

DISASTER
RELIEF

CASE REPORT
Tunisia—Floods
March 1973

Agency for International Development
Washington, D.C. 20523



Damage to farm lands was extensive as acres of crops and olive trees were inundated.

Foreign Disaster Case Reports are publications of the Office of the Foreign Disaster Relief Coordinator, Agency for International Development. This office has responsibility for coordinating U.S. Government foreign disaster relief responses and for the further coordination of such activities with those of the U.S. private and international disaster relief communities.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Coordinator acknowledges assistance received in the preparation of this and other case reports from the many public and private organizations in the United States and abroad engaged in foreign disaster relief.

TUNISIA

Floods

... resulting from week-long heavy rains brought death and destruction to the Medjerda River Valley the latter part of March, 1973. The raging waters left 52 people dead, 33 missing, and 41,000 homeless. Over 4,800 dwellings and 3 main bridges were destroyed. One-third to one-half of the agricultural land in the lower Medjerda River Valley was inundated and 150,000 olive trees sustained severe or partial damage.

VALUE OF U.S. ASSISTANCE \$468,976
VALUE OF ASSISTANCE FROM THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY \$332,097

Heavy rains began in Tunisia on March 21, 1973. By March 28, after a week of steady rain, the situation was disastrous. The Upper Medjerda River Valley from Ghardimaou to Medjez-el-Bab was filled with swirling muddy water reportedly as deep as ten feet in some areas. On March 28 Prime Minister Nouira of Tunisia urgently requested United States' assistance in coping with the floods.

ACTION TAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT OF TUNISIA

During the night of March 28, the Tunisian Ministry of Defense established an operations center to organize military guides familiar with the flooded area and to formulate relief mission directives and priorities. The Minister of the Interior, Mohamed Tahar Belkodja, was appointed by his government to take total charge of all rescue operations. The Minister of Defense, Secretary General Slaheddine Baly, was appointed Deputy Director and was made the Tunisian contact for United States' assistance efforts. The Tunisian military supplied eight Alouette helicopters, and, in addition, coordinated all rescue operations. Also, the government purchased more than 18,000 blankets for use by rescued flood victims. The United States Ambassador reported effective coordination of Tunisian rescue and relief efforts.



A U.S. Navy helicopter hovers low over a man as a rescue net is lowered to him.

**ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY
THE U.S. GOVERNMENT:**

On March 28, 1973, U.S. Ambassador Talcott Seelye, exercising his disaster relief authority, authorized the expenditure of \$25,000 from the A.I.D. contingency fund for flood relief operations. At the Ambassador's request, AID/Washington subsequently approved expenditures in excess of that amount. Ambassador Seelye requested the assistance of the Sixth Fleet, U.S. Navy, for rescue and relief operations. This request was immediately concurred in by the Department of Defense, AID/W and the U.S. Commander in Chief, Europe. The USS Forrestal, an aircraft carrier, was sent into Tunisian waters on March 29, followed by the USS Springfield, flagship of Admiral Gerald Miller; the USS Sampson, a guided missile destroyer; and the USS Ponce, an amphibious transport dock. The latter three were prepared to assist if necessary, but the six SH-B twin-engine and three CR-53 helicopters of the USS Forrestal played a major role in rescue and relief efforts. The Forrestal helicopters, together with 31 helicopters of other countries, flew reconnaissance missions and rescue flights for three days under the direction of the Tunisian military.

In addition to the many services rendered by the U.S. Sixth Fleet, the USG contributed tents, blankets and P.L. 480 food commodities. Following is a breakdown of USG assistance.

500 tents (15 of these were left in custody of Catholic Relief Services (CRS) in New York because the plane was loaded to capacity ..
\$51,000

7,900 wool blankets and 2,730 cotton blankets from CRS which AID promised to replace from its excess property stocks. Estimated cost of replacement \$9,200

Air transportation cost for blankets and tents \$37,580

Cost of the U.S. Navy Sixth Fleet operations reimbursable to the Department of Defense from the Contingency Fund \$ 79,020

Total from Contingency Fund \$176,800

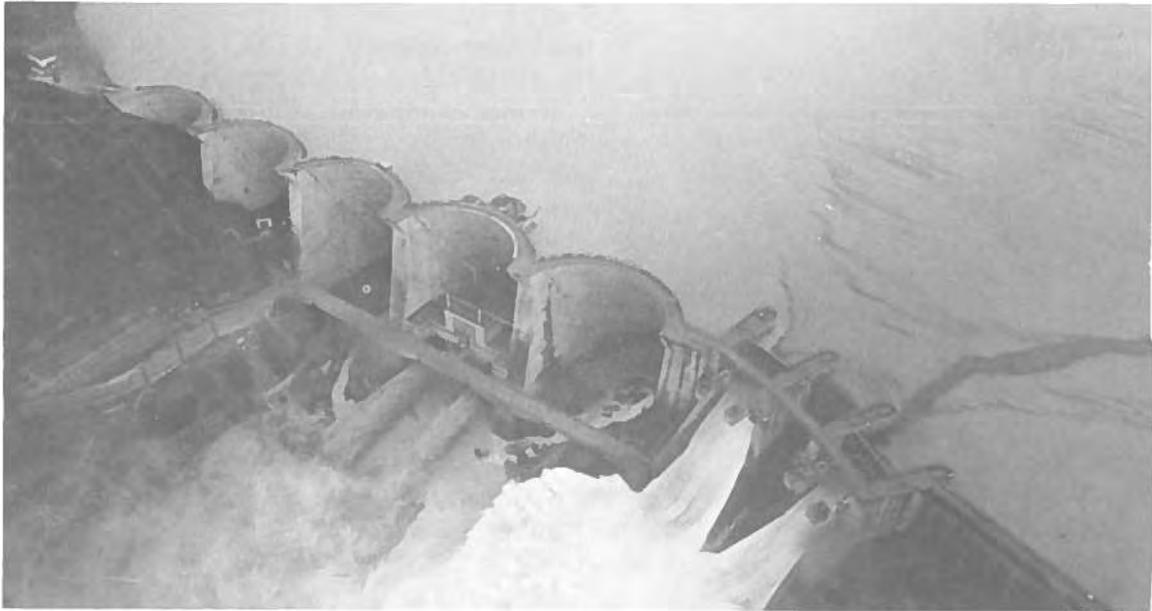
P.L. 480 Food

295 metric tons of flour and 63 metric tons of vegetable oil deployed from U.S. voluntary agency stocks \$50,900

1900 tons of wheat transferred from World



A helicopter being launched from the USS Forrestal for a rescue mission over the flooded Medjerda River Valley.



An overflowing dam in Tunisia shows the result of week of steady rain forcing hundreds of people to leave their flooded homes.

Food Program Project 482 for an emergency food assistance project.

Value, approximately	<u>\$155,800</u>
Sub-Total	<u>\$206,700</u>
Total	\$383,500

ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY U.S. VOLUNTARY AGENCIES

C.A.R.E. and Catholic Relief Services were very active in aiding Tunisia in the aftermath of the flooding. In addition to releasing the previously mentioned USG P.L. 480 food commodities from their ongoing projects in Tunisia, they provided the following from their own resources:

C.A.R.E.

3,000 blankets, sardines and milk, valued at \$10,711

Catholic Relief Services

55,085 pounds of used clothing; 705 pounds of shoes; 18,975 pounds of used bedding and blankets (6,240 pieces). Value estimated by FDRC at \$74,765

Total U.S. Voluntary agencies assistance \$85,476

ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

Governments

Libya—Provided four SA-321 helicopters; six inflatable boats for rescue operations and one C-130 aircraft for reconnaissance flights *

Italy—Supplied 16 helicopters and eight inflatable boats. Also 28 tents and 1700 blankets. FDRC estimates value of the tents and blankets at\$8,000*

France—Supplied 11 helicopters and contributed over 100 tents and an unknown number of blankets. FDRC estimates value of the tents at\$10,000*

Germany (Federal Republic of)—medical supplies *

\$18,000

League of Red Cross Societies

Austria—1,000 blankets, valued at \$4,052, two water purification units and the services of two specialists valued at \$3,742 for a total value of \$ 7,792

Australia—Cash donation 592

Bahrain—Cash donation 418



A rescue basket is being lowered from a U.S. Navy helicopter to stranded people forced to their rooftops by rising flood waters.

Canada—Cash donation of \$3,871 and 13 cartons of clothing valued at \$3,615 for a total value of ..	7,486
Denmark—Cash donation	1,348
Finland—4,000 pairs of rubber boots valued at	9,843
France—Cash donation of \$916 and 1.5 tons of food and vitamins valued at \$6,654 for a total value of	7,570
Germany (Democratic Republic)—3.5 tons of food, 1,020 blankets, 5,000 articles of clothing, and 3,900 pairs of socks for a total value of	28,651
Germany (Federal Republic of)—Cash donation of \$3,690 and 200 tents valued at \$7,380 for a total value of	11,070

Great Britain—Cash donation	2,037
Iran—Cash donation	4,181
Iraq—1,000 blankets and three tons of medical supplies for a total value of	12,484
Lebanon—Cash donation	129
Luxembourg—Cash donation	258
Monaco—Cash donation	183
Morocco—3,000 blankets and 200 tents	*
Netherlands—10 tons of infant and baby food for a value of	6,208
New Zealand—Cash donation ...	1,079
Norway—500 woolen blankets valued at \$1,726 and 100 pairs of rubber boots valued at \$5,667 for a total value of	7,393
Saudi Arabia — Medical supplies, tents, and blankets for a total value of	14,865
South Africa—Cash donation	235
Spain—500 blankets, 5,000 pairs of shoes, and seven tons of food for a total value of	27,786
Sudan—Cash donation	310
Sweden—Cash donation of \$1,843 and 200 tents valued at \$18,684 for a total value of	20,527
Switzerland (Government) — 10 tons of food valued at	19,097
Turkey—750 blankets, 150 tents, and three cases of medical supplies for a total value of	14,839
Yugoslavia—280 blankets valued at	981
Maghreb stocks released from Tunis, partly made available by the Swedish Red Cross—599 tents (\$50,572), 203 bags of clothing and 597 yards of cloth (\$28,852), 4,035 blankets (\$11,293), 106 cartons of rubber boots (\$7,175), 123 bags of shoes (\$8,583), and 1.8 tons of insecticide "Trix" (value unknown) for a total value of	106,475
International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC)—Cash donation ..	258
Total	\$314,097

* Value not reported



Homeless flood victims gathered in shelters after being rescued by helicopters and boats.



TUNISIA