

JORDAN RELIEF OPERATION

On several occasions, we have published information about the relief operation undertaken by the ICRC in Jordan, with the co-operation of the League, National Societies, institutions and governments, during the last few months of 1970. But the richly illustrated Final Report which the International Committee is now publishing gives a complete picture of the action, and we think it worth while to reproduce the text, especially as it is followed by tables from which our readers will see who were the generous donors who participated in the action and the extent of the contributions received and forwarded.

On September 6, 1970, the world was stunned at the news that two passenger aircraft, one Swissair and one TWA, had been hijacked to the desert airport in Zerka, Jordan. On the same evening the Head of the ICRC delegation in Jordan went to Zerka to assess the condition of the passengers.

On the following day in Geneva the ICRC decided to send a special delegation by Red Cross plane to Amman, Jordan. The purpose of the mission was explained by the delegation to the Prime Minister of Jordan on September 8th.

On the afternoon of September 9th a BOAC passenger aircraft was hijacked and joined the other two on the desert airfield. The following day a second Red Cross plane arrived in Amman with food, doctors and nurses. A convoy with food sent out from Amman to Zerka on September 11th was detained en route and not allowed to proceed. An ICRC doctor who had from his arrival remained in the desert with the passengers was given orders to leave. He advised that dynamite had been placed in all the aircraft.

"I am a little child. Let me go home!" This plaintive plea of a small boy who had been held hostage on an aircraft in the Jordan desert was but a faint echo of the cries of anguish that rang through the hills of Jordan in the days that followed. A fortnight of fear!

Combat and casualties. Smoke and ruins. People in distress—wounded—homeless—helpless. A world aroused. For the dead, everlasting peace, for the living a tomorrow. For those in need, the Red Cross.

Meanwhile, on September 17th, civil war broke out in Jordan.

The International Committee of the Red Cross for some years has had its permanent delegations in the Middle East, in Beirut, Amman, Damascus, Cairo, Tel Aviv, Sanaa and Aden. In Jordan there were two delegates who had diligently carried out the traditional activities of the ICRC. These had been augmented by others following the aircraft hijacking. With the outbreak of internal conflict the picture changed. The ICRC delegation headquarters became a battleground and was partly destroyed. Shellfire put Red Cross radio communications out of commission for several days. There was no light, no water, no contact with the outside world. For four days the delegates were pinned down under fire. At the same time the headquarters of the Jordan Red Crescent was demolished. In this setting a major undertaking had its beginning. Further to his appeal to several countries for emergency assistance, King Hussein addressed on September 19 a formal request to the ICRC asking the Committee to coordinate all relief for Jordan.

With mounting world pressures and against maximum insecurity, actions were taken and risks involved. People were dying. People were in need. On September 23rd, the President of the ICRC appealed for a 24-hour truce in order to provide aid to the wounded. In view of the magnitude of the relief action to be undertaken, the ICRC created, on the same day, within the Department of Operations of the ICRC, a special group whose task would be the coordination of the relief action of the ICRC, the League of Red Cross Societies and the National Societies and, should the occasion arise, of other organizations. The direction of this coordinating group was assigned to the Secretary-General of the Finnish Red Cross Society. Also on that day, a Red Cross survey team was dispatched to Jordan. The green light was given to medical units to proceed to Jordan. By air and by land, via Cyprus, Beirut and Damascus they came, as well as from Israel and the occupied territories. The action was begun.

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Unique in the annals of international relief, the Jordan Relief Operation was a milestone in international Red Cross cooperation. Working under the aegis of the ICRC, at its Headquarters in Geneva, the Jordan Relief Operation was independently administered, utilizing the combined resources made available by the National Societies, the League and the ICRC. Headed by the Secretary-General of the Finnish Red Cross, a table of organization was established and a headquarters staff was assembled. This staff included members from the ICRC, the League of Red Cross Societies and National Societies.

In Jordan a parallel structure was established and there was rapidly assembled a medical and relief staff from thirteen National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the League, and the ICRC. In addition, there arrived in Jordan medical teams from 19 nations to take up the burden of providing medical care for the injured and ill.

Thus, from 25 nations and Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, around the world, individual identities were shed, and the Jordan Relief Operation without concern for prestige, power or national origin became a coordinated Red Cross reality. People were paramount and actions were focused on meeting human needs.

An initial appeal to National Red Cross, Red Crescent and Red Lion and Sun Societies was launched by ICRC on September 24, followed by additional appeals on October 6 and 9. The response was immediate and gratifying. A record of the contributions is included in this report.

With the initial temporary cease-fire agreement, the first four-man Red Cross survey team arrived in Amman in Jordan on September 24th. The situation was still very tense, and under continued sporadic gunfire, the team found itself unable to conduct an actual survey but, instead, was immediately overburdened in an attempt to bring some order into the relief situation. Flights of relief supplies were arriving, often unannounced, at the Amman airport and convoys by land came by way of Syria and the Allenby Bridge. Under very trying circumstances supplies were taken in hand for distribution to facilities that were operative, and medical teams were directed to areas where they could operate in bringing aid to the wounded. From the very beginning, Red Cross delegates

and team members at great personal risk and with maximum physical discomfort pursued their tasks.

As from September 26th, about 50 planes flew to Jordan field hospitals from France, the United States and Great Britain.

The two aircraft put at the disposal of ICRC by the Swiss Government for the Jordan Relief Operation and clearly identified as Red Cross planes, served as a life-line between Amman, Beirut, the Middle East and Europe. They carried in personnel, medical supplies and food, and evacuated hostages, the wounded and nationals from other countries who had no means of exit because there were no commercial flights operating. The aircraft continued to serve the Jordan Relief Operation at no cost until November 1st, at which time scheduled commercial flights were back in operation. These flights made possible the delivery of needed supplies to hospitals and to the stricken population and were a significant contribution to the success of the operation. In all, a total of 92 flights were made carrying a total of 587 tons of supplies.

By the first week in October, with the arrival of additional staff and with medical teams established in fixed locations, a semblance of order was brought into being. A relief headquarters was established at the King Hussein Youth Center Stadium. A supply warehouse was obtained, and a supply distribution system was established to provide relief items to hospitals and to families in need.

Logistic support was provided to both the headquarters and the field operation by ICRC permanent delegations in Lebanon, Syria and Israel. Radio contact was established between Amman, Beirut, Damascus and Geneva and the two Red Cross aircraft. Lebanon being central to the Middle East, an ICRC delegation was there with splendid cooperation from the Lebanese Red Cross which carried a major share of the support effort.

Regular visits to the field operation in Jordan were made by headquarters administrative staff. From the report of the Chief of the Relief Operation during his October 3rd visit the following can best describe the situation:

“The present situation is difficult to evaluate because of the lack of accurate information and statistics. The exact number of casualties will probably never be known. The damage caused by the conflict is enormous in some areas, and in others not as extensive

as had been previously indicated. Living conditions have gradually improved, but the lack of water and electricity remains a serious problem. On the medical side eleven medical teams comprising 516 doctors, nurses and technical personnel have given care to 5,107 patients. In spite of difficulties the work of these teams is effective and very well coordinated through daily staff meetings and through the use of the radio network furnished by the British team. The first and critical emergency phase of the operation can be considered as terminated and now we begin a second phase of assessment and action to meet the known continuing needs of the situation."

From the above as reported by the Chief of the Relief Operation, plans were immediately launched for the second and major phase of the operation. From the Geneva headquarters an intensification of the appeal for funds and supplies was undertaken. Recruitment of additional staff and replacements for staff who were on limited assignment were undertaken and accomplished.

In Jordan better working accommodations were achieved, and regular distribution schedules were established with the cooperation of the Jordan Red Crescent Society and the "Palestinian Red Crescent." The situation in Jordan gradually improved although security was not always totally ensured. Medical teams continued their work under Red Cross coordination and planning was undertaken regarding the need for continuing medical care for an estimated 150 civilian patients who would still require hospitalization.

The activities of UNRWA which had been brought to a virtual standstill by the conflict made rapid progress of restoration in the early days of October. UNRWA had cooperated fully with the Red Cross and others in bringing emergency assistance to Jordan.

A third and final phase of the operation was planned and brought into being in late October. This involved the evacuation of medical teams and the consolidation of the remaining patients into one hospital. Under a Red Cross agreement with the Jordan Ministry of Health, the King Hussein Hospital was designated as the Red Cross hospital, to receive the remaining civilian patients. The hospital was staffed on a cooperative basis by the Jordan Ministry of Health, the Jordan Army Medical Service and the coordinated units of the Red Cross, and on October 30 the consoli-

dation of the remaining patients into one hospital was achieved. With the cooperation of the Governments of France, Great Britain and the United States, equipment brought to Jordan by the medical team from these countries was left at the Red Cross hospital to assure its capable operation. This was augmented by supplementary supplies contributed by medical teams from Red Cross Societies and supplies sent by donors to the Jordan Relief Action.

Of the 174 casualties transported to Lebanon by the ICRC immediately following the conflict, by November 30th, all but 23 had been discharged or repatriated to Jordan. The final "patients still requiring hospitalization" were air evacuated to Jordan on November 29th. From the records maintained by the Red Cross and government-sponsored medical teams, more than 2500 patients were admitted to hospitals in which these teams were working. Over 2300 operations were performed and more than 7850 persons were treated as out-patients.

From November 1st until the close of the operation the distribution of relief supplies was undertaken totally by the Jordan Red Crescent Society and the "Palestinian Red Crescent" under the supervision of the Red Cross Jordan Relief Action. In addition they received quantities of food and medicaments sent directly to them without going through the Jordan Relief Operation. In addition to the air lifts, convoys crossing the Allenby Bridge brought in large quantities of supplies collected in Israel and the occupied territories including food purchased by the ICRC delegation in Israel. As has been indicated, during the confusion immediately following the conflict, all incoming supplies could not be properly documented. However, records do indicate that in excess of 1,800,000 kilos of supplies were received and distributed by the Jordan Red Cross relief team. These included 1,500,000 kilos of food, 112,000 kilos of medical supplies, plus quantities of tents, blankets, clothing and other materials.

As of December 1st, discussions had been held with the medical and surgical staff at the King Hussein Hospital regarding the remaining patients. The patient load was decreasing daily and the Jordan medical authorities along with the Red Cross team physicians agreed that the remaining patients' care was entirely within the capabilities of the local medical and nursing personnel. It was

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agreed therefore to release the remaining Red Cross medical and nursing staff by December 10th. As of December 10th there were but 14 patients in the hospital.

A final relief convoy left Beirut on December 5th for Amman carrying food, medical supplies, clothing and tents. The convoy arrived in Amman on December 6th and the Red Cross staff began an immediate distribution of the tents and other supplies with the cooperation of the Jordan Red Crescent Society and the "Palestinian Red Crescent". By December 10th the remaining Red Cross team members left Jordan for home.

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Jordan Relief Operation

Country	Cash	Personnel	In kind— value where known	Total
	Fr.	Fr.	Fr.	Fr.
Abu Dhabi		not specified		
Algeria		31,000.—	93,140.—	124,140.—
Australia (Red Cross)	23,825.—			23,825.—
Austria (Red Cross)			66,000.—	66,000.—
Belgium *	2,300.—		530,500.—	532,800.—
Canada (Red Cross)	71,600.—	8,526.—	72,240.—	152,366.—
(Gvt)	210,500.—			210,500.—
Cyprus			not specified	not specified
Denmark *		648,102.—		648,102.—
Dubai		not specified		
Ethiopia (Red Cross)	10,000.—			10,000.—
Finland *	51,600.—	316,922.—	76,295.—	444,817.—
France (Red Cross)	20,000.—	52,360.—		72,360.—
(Gvt)		1,193,500.—	74,382.—	1,267,882.—
German Dem. Rep. (Red Cross)			216,114.—	216,114.—
Germany Fed. Rep. *		96,022.—	528,203.—	624,225.—
Great Britain (Red Cross)	20,600.—	20,895.—	71,490.—	112,985.—
(Gvt)		2,000,000.—		2,000,000.—
Iceland (Red Cross)	2,500.—			2,500.—
Indonesia (Gvt)	22,800.—			22,800.—
Iraq		not specified		
Ireland (Red Cross)	20,600.—			20,600.—
Israel (Gvt)			(400 tons)	
Italy (Red Cross) *	94,551.—		175,000.—	269,551.—
Japan (Red Cross)	8,640.—		10,035.—	18,675.—
Kuwait (Red Crescent)		not specified	618,100.—	618,100.—

* Including Government contribution.

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Country	Cash	Personnel	In kind— value where known	Total
	Fr.	Fr.	Fr.	Fr.
Lebanon (Red Cross)			58,700.—	58,700.—
Liechtenstein (Red Cross)	5,000.—			5,000.—
Luxembourg (Red Cross)	3,000.—			3,000.—
Libya		not specified		
Monaco (Red Cross)	1,560.—			1,560.—
Morocco (Red Crescent)			250,000.—	250,000.—
Netherlands (Red Cross)	210,000.—	35,700.—	190,281.—	435,981.—
(Gvt)	120,000.—		714,000.—	834,000.—
New Zealand (Red Cross)	24,480.—			24,480.—
Norway (Red Cross)	60,400.—	30,200.—	513,400.—	604,000.—
(Gvt)	120,800.—			120,800.—
Philippines (Red Cross)	1,080.—			1,080.—
Poland (Red Cross)			10,500.—	10,500.—
Qatar (Gvt)			300,000.—	300,000.—
Rumania (Red Cross)			112,700.—	112,700.—
Saudi Arabia		not specified		
South Africa (Red Cross)	3,005.—			3,005.—
Spain (Red Cross)	10,000.—		135,000.—	145,000.—
Sudan		not specified		
Sweden *	248,930.—	127,922.—	1,529,970.—	1,906,822.—
Switzerland (Red Cross)		25,000.—	100,000.—	125,000.—
(Gvt)		100,000.—	2,900,000.—	3,000,000.—
Syria (Red Crescent)	15,600.—			15,600.—
Tunisia (Red Crescent)			not specified	
Turkey (Red Crescent)			135,512.—	135,512.—
United Arab Rep.			not specified	
USSR (Red Cross)		23,088.—	86,400.—	109,488.—
USA (Red Cross)	216,000.—	71,755.—		287,755.—
(Gvt)	432,000.—	4,320,000.—		4,752,000.—
Yemen People's Dem. Rep.			not specified	
Yugoslavia (Red Cross)			15,000.—	15,000.—
<i>Others</i>				
European Economic Community			1,000,000.—	1,000,000.—
Individuals	27,300.—			27,300.—
Lutheran W.F.	43,200.—			43,200.—
OXFAM	154,500.—			154,500.—
Save the Children Fund		259,250.—		259,250.—
CARE		(included in US Government)	(150 tons)	
Catholic Relief Service			14,500.—	14,500.—
UNHCR	21,600.—			21,600.—
UNRWA			40,000.—	40,000.—
Private groups on West Bank			(490 tons)	
	2,277,971.—	9,360,242.—	10,637,462.—	22,275,675.—

* Including Government contribution.

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	<i>Swiss Francs</i>	
A Relief to victims		
1. Food	151,429.—	
2. Clothing	27,497.—	
3. Shelter—household items—bedding	157,227.—	
4. Medical treatment and supply	603,440.—	
5. Transport	242,433.—	
6. Warehousing	113,245.—	
7. Special relief supplies and equipment	64,427.—	
8. Participation in artificial limb and rehabilitation centre in Jordan	250,000.—	1,609,698.—
B Administration costs—Headquarters and field		
9. Salaries	97,443.—	
10. Insurances	69,387.—	
11. Per diem and travel	301,018.—	
12. Communications	43,023.—	
13. Office supplies—equipment	81,357.—	
14. Maintenance and storage or returned equipment and supplies in Beirut warehouse for preparedness in the area	76,045.—	668,273.—
Total		2,277,971.—
Total funds promised and received		2,277,971.—
Total value		
of assistance given to the victims of Jordan conflict		
In cash		2,277,971.—
In kind		10,637,462.—
In services		9,360,242.—
Grand total		22,275,675.—

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Medical teams from the following countries were sent to Jordan to assist in the relief operation:

Abu Dhabi, Algeria, Denmark, Dubai, Finland, France, Germany (Federal Republic), Great Britain, Iraq, Kuwait, Lybia, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, UAR, USA, USSR.

Individual staff members were loaned to the Jordan relief operation from Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies from the following countries:

Australia, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Great Britain, Greece, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, Tunisia, United States.