

JORDAN

Civil Strife

...spread from the streets of Amman, the capital, to nearby cities and towns. The bloodshed lasted two weeks—September 17 to 30, 1970. It was unofficially reported 3,500 civilians were killed, nearly 11,000 injured. Many deaths were attributed to the impossibility of reaching and treating the injured. In all, an estimated one million persons were affected.

Some other consequences: Armor and artillery fire left the city without communications or transportation. There was little food. Water for drinking, washing, bathing and cooking was scarce. Normal life was paralyzed. Total dollar damages: \$42 million.

Value of U.S. Assistance	\$11,816,007
Value of Assistance by 21 other Nations and International Organizations	7,352,446
	\$19,168,453

DETAILS AND BACKGROUND

Palestine refugees are Arabs who fled from that 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 Kingdom of Jordan, where some settled on the "West Bank" (formerly Palestine), and others across the Jordan River on the "East Bank" (Transjordan)

In 1967, as a result of renewed Arab-Israeli hostilities, the Jordan River became the scene of another massive exodus. Arabs fleeing the Israeli-occupied West Bank and the Gaza Strip went to Jordan east of the river. Some were already registered with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), dating from the 1948 exodus. Others, non-refugee residents of the West Bank and the

Gaza Strip, fled for the first time. There were thus 517,000 UNRWA registered refugees in East Jordan plus 250,000 other displaced people from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Of these, the combined total of 767,000, two-thirds were located in the Amman area.

The severe civil strife that occurred in Jordan from September 17-30, 1970, was the culmination of many months of internal disturbance marked by conflict between the Government of Jordan and its armed forces on the one hand, and the Palestine Fedayeen (commandos) and their supporters on the other

Prior to September 17, Amman, with a population of about half a million, had for a number of days been under partial curfew. The nights were silent, broken only by occasional gunfire between hostile forces. Small daytime clashes occurred in the streets. Fierce fighting erupted at 5.00 A.M. on September 17, and for almost two weeks civil war prevailed in Jordan. Although there was heavy fighting in other parts of the country, Amman clearly bore the brunt of the conflict.

Two weeks of gunfire left scars throughout Amman and the surrounding area



Armor and artillery fire were widespread, coupled with heavy concentrations of small arms fire. Throughout Amman, civilians were pinned down in homes, mosques or other public buildings. When the shooting stopped on September 27, they emerged to find themselves in a city without communication or transport and very little food. When obtainable, food was selling at three times normal price. Most distressing, there was no water for washing, sanitation, cooking or even for drinking. Normal life was paralyzed throughout the country.

Suffering was severe, and the number of casualties ran high, particularly in the Wahdat refugee camp in Amman. Wahdat Camp, originally built outside the city limits by UNRWA, had been gradually engulfed by Amman, and although UNRWA continued to provide certain services, the original "camp" had become a congested urban neighborhood.

In Amman, many thousands of homes were damaged or destroyed. The toll of industrial, commercial and government premises and public utilities was heavy as the conflict raged throughout sections of the city. Losses were also severe in and around major outlying population centers such as Irbid and Zarqa in northern Jordan. Areas south of Amman escaped damaged from the fighting.

ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY THE GOVERNMENT OF JORDAN, LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS AND REFUGEE SELF-HELP:

The Government of Jordan authorized expenditures on a number of relief, clean-up and rehabilitation projects under emergency fund allocations. After the initial shock had dissipated, the government quickly moved to restore normal life. There was an especially heavy burden in the early weeks upon municipal officials to restore transportation, electricity, water and other public services. Central government ministries and departments worked closely with municipal authorities and, considering the magnitude of the disaster, the coordination was judged satisfactory though not highly systematized. Aside from some ad hoc committees, no new relief organizations were

formed.

Shelter, food, clothing and medical help were provided to the needy by the government, the International Committee of the Red Cross, Palestinian and Jordanian Red Crescent Societies, UNRWA, local, U.S. and international voluntary agencies and by third country donors.

By early 1971, the Jordanian Government had compensated refugees of the three hardest hit camp areas (Wahdat, Jebel Hussein and Zerka). By this time repairs were well underway on buildings, equipment, supplies and vehicles damaged in Wahdat. Reconstruction of schools had started and those that could be opened were placed on double shift in order to get the children out of the tents in which many of them had started the 1970-71 school year.

The self-help element, based on a strong Arab tradition of family allegiance, was evident. Assisted by the Jordan Government and several voluntary agencies, refugees largely rebuilt their own concrete-block shelters. In Wahdat, the Lutheran World Federation set up machines for the manufacture of concrete blocks which were donated to needy families.

Dollar value of all assistance provided by the Government of Jordan, local organizations and private citizens is not available. However, in agreement with the U.S. Government, a Joint Fund for rehabilitation projects was established. The USG gave \$1,820,000 to the Fund and the GOJ added an equivalent amount.

ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY THE U.S. GOVERNMENT:

For the first ten days of the conflict, the heavy fighting and firing completely prohibited movement in the city and prevented any attention to relief considerations. American Embassy staff were unable to leave the premises during this period.

On September 25, the American Ambassador, L. Dean Brown, officially declared that a disaster situation existed, and on the following day President Nixon pledged \$5 million to help meet emergency and rehabilitation needs in Jordan. Under the

Ambassador's direction, during the following months all members of the U.S. Mission participated unstintingly in the administration of this assistance, coordinating with the Government of Jordan and other donors.

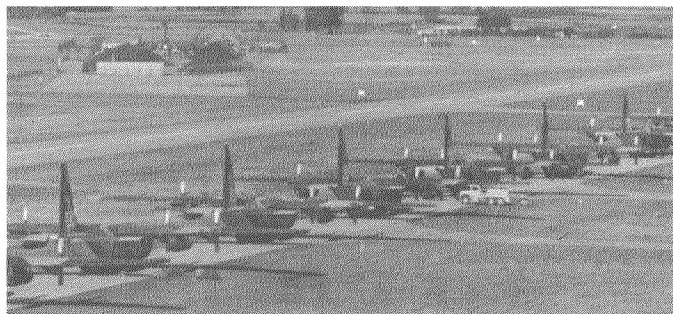
The Ambassador exercised his disaster relief authority and received AID/W approval for expenditures not to exceed \$50,000 from the pledged \$5 million, to help local and international relief activities underway at the time. This "discretionary authority" was later increased to \$150,000.

In late September 1970, the American Embassy in Beirut, Lebanon, accepted the responsibility to act as the temporary coordinator of the disaster relief efforts for Jordan until the security situation improved permitting the transfer of coordination to Amman.

United States efforts were channeled through the **International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)**, which solicited assistance from all sources, and coordinated all relief activities in Jordan. Under the ICRC, relief became a vast international undertaking. To avoid duplication in these efforts, daily coordination meetings were held at the ICRC headquarters, attended by an American Embassy official.

While it was impossible for relief activities to commence until the fighting ended, advance preparations were made by the

Line of USAF C-130's at Kitzingen AFB, Germany, on alert to airlift Red Cross personnel and a mobile hospital to Amman.



USG for the earliest possible delivery of two US military hospitals, food and other supplies. A special group consisting of State/AID/USIA representatives was created in Washington to focus exclusively on the relief needs of the civilian victims of the conflict. This task force was placed under the direction of Mr. C. William Kontos and worked on a 24-hour a day, 7 day week basis. The AID Disaster Relief Coordinator, who coordinated USG and US voluntary agencies' relief shipments from the United States, and a member of his staff were assigned to the task force.

At the request of Ambassador Brown, the US Mission in Beirut arranged for a commercially chartered planeload of fresh and canned food to be flown on September 27 from Beirut to Amman. It was the first shipment of USG-donated supplies. The next day four C-130s carried food and other supplies to Amman from the USG Air Base at Incirlik, Turkey.

Ambassador Brown recommended and State/AID approved the deployment to Jordan by the Department of Defense of two US Army and Air Force mobile hospital units. One was a mobile 36-bed hospital capable of providing in-hospital and outpatient care; the other a 60-bed field surgical hospital, staffed primarily by surgeons and surgical teams. It required 18 US military aircraft to fly the hospitals to Amman from Europe. They were delivered on September 28 and 29 and were immediately put into operation. The two hospitals were manned by more than 200 US military doctors, male nurses and support personnel. Patients brought to the facilities quickly filled all the beds. The capabilities of the American doctors and the range of their facilities resulted in their taking on many very difficult surgical cases.

A great deal of ingenuity was required of the American medical facility. Members of the motor pool, for example, made artificial limbs from scrap wood and other materials they could salvage locally. All of the US military personnel wore civilian clothes and were identified by Red Cross armbands as part of the ICRC effort. The American flag was flown in front of the US hospital complex.