront of this movement are :

## LAURICE HLASS

In 1962 Iaurice Hlass was sitting patiently talking to another guest at a service club luncheon in Dallas, Texas. She had been invited to address the gathering in her capacity as director of the Arab Information Centre in that city. Finally she asked why lunch was so late and was told, in reply, that the guest speaker had not yet arrived. At that point she got up and identified herself. This broke the ice and everyone laughed good-naturedly because they had been expecting a woman in traditional Arab dress and not a smartly turned-out business woman wearing American clothes.

Iaurice Hlass is the first and, so far, the only woman to reach ambassadorial rank in the Jordanian Foreign Ministry, an accomplishment which ranks among the many changes in the role of women she has witnessed over the past 25 years.

One of two daughters born in a humble but remarkable Jaffa family (her only brother is a space engineer with NASA in Houston, Texas) she worked hard to win the scholar-



(below) UNRWA's first woman physician, Dr. Boudeir, a camp doctor in 1951. See page 14 for Dr. Boudeir at work today.



ships that enabled her to complete a B.A. in economics and the sociology of education and, subsequently, in 1959, an M.A. in social work from New York's Columbia University. At present she is Senior Advisor for plans and programming to the Minister of Tourism in Jordan. Her career, however, has included the posts of inspector of welfare in Jordan, Assistant to the Director of UNRWA's Relief Programmes, United Nations development advisor in Morocco and deputy-head of the Jordanian delegation to the United Nations in New York.

Laurice Hlass often puts in a 15-hour day at the Ministry. She works as energetically to advance both the cause of women and that of her fellow refugees. Her inspiration comes from being a refugee herself: "Being driven from my home", she says, "gave me the push, the incentive to work hard."

Much remains to be done before women can say that they have achieved equality with men. "First", she says, "women must stick up for themselves." She puts her words into practice by constantly lobbying for more positions for women in the government service in Jordan. "Women must demand a more equitable distribution of scholarships", she maintains, to help them get the higher education they need to play an effective role in social and economic development.

"International Women's Year", says Miss Hlass - she headed Jordan's delegation to the IWY World Conference in Mexico City - "has helped women everywhere by identifying more problems and, through its World Plan of Action, helping resolve existing problems, thus allowing women to share more fully opportunities and responsibility with men."

#### SELWA KURDASI

Young TV viewers in four Middle Eastern countries know Selwa Kurdasi, the popular and attractive hostess of a weekly international pop music show on Syrian television. She writes the introductions and puts the programme together from viewers' requests, the international pop music charts and available film clips. Selwa also reads the news and introduces other programmes on radio as well as TV.

Selwa Kurdasi was born in Aleppo, in the north of the Syrian Arab Republic, but her family are Palestine refugees from Haifa who now live in Mezzeh, a suburb of Damascus. She attended UNRWA/Unesco schools, and, after high school, enrolled in the Arabic language and literature programme at the University of Damascus where she is now in her senior year. She began her broadcasting job during her first year at university.

Her broadcasting career represents a departure from traditional ways because she is seen by hundreds of thousands of viewers in the TV audience. Not long ago most women in Syria went veiled if they ventured out of their homes. Although Selwa has been offered a number of acting jobs she has turned them all down, in part because she feels acting is not yet socially accepted in Syria as a suitable profession for a respectable young woman.

"A woman's role", Selwa considers, "should be both to build and change society so that women, who comprise half the population, can enjoy equality of rights and

opportunities with men." In her occupation there are a fair number of women but certainly not all jobs in broadcasting are open to them. Women announcers in Syria, however, do get more pay than their male counterparts, to compensate them for what they have to spend on cosmetics and hairdressing.

Selwa considers marriage a very important step in life. "Most men", she says, "now want to marry an educated woman, which was not the case in the past. And today many husbands encourage their wives to work, because of the high cost of living."

If a woman has children, the problem arises as to who is to care for them while the mother works. Traditionally this has been the responsibility of one of the grandmothers or an elder daughter. But the need for play-centres or kindergartens is becoming increasingly felt, although many people still feel that a grandmother provides better care and more affection for a child.

"When the time comes I want to have only two children", she says, in contrast with the Palestinian tradition of having large families, "more would be too complicated to look after."

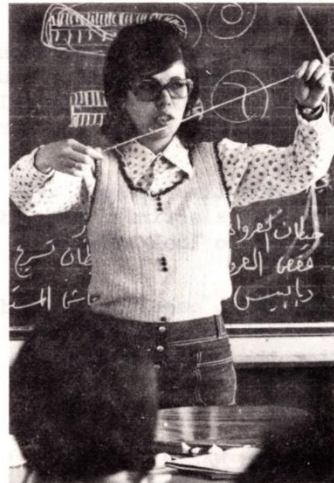
There is no question of giving up her broadcasting career since she only works in the afternoons or evenings. "My husband", she says self-assuredly, "can look after the children when I'm at the studio."

#### ELIZABETH NASIR

Among the first women to attend university in the Middle East was Lizzy Nasir, who graduated from the American University of Beirut in 1934 with a degree in social sciences. Both her father and mother were educated but it was difficult to bring up eight girls and one boy on a clergyman's salary. She managed to overcome the financial problem by getting her brother to pay her fees. Musa Nasir, her brother, was a senior official in the British Mandate Government in Palestine. A strong believer in education for women, he subsequently founded the co-educational Bir Zeit University near Ramallah.

After graduation Lizzy Nasir, too, went to work for the Mandate Government, as a probation officer in Jaffa where she ran social welfare clubs in her spare time. "During the hostilities of 1948 I fled to the Arab sector of Jerusalem, registered with the Red Cross and threw myself into relief work. That included registering other refugees." The following year she became Director of Social Welfare in charge of the Hebron-Jerusalem-Ramallah area. Three years later, with the financial help of church groups and individuals, she started Rawdat el-Zuhour, a co-educational elementary school in Jerusalem for under-privileged children.

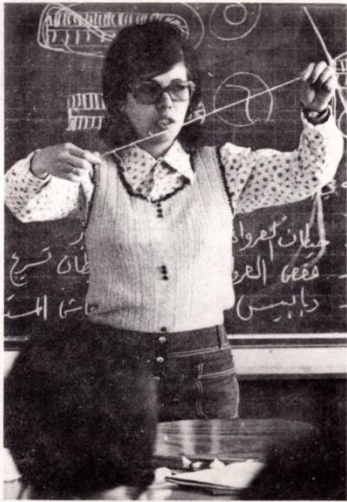
Lizzy Nasir and her staff of 12 try to instil a sense of security in the 230 children who attend her school; the atmosphere is as relaxed and homelike as possible. For those who are destitute (only five per cent pay fees), all is provided : food, clothes, transport and medical care.

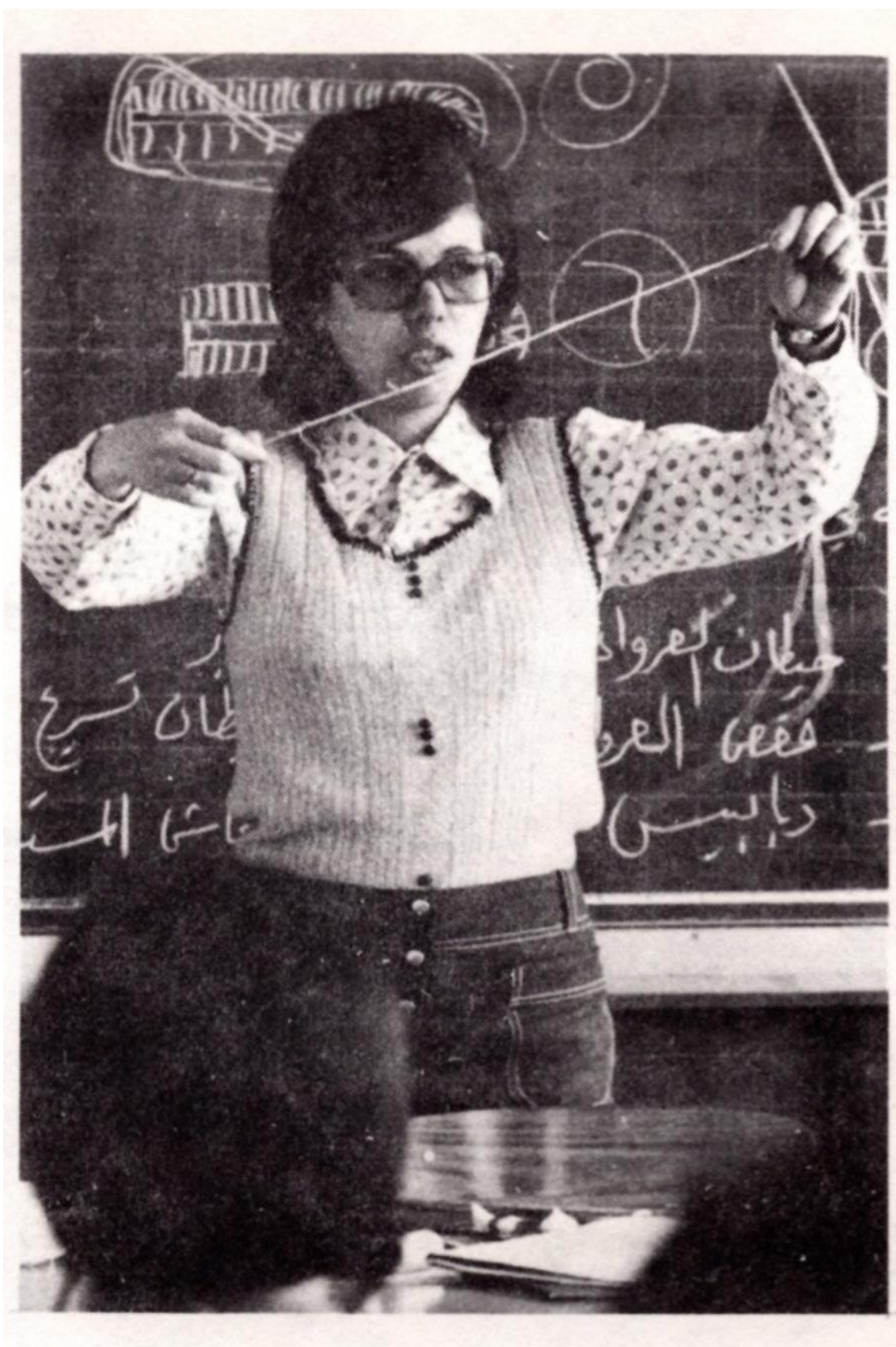


Because of advances in education for women, more and more Palestine refugee women can work in professions.



## THE PROFESSIONALS







She has seen the role of women alter significantly since 1948. The average marriage age has risen from 13 to 16, largely because of increased educational possibilities for girls. Many more women, including married women, are now working but men still get priority when applicants are selected for jobs. "This state of affairs must change", according to Lizzy Nasir, who also wants to see "women receive equal pay for equal work". In her role as an educator and as a member of various organizations and committees, such as the Arab Women's Union and the board of the Jerusalem YWCA, Lizzy Nasir is helping to fight what she calls "conservatism and ignorance among the women of the Middle East."

#### NADA HASSAN

Nada Mustapha Hassan, whose family came from Lubieh village near the Sea of Galilee, graduated in 1973 as an electrical engineer from the American University of Beirut - the first woman ever to do so. Born in Wavell refugee camp near Baalbek, in Lebanon, she received her elementary and secondary education in the camp's UNRWA/Unesco school. Nada did very well in high school and decided to continue her education. Although she considered medicine, the cost and the length of time necessary to become a doctor dissuaded her. She settled, instead, on engineering, in part because she was good at mathematics and science, but also because of the challenge it represented. Her own ability and determination, plus an UNRWA scholarship, helped her prove that engineering was not "too hard for girls" which is what her male classmates had chorused when she had first gone to class.

Now she works for a firm of consulting engineers and is getting practical experience in her field of specialization : the optimization of electric power-flow. There is no discrimination at the office, she is just treated as any other engineer in the company. After office hours both Nada and her fiancé, whom she met at college, are working for their M.A. degrees. When they finish, next summer, they plan to get married.

Since she started working she has been helping her family financially, which has enabled them to move from Wavell camp to Beirut. She is also assisting her older brother in paying for her younger brother and sisters' education, their father being too old to work.

Although Nada claims to have no time, she has managed to find enough to get a driver's licence ("public transport is so erratic I have to drive myself") and serve for one year as an officer in an engineering society. She is looking forward to marriage and starting work on a PhD. - which will probably make her the first Palestine refugee woman to obtain such an advanced degree in engineering.

#### RIAD BOUDEIR

The first of May 1975 was not only the twenty-fifth anniversary of UNRWA but it also marked a quarter of a century since Dr. Riad Boudeir, the first Palestinian Muslim woman doctor, came to work for the Agency. Born in Damascus, Dr. Boudeir, the daughter of a Palestinian businessman, has ties also with Haifa. She got her medical education at the French Faculty in Beirut, graduating in 1946, whereupon she returned to Haifa to do her internship in the government hospital in that city.

During the hostilities of 1948 her parents persuaded her to leave Haifa for Egypt where she stayed just long enough to find a ship going to Beirut. In August of that year she married a colleague from medical school who was working for an oil company in Tripoli, North Lebanon. She, too, started working in Tripoli, as a UNICEF volunteer helping to look after Palestine refugee children.

When she first worked for the newly-formed UNRWA, in Nahr el-Bared camp, north of Tripoli, she was in charge of deliveries and newborn babies. Apart from courses in public health which she followed at the American University of Beirut, Dr. Boudeir has devoted herself exclusively to the problems of mothers and babies. Today she heads the Mother and Child Health Clinic at UNRWA's busy Polyclinic in the heart of Beirut.

The Boudeir family is deeply involved in medicine. Dr. Boudeir's husband is in charge of the Lebanese Government's social medical services. Her eldest daughter, now a married woman, works as a nutritionist in Beirut, while her eldest son is studying hospital administration in the United States. There are three younger children still in school.

As a mother and child health specialist, Dr. Boudeir is very interested in family planning. "To protect the health of both the mother and her children a family should be planned. Pregnancies must be spaced because if the intervals between them are too short a woman becomes exhausted, which can constitute a risk to her children's health and well-being. Most of the refugees manage to earn something but they don't have the financial resources to raise a dozen children properly. Whenever a woman with five children comes to see me, I recommend that she visit a family planning centre."

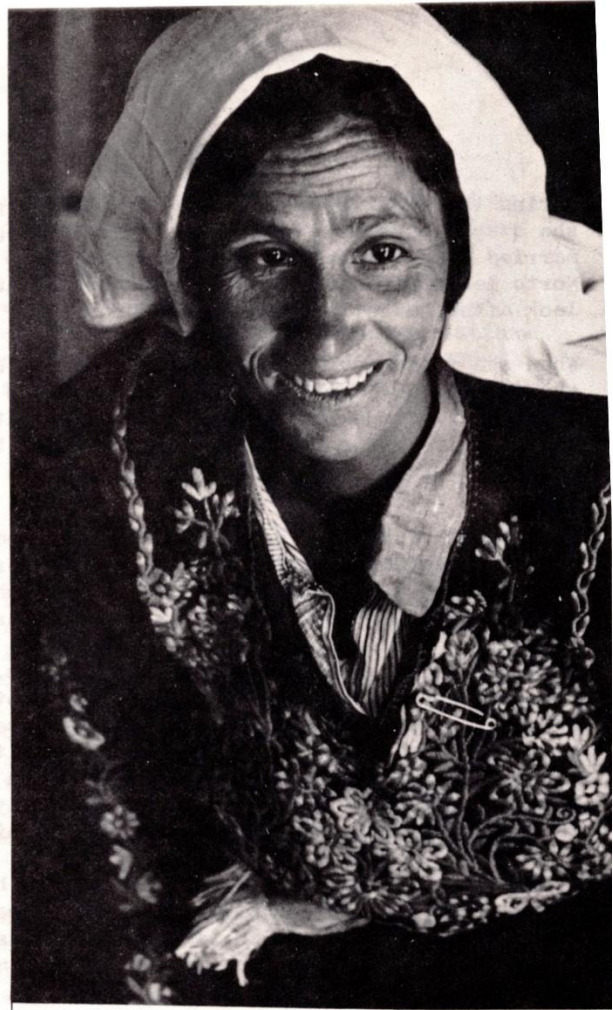
"There was a time when it was necessary to have 10 children to have five reach adulthood. Today, fortunately, infant mortality has been greatly reduced (80 per 1000 among registered Palestine refugees in Lebanon, which is lower than the infant mortality rate in the region as a whole). Having fewer children means that each child has a better chance of leading a worthwhile life."

#### LEILA QULEIBO

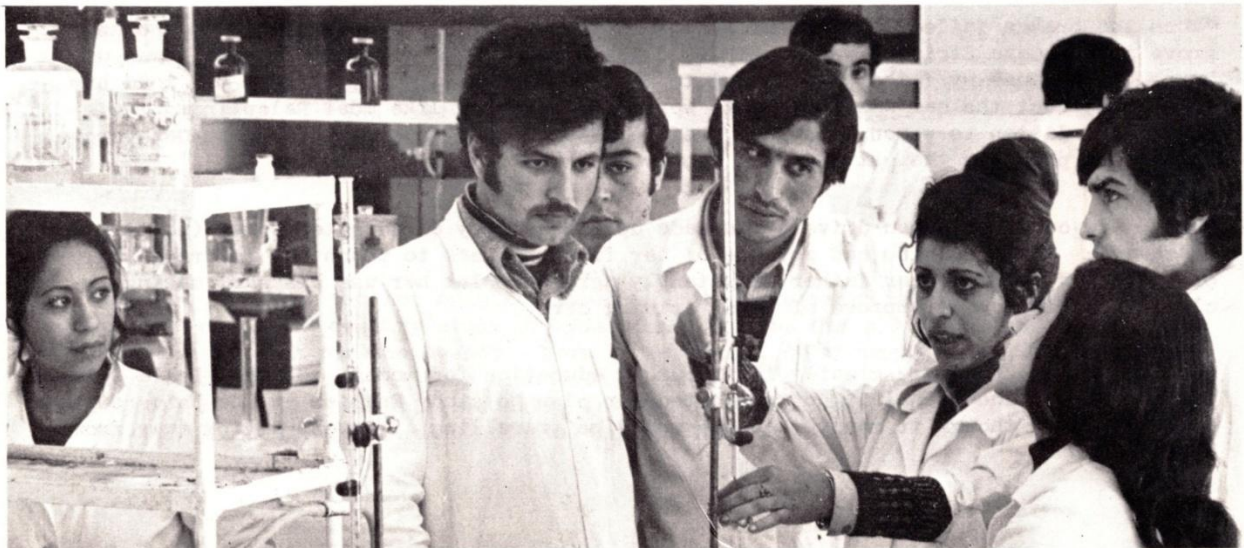
"When the brakes failed as I was driving my father's car and it plunged into an orange grove in the Gaza Strip, I was happy", said Leila Quleibo. "Not just because I was unhurt, but because my father would have to replace our aged family car. I had told him repeatedly that the car was too old to work properly but, like most Palestinian men, he did not listen to women. In fact, before 1967, only five or six women in Gaza drove cars, so he probably thought I didn't know what I was talking about."

This elite corps of women drivers was made up exclusively of educated women (mostly teachers). Leila Quleibo had got one of her five brothers to teach her to drive and, once she had learned, her father reluctantly agreed to let her use his car, making it clear that he did not approve of women driving cars.

Her father was, however, greatly in favour of education for women, so, when Leila Quleibo finished high school in 1952, he supported her plan to study English at the University of Cairo, even though it meant that she would be travelling alone and living away from her family.



(above) An UNRWA/Unesco schoolteacher and a traditional refugee mother ... the younger and older generations. (below) Instruction in an UNRWA Vocational Training Centre.







In the early fifties, only three or four women from Gaza had graduated from university. Today, 25 years after the beginning of the UNRWA/Unesco education programme, hundreds of Palestine refugee women from Gaza go to university every year. A large number of these graduates return to Gaza where a women's university club has recently been formed. Many others find work in different parts of the Arab world, where the need for managers, scientists, engineers, technicians and teachers is growing as the region's economies expand.

Leila Quleibo works as an elementary school supervisor in the UNRWA/Unesco system but she is also very active in the Palestine Women's Union of Gaza (PWU). Founded in 1964, this organization is dedicated to improving the lot of women in the Gaza Strip through educational, cultural and welfare programmes.

The Union runs three nurseries in Gaza, Khan Younis and Rafah, which are attended by about 350 children of pre-school age. In addition the Union conducts literacy courses for women in 10 centres in various camps and towns in the Gaza Strip. (Illiteracy is a serious problem only among the older generation of Palestine refugee women; today, young women have attended UNRWA/Unesco schools and can both read and write.) Perhaps as a natural outgrowth of this programme the PWU has opened three small libraries, also in Gaza, Khan Younis and (the newest one) in Rafah. English and Hebrew language courses, open to men as well as women, are also available for those above school age.

In the years since 1967, the Palestine Women's Union of Gaza has contributed to hospitals, orphanages, blood banks and needy families in the Gaza Strip. In its dressmaking and sewing centres the Union employs women whose families are in need and produces dresses and uniforms for a number of girls' schools in the Strip and bath robes and bed jackets for hospital patients.

Apart from their present welfare and educational activities, Leila Quleibo and the other members of the Palestine Women's Union of Gaza are working hard to introduce a course for female health educators for the Gaza Strip, establish an institute for deaf and dumb children and a second institution for mentally retarded children. The Union also hopes to start a home for the aged and disabled.

This is all part of Miss Quleibo's dream for the future.

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# SUMMARY OF PLEDGING CONFERENCE

At the annual meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee of the General Assembly for the Announcement of Voluntary Contributions to UNRWA, held in New York on 26 November, 44 governments announced pledges of cash, goods and services in support of the activities of UNRWA in 1976.

Of the 44 governments represented at the "Pledging Conference", 16 pledged increased contributions. The amounts pledged for 1976, some of which were not specific, can be estimated at \$ 61.7 million.

Since the Conference, additional pledges confirmed or received, together with estimates based on previous contributions of those governments which have not yet made known their intentions, non-governmental income, contributions from other United Nations organizations and miscellaneous income total some \$ 86.6 million. This figure does not include special (one-time) contributions in 1975 which have not been incorporated in regular contributions for 1976. These special contributions amounted to \$ 29 million in 1975 and if they were repeated there would still be a budget deficit of \$ 24 million in 1976. Without them, and if no new contributions or additional contributions are received, the deficit will be no less than \$ 53 million.

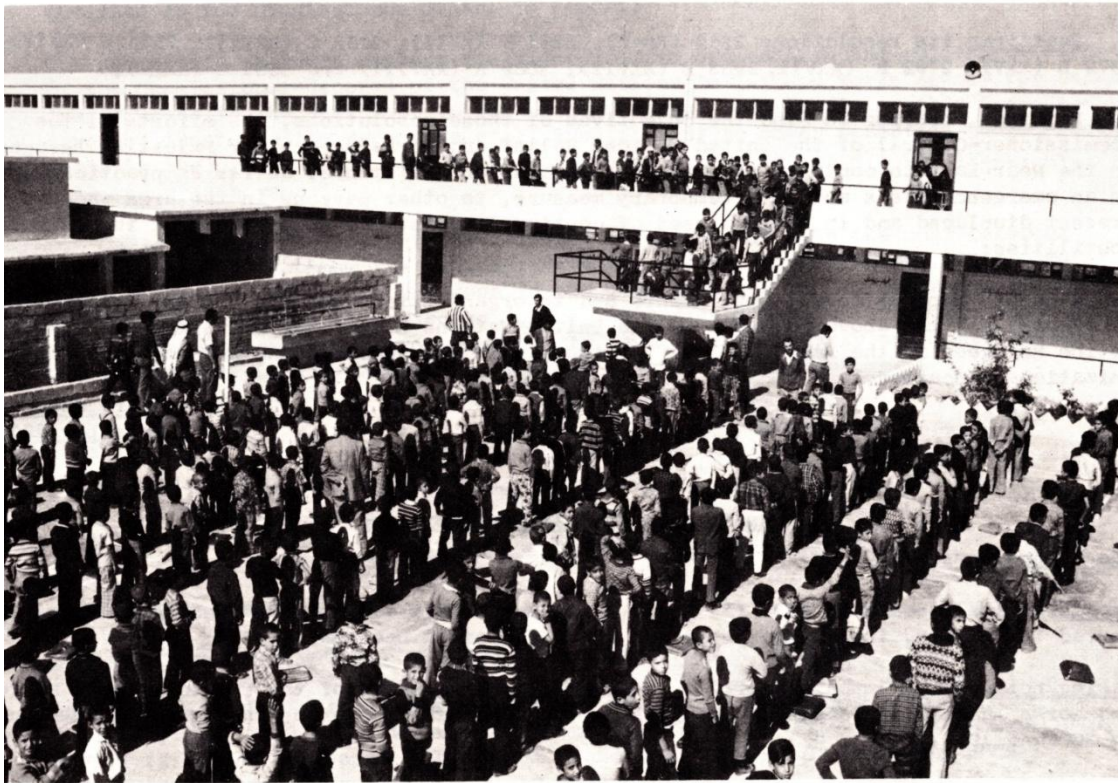
Addressing a plenary meeting of the General Assembly on 8 December, Sir John Rennie, UNRWA's Commissioner-General, spoke about the Agency's finances in the following terms :

"After consulting the Secretary-General, what I propose to do, therefore, is to review the financial position in March 1976. If by then sufficient funds have not been pledged to maintain operations in full until the end of the year, reductions in services will have to be made, with effect from 1 April, to the extent necessary to eliminate one half of the outstanding deficit. If enough funds are subsequently received, those services will be restored. The position will be reviewed again in June, and if sufficient funds are still lacking, further reductions will be made on the scale necessary to eliminate the deficit."

"I much regret the need to refer to the possibility of reductions in UNRWA's services in 1976 before that year has even begun, but I consider -- and the Secretary-General shares this view -- that the General Assembly should be left in no doubt about UNRWA's prospects for 1976. I have emphasized very strongly on many occasions the importance that I believe should be attached to the maintenance of UNRWA's services, especially at this critical time, and in doing so I know I have simply been echoing what has been said by many others. I assure the Assembly that every effort will be made to obtain the amount necessary to maintain services in full and that I shall give all possible assistance to the Working Group, renewal of the mandate of which is recommended in a draft resolution before the Assembly."

"I am bound to add, however, that the ultimate responsibility for ensuring that UNRWA has the funds required to continue its operations must rest, in the final analysis, not with the Secretary-General and the Commissioner-General, but with the States Members of the United Nations, which decided only a year ago, at the twenty-ninth session, to renew the Agency's mandate for a further period of three years."

Most UNRWA/Unesco schools, as the Ma'daba Boys' School, east Jordan, run double shifts to accommodate the increasing number of Palestine refugee pupils.



# GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTIONS PERTAINING TO UNRWA

3419 (XXX) United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

A

## Assistance to persons displaced as a result of the June 1967 hostilities

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 2252 (ES-V) of 4 July 1967, 2341 B (XXII) of 19 December 1967, 2452 C (XXIII) of 19 December 1968, 2535 C (XXIV) of 10 December 1969, 2672 B (XXV) of 8 December 1970, 2792 B (XXVI) of 6 December 1971, 2963 B (XXVII) of 13 December 1972, 3089 A (XXVIII) of 7 December 1973 and 3331 C (XXIX) of 17 December 1974,

Taking note of 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 1974 to 30 June 1975,<sup>1/</sup>

Concerned about the continued human suffering resulting from the June 1967 hostilities in the Middle East,

1. Reaffirms its resolutions 2252 (ES-V), 2341 B (XXII), 2452 C (XXIII), 2535 C (XXIV), 2672 B (XXV), 2792 B (XXVI), 2963 B (XXVII), 3089 A (XXVIII) and 3331 C (XXIX);

2. Endorses, bearing in mind the objectives of those 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 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 other inter governmental and non-governmental organizations concerned.

2430th plenary meeting  
8 December 1975

B

## Assistance to Palestine refugees

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 3331 (XXIX) of 17 December 1974 and all previous resolutions referred to therein, including resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948,

Taking note of 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 to 30 June 1975,<sup>2/</sup>

1/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirtieth Session, Supplement No. 13  
(A/10013 and Corr. 1).

2/ Ibid.

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 by the Assembly in paragraph 2 of resolution 513 (VI) of 26 January 1952 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 to the staff of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East for their continued dedicated and effective efforts under difficult circumstances to provide essential services for the Palestine refugees, and to the specialized agencies and private organizations for their valuable work in assisting the refugees;
3. Notes with regret that the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine has been unable to find a means of achieving progress in the implementation of paragraph 11 of General Assembly resolution 194 (III) and requests the Commission to exert continued efforts towards the implementation of that paragraph and to report as appropriate, but no later than 1 October 1976;
4. Directs attention to the continuing seriousness of the 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;
5. Notes with profound concern that, despite the commendable and successful efforts of the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East to collect additional contributions, this increased level of income to the Agency is still insufficient to cover essential budget requirements in the present year, and that, at presently foreseen levels of giving, deficits will recur each year;
6. 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 regularly and contributing Governments to consider increasing their regular contributions.

2430th plenary meeting  
8 December 1975

C

#### Population and refugees displaced since 1967

The General Assembly,

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

Recalling also its resolutions 2252 (ES-V) of 4 July 1967, 2452 A (XXIII) of 19 December 1968, 2535 B (XXIV) of 10 December 1969, 2672 D (XXV) of 8 December 1970, 2792 E (XXVI) of 6 December 1971, 2963 C and D (XXVII) of 13 December 1972, 3089 C (XXVIII) of 7 December 1973 and 3331 D (XXIX) of 17 December 1974,

Having considered the report of the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East 3/ and the report of the

3/ Ibid.

Secretary-General of 16 September 1975, 4/

1. Reaffirms the right of the displaced inhabitants to return to their homes and camps in the territories occupied by Israel since 1967;
2. Deplores the refusal of the Israeli authorities to take steps for the return of the displaced inhabitants;
3. Calls once more upon Israel :
  - (a) To take immediate steps for the return of the displaced inhabitants;
  - (b) To desist from all measures that obstruct the return of the displaced inhabitants, including measures affecting the physical and demographic structure of the occupied territories;
4. Reiterates its call upon Israel :
  - (a) To take effective steps immediately for the return of the refugees concerned to the camps from which they were removed in the Gaza Strip and to provide adequate shelters for their accommodation;
  - (b) To desist from further removal of refugees and destruction of their shelters;
5. Condemns Israeli military attacks on refugee camps and calls upon Israel to desist from such attacks;
6. Requests the Secretary-General, after consulting with the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, to report to the General Assembly by the opening of the thirty-first session on Israel's compliance with paragraphs 3, 4 and 5 of the present resolution.

2430th plenary meeting  
8 December 1975

D

Working Group on the Financing of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency  
for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 2656 (XXV) of 7 December 1970, 2728 (XXV) of 15 December 1970, 2791 (XXVI) of 6 December 1971, 2964 (XXVII) of 13 December 1972, 3090 (XXVIII) of 7 December 1973 and 3330 (XXIX) of 17 December 1974,

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4/ A/10253

Having considered the report of the Working Group on the Financing of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East,<sup>5/</sup>

Taking into account 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 1974 to 30 June 1975,<sup>6/</sup>

Gravely concerned at the alarming financial situation of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, imminently endangering the essential minimum services being provided to the Palestine refugees,

Emphasizing the urgent need for extraordinary efforts in order to maintain, at least at their present minimum level, the activities of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East,

1. Commends the Working Group on the Financing of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East for its work;
2. Notes with appreciation the report of the Working Group;
3. Requests the Working Group to continue its efforts, in co-operation with the Secretary-General and the Commissioner-General, for the financing of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East for a further period of one year;
4. Requests the Secretary-General to provide the necessary services and assistance to the Working Group for the conduct of its work.

2430th plenary meeting  
8 December 1975

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<sup>5/</sup> A/10334

<sup>6/</sup> Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirtieth Session, Supplement No. 13  
(A/10013 and Corr. 1).

# TEMPORARY RELOCATION OF UNRWA HQ

At the end of December, the Commissioner-General of UNRWA, after consulting the Secretary-General, decided to move the Agency's Headquarters temporarily from Béirut, Lebanon, to Amman, Jordan, as an emergency measure to restore Headquarters' support for and control of the Agency's programmes. HQ functions had been disrupted intermittently from April 1975 and totally interrupted since 6 December due to the civil strife in Lebanon.

As it was not possible to obtain at once, in Amman, office space for all the 400 persons employed in Headquarters, the health and education departments went to Amman, while some 50 staff members forming an administrative and financial unit were sent on temporary duty to Vienna, Austria, where spare United Nations accommodation and communications facilities were immediately available.

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A class in Karameh girls' school in the Jordan Valley. Temporarily, the headquarters of UNRWA's Health and Education Departments have been redeployed to Jordan.



Editor's Note

This is the first issue of the Newsletter to appear since April 1975, in large measure because of the effects of the civil conflict in Lebanon.

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