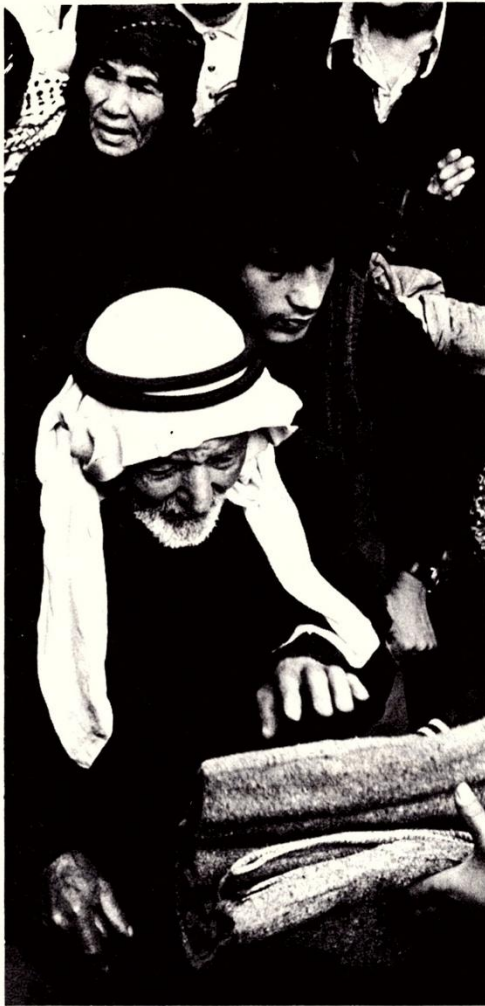


Palestine Refugees Today

No. 85





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Cover photo: Destruction in south
Lebanon, March 1978.

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The twenty per cent problem

A crisis within a crisis: that has been the plight of 67,000 refugees displaced from their homes by the Israeli invasion of south Lebanon and aerial strafing of Damour.

Once again, UNRWA has had to divert scanty resources from its basic task - assisting the refugees of 1948 - to an emergency programme for victims of yet another conflict. Money that was intended for schools and clinics had to be spent on emergency feeding, blankets and other relief.

Shall we try to be optimistic and thank our lucky stars that there is an UNRWA on hand to deliver relief supplies at times like this? Or should we be pessimistic, looking back on the number of occasions when we have had to come to the rescue, and ask ourselves how often again will it be necessary to bandage wounds, shelter and feed the displaced families and care for the mothers and infants. We should not go to either extreme. UNRWA has been charged by the General Assembly with providing essential services to Palestine refugees, and it will continue to do so within the limits of its resources. If and when a new emergency affects those Palestine refugee families, whatever its cause, UNRWA staff will be there to help.

"Within the limits of its resources": supporters of UNRWA will be all too familiar with that term, and we have not heard the last of it. For the international community has yet to find a way of providing adequately for the financing of the task it has assumed, through many

General Assembly resolutions, of caring for the refugees who lost their homes and livelihoods 30 years ago.

Three decades and many millions of dollars later, UNRWA is facing the biggest financial shortfall of its history. Contributors large and small have increased their donations, with heartening generosity, yet income has not increased rapidly enough to keep pace with the inflation and dollar depreciation of the past five years.

And so UNRWA was already facing a deficit of \$27 million in March when fighting drove 67,000 Palestine refugees - a third of those living in Lebanon - from their homes alongside an even larger number of Lebanese.

Today, if the end of the March crisis is not yet in sight, it is certainly nearer. But the old crisis is still with us: the need to protect the health of an uprooted people; to give them the basic education they must have to be self-supporting; to help fatherless families through hard times.

The 1,700,000 registered Palestine refugees look to UNRWA to take care of their most basic needs. In its turn, UNRWA looks to benefactors around the world to furnish the additional 20 per cent of financial support that will enable it to do its job, and to save an important part of its educational programme which is about to be axed for lack of means. The following pages show how UNRWA reacted to the crises of 1978 and 1967.

and to the displaced refugees, UNRWA, with its experienced staff and supply network, was able to provide for the orderly delivery of food, clothing and blankets to the neediest refugees. The quantities of relief supplies and food available were limited and came from UNRWA stocks for its regular programme, until international aid began to arrive.

An emergency feeding programme for 34,000 displaced refugees in the Sidon area was quickly set up, and refugees received bread, sardines or tinned beef, and some fresh foodstuffs, on alternate days. In Beirut the supplementary feeding programme for refugee children up to the age of six, who receive one hot meal daily, was extended to cover children up to age 15.

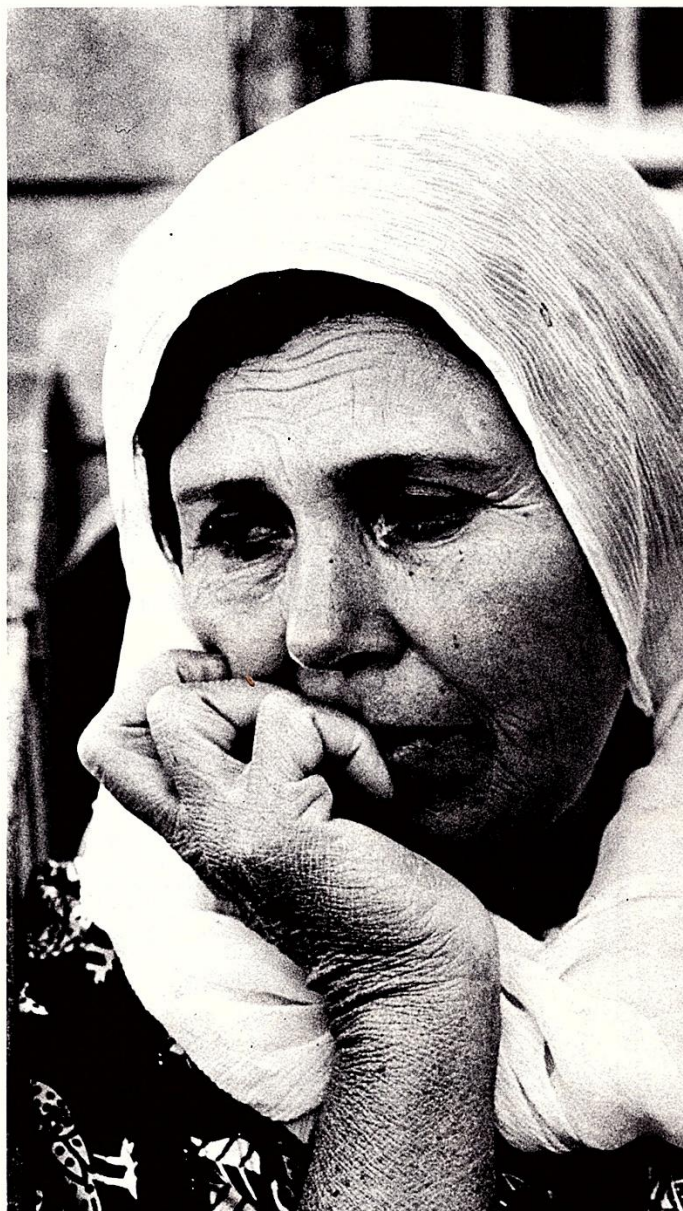
Without international assistance and support, UNRWA could not have continued to provide emergency relief to the displaced refugees; the Agency's estimated income for 1978 is \$27 million short of the proposed budgeted expenditure of \$139.8 million and the emergency relief programme is outside the regular budget.

Quick response

UNRWA appealed to the international community on two occasions in March and April on behalf of the displaced refugees. The response to the appeals was quick and generous (see page 8). All told, by the end of April, well over \$1 million in relief, including cash, tents, blankets, clothing, and foodstuffs for the 67,000 displaced refugees had been received.

Now, as the withdrawal of Israeli troops has begun under United Nations Security Council resolution 425, what can the refugees expect? About 80 per cent (by 1 May) of the displaced refugees from places south of the Litani River have returned to their homes.

As they go back, UNRWA is assessing the damage to their houses, which were originally provided in part by UNRWA, and to UNRWA installations such as schools, clinics, feeding and ration distribution





centres. A survey indicates that in the three camps around Tyre, the cost of repairing or reconstructing such facilities would be about \$450,000.

How Long?

For refugees returning to a war-ravaged zone whose economy has been disrupted, there is no immediate telling how long relief

will be required. At a minimum, rations of flour, rice, sugar and oil for the Palestine refugees from Nabatieh and all those south of the Litani river, and protein supplements for about 15,000 special hardship cases over three months, will be required. The shattered economy offers few jobs and little income, and extra food is needed to help keep Palestine refugees alive until they can support themselves again.

The long emergency

They had to move on again. Refugees of 1948, they became the displaced refugees of 1967. They came to the rolling hills of north Jordan, where the highway rises and dips on its way from Amman to Damascus. On the valley floor the emergency camp of Baqaa was set up for them. It is still there.

*

Hannan Ibrahim: I'm nine years old, and I was born in Baqaa. I like living here. There are 14 of us at home sharing three rooms: six boys, six girls and my father and mother. My father is a baker. I like watching television or reading when I am not helping with the housework. We see good serials from Egypt, and I like "The little house on the prairie".

*

Ten storeys high, the parabola of a satellite telecommunication ground station dwarfs the camp's huts. It brings images of a universe far beyond the limits of Hannan's world, the camp of Baqaa.

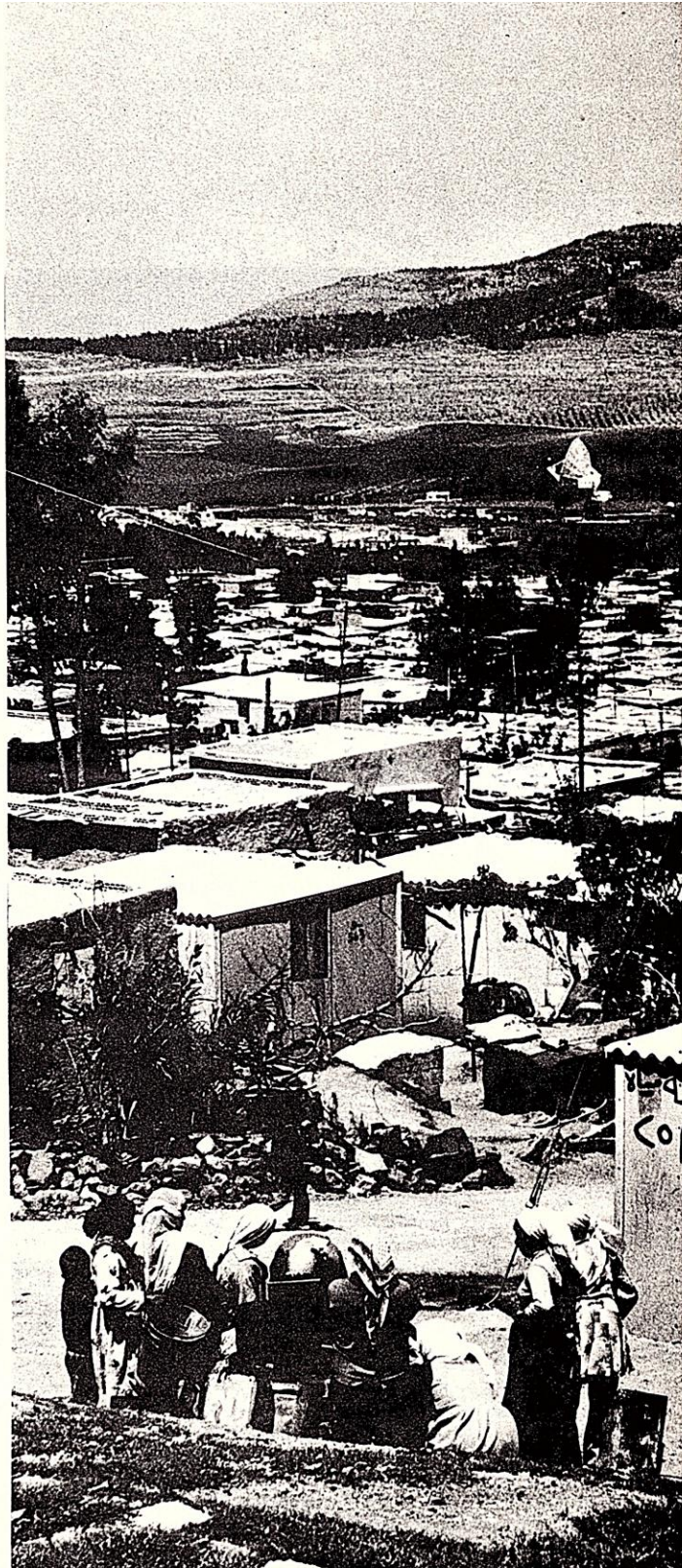
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Ibrahim the baker: Television isn't for men. I would rather go to a café if I can afford it, but times are hard. So many families are buying their own ovens these days. It's a miserable life we lead here. It is hot in summer and deep mud in winter, and I'm forever having to fix a leak in the roof. The bakery doesn't pay well enough, and I still have nine of my children at school. Hannan and the others are doing well, and I am proud of them. One of my sons is leaving school soon: I would like him to get an UNRWA scholarship so that he qualifies for a decent job.

*

Hiyam, classmate of Hannan: I want to be a teacher when I grow up.

*



The incidence of gastro-enteritis has dropped with increasing cleanliness, so that fewer underweight babies need emergency treatment. There is a new kind of emergency case at Baqaa today: the road accident victim. For the camp now has its own roads where cars, delivery trucks and taxis vie for space with donkey carts and with the 12,000 children who throng the alleys on their way to school.

*



IBRAHIM AND HANNAN

Wasel Abujaber: Palestinians are overcoming death by their high rate of fertility. The Palestine people are growing tremendously. Ask any of our three-year-olds where he is from and he will answer: Palestine!

*

Dr. Hisham Abu Arqoub: I am on call 24 hours a day for emergency cases at Baqaa - abnormal deliveries, cuts, things like that. I qualified in Syria not long ago. My father is a driver with UNRWA.

*

Every working day about 15 tons of food are handed out to needy refugees - flour, rice, sugar and oil. This quantity is less than before. The flour ration has been cut because UNRWA is short of funds.

*

Raghda, classmate of Hannan: I want to become a teacher.

*

Monthly rations do not provide enough nourishment for growing children. Up to the age of 15 they can get a free hot meal at midday in an emergency camp. At Baqaa 2,200 children are served daily. A typical meal: rice, meat and beans with yoghurt and a chunk of bread. A carrot or half an orange adds some vitamins.

*

Teacher: All the girls want to take up teaching. It's the only work they expect to find.

*

Latifi Hamad: It wasn't easy, living in a tent with a family. We lost two boys at Karameh with malaria, one six years old, the other eighteen months. We had to leave Karameh in 1968 and another of my boys died on the way from there after I had carried him for miles. There were tents here at first, but then we were given better shelters.

*

Special contributions from the Federal Republic of Germany enabled the tent dwellers of Baqaa to be rehoused in 7,390 prefabricated shelters between 1969 and 1971.

*

Leila Jaoudat Abdulla, Hannan's teacher: It isn't easy for children to do their homework with 12 people living in the same room.

*

Hamad Ali Said, husband of Latifi: I used to grow cereals on my land in Tiberias; now I sell coffee to support my family. The future? Only God knows. But we are content - we manage. There's nothing for us but to accept this way of life.

*

Afaf Asfour: I am the head teacher of this elementary school. This month we are using the school in the mornings; next month it will be in the afternoons because another school shares the same buildings - there are not enough of them to go round. Things have improved a bit over the years because even the schools were in tents before. But the physical conditions are not decisive; what matters more is the parents, and the people who run the school. If parents ask their children to study hard the results are marvellous. There needs to be co-operation between the school and the home.

*

Dr. Nazih Azzeh: I was born in a village near Hebron just before the Arab-Israeli war of 1948 and I grew up in a refugee camp. I went to UNRWA schools, then to secondary school, and studied medicine in Cairo. Now I am one of the five camp doctors at Baqaa. We feel that pregnant women and nursing mothers are more knowledgeable about health care than they were some years ago.

*

Camp residents can now buy electricity from three generators run commercially by refugees at Baqaa. There are 4,500 meters of roads and 1,300 meters of concrete pathways; more roads are planned, with finance coming from the Government of Jordan, the refugees themselves and from UNRWA.

*

Salem Hamad al-Aidi: Are people contented in Baqaa? No! We are against rehabilitation anywhere but in Palestine. Please tell this to the newspapers of the world.

*

Wasel Abujaber: We will never be satisfied, even though UNRWA gives us castles and skyscrapers. We still think of our homeland.

*



LATIFI

"The Security Council ... calls upon the Government of Israel to ensure the safety, welfare and security of the inhabitants of the areas where military operations have taken place and to facilitate the return of those inhabitants who have fled the areas since the outbreak of hostilities"

Security Council Resolution 237 (1967)

*

"In the 10 emergency camps (6 in east Jordan and 4 in the Syrian Arab Republic) set up to accommodate refugees and other persons displaced as a result of 1967 hostilities, the population showed a slight decrease from 146,437 last year to 146,181 at present."

UNRWA Commissioner-General's report, 1977

*

Financial help comes from afar and nearby

The following governments, voluntary organizations, businesses and individuals have pledged or donated contributions in cash or kind on behalf of the Palestine refugees of south Lebanon (as at 1 May 1978)*:

Cash contributions

Governments:

Federal Republic of Germany	\$196,520
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia	\$500,000
Netherlands	\$ 67,797
Norway	\$181,159
Sweden	\$434,783

Non-governmental sources:

Mary Cassel's Welfare Fund Committee, West Bank	\$ 100
UNRWA Area Staff Association (Syrian Arab Republic)	\$ 6,231
UNRWA International Staff Association	\$ 1,672

Contributions in kind or cash to purchase foodstuffs and supplies:

<u>Blankets:</u>	<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Value</u>
British Ministry of Overseas Development/British Red Cross Society	3,000	\$ 15,000
Middle East Christian Council	4,980	\$ 24,900
Oxfam	9,970	\$ 49,850
UNICEF (cash to purchase)	16,940	\$ 84,700
		\$174,450

<u>Clothing</u>	<u>Quantity</u>
IDA (Netherlands)	20 bales
Middle East Christian Council	15 bales
Oxfam	60 bales
UNRWA International Staff Association	10 cartons

Foodstuffs:

	<u>Item</u>	<u>Value</u>
European Economic Community (EEC)	1,000 tons) flour)	
	40 tons)	
	sugar)	\$226,000
	40 tons)	
	cooking)	
	oil)	
International Union for Child Welfare	5 tons whole milk powder)	\$ 6,000
Middle East Council of Churches	500 kgs. cheese)	**
Oxfam (cash to purchase)	fresh food-stuffs)	\$ 18,600
UNICEF (cash to purchase)	250 tons) flour)	
	12.5 tons)	
	rice)	
	12.25 tons)	\$ 68,462
	sugar)	
	12.25 tons)	
	skim milk)	
	powder)	

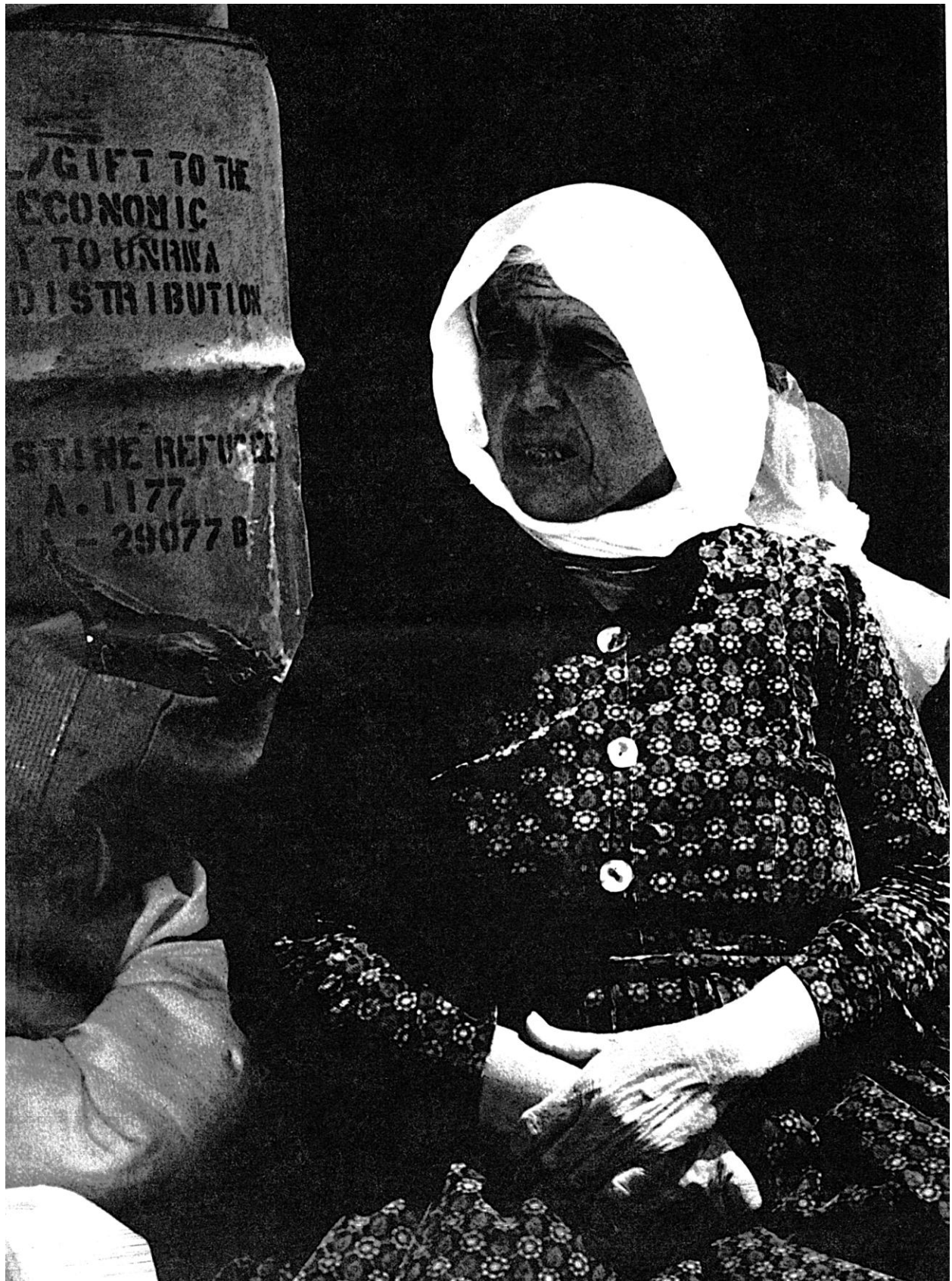
<u>Freighting (air):</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Value</u>
TMA (Trans Mediterranean Airways)	35 tons	\$ 70,000
Middle East Airlines	15 tons	\$ 30,000
		\$100,000

<u>Mattresses:</u>	<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Value</u>
UNICEF (cash to purchase)	8,000	\$ 34,680

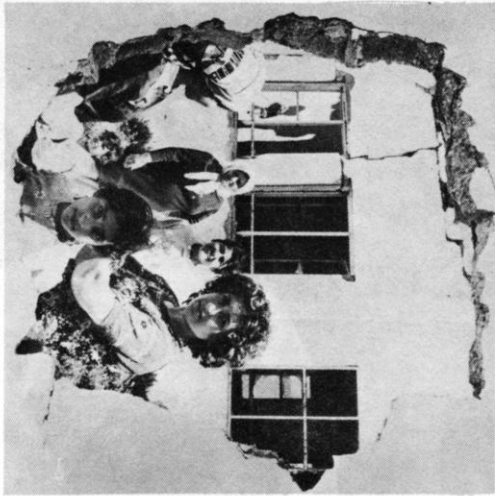
<u>Tents:</u>	<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Value</u>
British Ministry of Overseas Development/British Red Cross Society	100	**
Lebanese Government (from U.S. donation)	500	**

* All figures are estimated value.

** Value not yet determined.



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