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NOTE BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL SUBMITTING A SECOND REPORT
OF THE COMMISSIONER-GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS RELIEF
AND WORKS AGENCY FOR PALESTINE REFUGEES IN THE NEAR EAST

The Secretary-General submits to the Members of the General Assembly and of the Security Council the following second report on the humanitarian aspects of the situation in the Middle East presented to him by the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA):

"1. The purpose of this report is to supplement and bring up-to-date my earlier report dated 18 June 1967. 1/ My information is now more comprehensive and, in addition to regular reports coming from Agency staff in the various fields of operation, I have myself visited Amman on 28 June; the Deputy Commissioner-General and the Director of Health have very recently visited all the fields and the Director of Administration and Relief has completed a special mission to the United Arab Republic.

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1/ Circulated on 20 June 1967 (A/6723 and S/8001).

"A. AREAS IN WHICH MAJOR HOSTILITIES OCCURRED

"(a) Gaza

"2. The Agency has virtually resumed its full services, including food distribution, supplementary feeding programme, health services and sanitation arrangements in the camps. The number of persons in need, and to whom the Agency is providing emergency rations, is considerably in excess of those previously registered with UNRWA. This is because many people have lost their employment or sources of income (including remittances from abroad) and have thus ceased to be self-supporting.

"3. There was a good deal of damage to property in the course of the fighting and afterwards some shelter has been demolished, mainly at Jabaliya and Rafah, as reprisals for mining incidents. The Agency has already issued instructions to begin rebuilding. Medical services for the wounded appear to be satisfactory, but burial arrangements are not entirely satisfactory and could pose a health hazard. Looting has not entirely ceased and some considerable losses have occurred to stores of the United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF) at Rafah, which were to be made available to UNRWA, if needed. There is also a need for additional civilian police, particularly in the middle camps. All these matters have been taken up with the authorities and remedial action has been taken or is promised.

"(b) West Bank of the Jordan

"4. The situation generally appears to have improved and electricity and water supplies and sanitation services have been restored to the Old City of Jerusalem. Telephone communications are still disrupted. The Agency's normal pattern of services and distribution of foodstuffs and supplies has been fairly well restored, but the large-scale movement of refugees, both within and beyond the West Bank areas, to which I refer below, have inevitably produced certain dislocations of our operations.

"5. The situation of the hospitals has caused some concern owing to a shortage of medical supplies and food.

"6. The Agency's shortage of transport, which was critical, has been considerably alleviated by a temporary loan of vehicles from the Government of Israel and, more recently, by the acquisition of a number of vehicles previously used by UNEF.

"(c) Southern Syria

"7. No Agency staff have been able to enter this area. It is believed that few inhabitants remain there.

"(d) Movement of civilian population

"8. In Syria the total movement may be of the order of 80,000. Of these, approximately 16,800 are Palestinians, of whom 11,200 are in the Damascus area and 4,600 in the Deraa area.

"9. The best estimate is that at least 150,000 persons have now left the West Bank of the Jordan; of these, 80,000 to 100,000 may be former UNRWA-registered refugees. It is evident that, whilst movement appeared to have virtually ceased about the middle of June, a 'second wave' began about 20 June, and in the last ten days perhaps 30,000 have crossed the Jordan. In the Jericho area, with a total of 73,000 before the hostilities began, only about 7,500 remain.

"10. There is also still some movement in the West Bank area. On 22 June, I received reports of some 12,000 inhabitants of Qualquilya having moved to the Nablus area. By 26 June, I had learnt that the Israel authorities were prepared to permit their return and this return has now taken place, but some 40 per cent of their homes were either damaged in the fighting or subsequently demolished, apparently because the Qualquilya area was the site of gun emplacements from which the outskirts of Tel Aviv and other targets in Israel were shelled by Jordanian artillery. The Mayor's estimate of the cost of reconstruction was \$1.4 million. Numbers of people also moved from three border villages in the Latrun area into Ramallah. These villages are still under military restriction and the inhabitants have not yet been allowed to return. The extent of damage to their dwellings is not known. In three other border villages in the Hebron area the inhabitants also moved and have not yet been allowed to return. Many of their dwellings are said to have been destroyed.

"(e) The Agency's problems in these areas

"11. The Agency now has increasing freedom of movement within these areas, although local staff are still subject to some restrictions. The losses of vehicles are now being made up by re-deployment from other fields and by taking over UNEF vehicles. Greater communication between headquarters in Beirut and these areas is now possible by courier-cars and may soon be improved by the use of a small aircraft to be made available by the generosity of the Canadian Government.

"12. The Agency's main concern is over food supplies. The disruption of shipping caused by the closure of the Suez Canal has meant that ships have off-loaded Agency flour shipments in places like Casablanca and Piraeus. New arrangements have had to be made for re-shipment, but the consequent delay in arrival has caused me great concern. The supply situation on the West Bank is critical, and is likely to remain so until mid-July, but the problem has been temporarily alleviated by a loan of flour from the Israel authorities. Satisfactory arrangements for receiving new supplies through the port of Ashdod have now been made with the Government of Israel so that, from mid-July onwards, these present difficulties should be overcome. In Gaza the situation is only slightly better and the Agency hopes to be able to transfer considerable quantities of supplies, now immobilized in Port Said, to Gaza. The Government of the United Arab Republic has already given its agreement to this transfer.

"13. The inhabitants remaining in these areas could well face a deteriorating economic plight in so far as employment and income have been lost to them. Their plight has been accentuated by the shortage of currency. Thus, the demand upon the Agency's services may increase. There will also be longer-term needs for reconstruction of the housing which has been damaged - for which tents can be no more than a temporary substitute - and for other Agency premises such as the extensively damaged building at Mount Scopus and also schools and clinics elsewhere.

"B. AREAS IN WHICH NO MAJOR HOSTILITIES OCCURRED

"(a) Jordan

"14. Co-operation with the Government in dealing with the influx of displaced persons has now reached a fairly advanced stage. In liaison with a Ministerial Co-ordination Committee, a plan to set up some eleven tented camps has emerged, of which UNRWA will organize and operate six. The camps will take from 5,000 to 10,000 persons each, and movement from the temporary shelter in schools and other buildings into the new camps has already started. The sanitary conditions will be improved with the removal to the new tented camps. Meanwhile, UNRWA has greatly expanded its provision meals while the people are still accommodated in schools and other public buildings. Once they move into the tented camps, the cooked meals will be replaced by the issue of dry rations which the refugees will cook themselves. However, UNRWA will continue the hot-meal programme in supplementary feeding centres for children up to the age of fifteen and will also supplement the basic rations to all recipients by an additional protein issue (probably canned meat and milk powder).

"15. The Agency's main immediate needs are for tents, blankets, cooking utensils, milk powder and animal protein. The Agency's supply position on basic commodities is good.

"(b) Syria

"16. Except for the area under occupation, the Agency's normal services are in operation. The Agency has agreed, following discussions with the Syrian authorities, to exceed the established ration ceiling by 2,400. It has distributed 5,000 blankets and established an expanded supplementary feeding programme for children up to the age of fifteen. However, for the majority of the 'new' refugees, not hitherto registered with UNRWA, the Government is assuming sole responsibility. This contrasts with the situation in Jordan where responsibility is more shared.

"17. For the Agency's own programme, immediate needs are for tents, blankets, clothing and 'household kits'.

"(c) Lebanon

"18. The Agency's normal services are operating effectively.

"(d) United Arab Republic

"19. Following a request from the Minister for Foreign Affairs, an Agency mission visited the United Arab Republic on 29 June. There appear to be some 6,000 newly displaced persons who are now in camps in Tahrir province, of whom perhaps a half are said to have been expelled from Gaza since the end of hostilities. However, an exact census has yet to be taken. The camps are in fact villages which were previously unoccupied, having been built for new settlers, and the general conditions which the governmental authorities have established there are good. The camps are well-organized and the people are given either food or money with which food can be purchased nearby. The Agency presently has under study the question of the methods by which it could best assist the Government of the United Arab Republic in the care of these persons.

"(e) The Agency's problems in these areas

"20. The Agency's immediate problems remain those of securing 'emergency' supplies such as tents, blankets, clothing and cooking utensils. The supplies of basic commodities such as flour, rice, sugar, cooking oil and fats are adequate although for Jordan the supply position may deteriorate if, because of the closure of the Suez Canal, the Port of Aqaba is less used by shipping. Of course, the new feeding programmes and protein supplements will require much additional food; some offers of food to meet these needs have been received, and other supplies will have to be purchased and imported.

"21. The calculations of precise quantities of 'emergency' supplies needed must necessarily remain provisional. It has not so far been possible to obtain accurate numbers of persons in need, or even to ascertain precisely what stocks of supplies are available to Governments, but certainly in Jordan the establishment of the eleven new tented camps will allow greater accuracy of assessment.

"22. The Agency hopes soon to be in a position to give some account of the estimated cost to the Agency of the emergency operations which it has undertaken since the beginning of hostilities.

"C. CO-OPERATION BETWEEN THE AGENCY AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS,
INTER-GOVERNMENTAL AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL

"23. The Agency has already begun co-ordination of its own programmes of assistance with those planned by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and a joint mission of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the World Food Programme, and detailed discussions between representatives of the Agency and of these organizations have already taken place. In outline, it is expected that these organizations will provide assistance to persons not previously registered with UNRWA, and some part of the increased quantities of food for the supplementary feeding programmes which the Agency is maintaining in addition to its normal food programmes. Assistance by UNICEF will be related to the numbers of mothers and children.

"24. The Agency has also been in consultation with the International Committee of the Red Cross, the League of Red Cross Societies, National Refugee Councils, Caritas, the Oxford Committee for Famine Relief and many others and has established at its own headquarters in Beirut a centre for co-ordination.

"D. PROSPECTS FOR THE RETURN OF REFUGEES UNDER SECURITY COUNCIL
RESOLUTION 237 (1967) OF 14 JUNE 1967

"25. The Commissioner-General and his Deputy have on two occasions discussed with the Government of Israel the question of allowing the displaced persons to return and have emphasized that the Agency can best serve the needs of the refugees in their established camps in Gaza and on the West Bank of the Jordan. Moreover, conditions in the purely temporary accommodations on

the East Bank were such that a potential health hazard existed, and this could be avoided by a speedy return to their former habitations.

"26. Following consultation with the Secretary-General, and having heard the announcement of the Government of Israel on 2 July that the return of refugees to the West Bank, under conditions to be specified, would be permitted until 10 August, the Commissioner-General has issued an appeal that further flight should stop and that those who had already fled should return. The Agency has announced its readiness to do all in its power to assist.

"27. The return of substantial numbers to the West Bank will necessitate a re-assessment of the need for emergency tented camps on the East Bank and of needs generally. The Agency therefore has to retain the utmost flexibility in all its planning. It will enter into consultation with all the parties affected by this announcement so as to facilitate the return in the most humanitarian and orderly way possible."
