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

Note by the Secretary-General

1. 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 operations in Jordan, dated 30 September 1970.^{1/} This special report is transmitted herewith to the members of the General Assembly for their most serious attention.
2. 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 in the order of two million dollars.
3. 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/3077) in which they expressed their profound distress at the bloodshed and suffering resulting from

^{1/} The annual report of the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East for the period 1 July 1969 to 30 June 1970 (Official Records of the General Assembly, Twenty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 13 (A/3013)) is now being processed and will be circulated shortly.

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 earnestly 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.

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Special report of the Commissioner-General of the United Nations
Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
on operations of the Agency in Jordan

1. 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, the Agency's activities were brought to a virtual standstill by the fighting which erupted on 17 September 1970. Agency officials and staff in Jordan were completely unable to communicate with each other, or indeed with anyone else, for ten days. Telephone service had ceased and movement on the streets had been prevented by fighting and later by curfews.
2. 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 reactivation of the Agency'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.
3. 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: the 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 per cent of the buildings were estimated to be beyond repair, another 25 per cent 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.

4. 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 its contents are largely intact, but some UNRWA vehicles and equipment and supplies have been lost. No deaths of Agency staff have been reported as yet, but only a small fraction of the staff has been reached so far.
5. 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. The Agency has been doing all it can to co-operate with the International Committee of the Red Cross and others in bringing emergency assistance from sources outside Jordan and to help these groups to co-ordinate 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 co-ordinating services will be arranged.
6. The Agency 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. 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 in the order of two million dollars.
7. The Commissioner-General urgently appeals to Governments, organizations, and individuals for funds to enable the Agency to restore its services and to meet the emergency needs of the Palestine refugees in Jordan east of the Jordan River.

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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 addition \$6 million in annual income can be found (see A/8040, annex).

8. 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.
