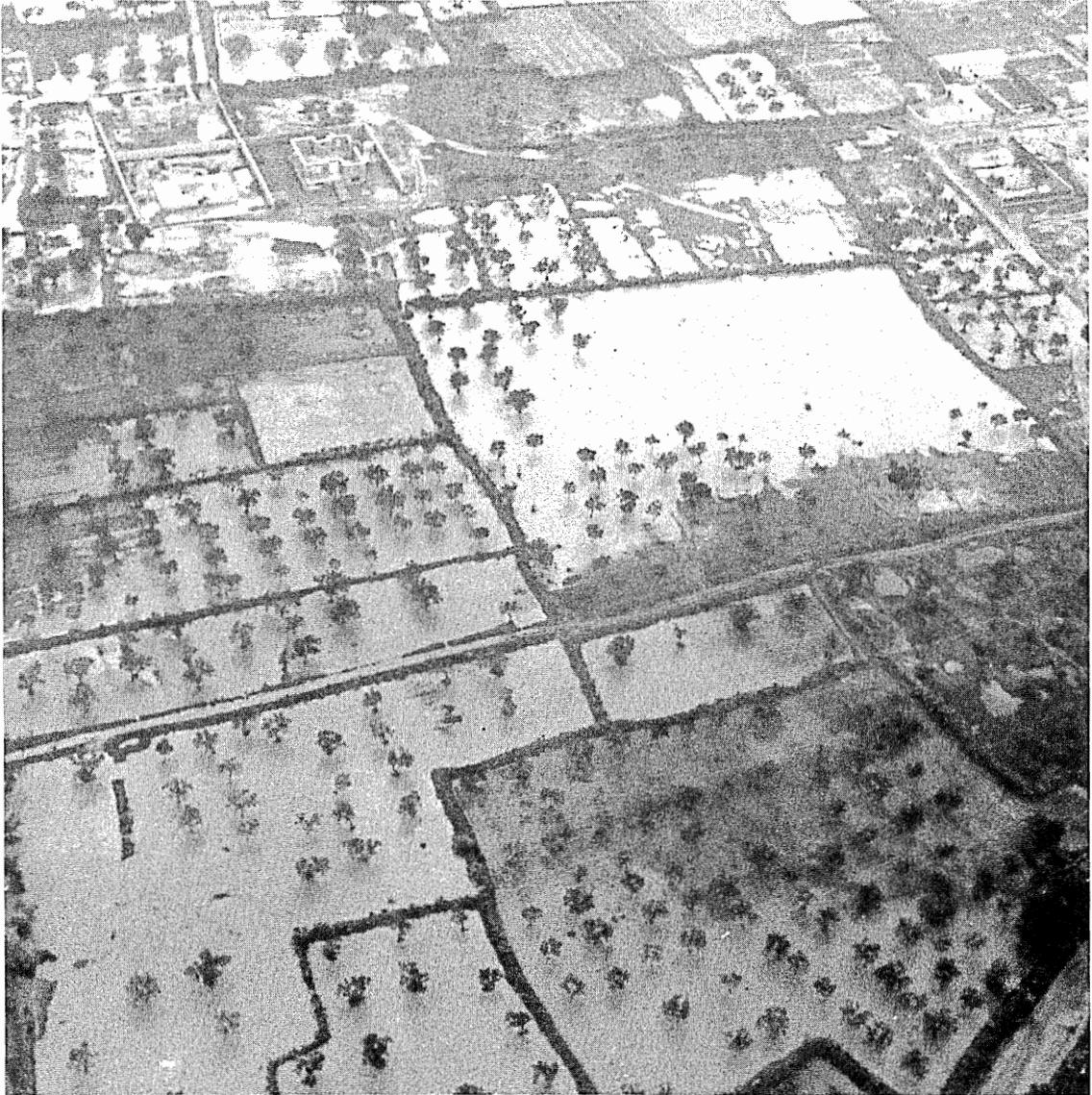




DISASTER
RELIEF

CASE REPORT
Tunisia—Floods
December, 1973

Agency for International Development
Washington, D.C. 20523



Massive acreage of olive trees was inundated in this agricultural area.

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.

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TUNISIA

Floods—December 1973

Continuous heavy rains in mid-December caused widespread flooding in Tunisia for the second time in 1973. In the Governorates of Sousse, Kairouan, Gofsa, Gabes, and Sfax an estimated 59 people lost their lives and over 920 houses were destroyed leaving more than 3,240 homeless.

Value of U.S. Government

Assistance \$28,695

Worldwide . . .

Rivers and river beds normally dry except during the rainy season from December to March became torrents, cresting many feet above normal level. Swirling flood waters washed away roads and bridges, completely isolating many villages and towns. The economy was adversely affected in the central plains and eastern region where most inhabitants engage in agriculture and livestock grazing. Massive acreage of olive trees and garden produce was inundated causing extensive loss in crop production. Thousands of domestic animals drowned.

ACTION TAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT OF TUNISIA AND LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS:

The Government of Tunisia (GOT) immediately initiated rescue and relief measures and called upon the international community for helicopter support for rescuing stranded victims and transporting relief supplies to isolated areas where roads were cut and bridges washed out making travel by roadways impossible. The principal Tunisian welfare agency, the National Committee of Social Solidarity (NCSS), provided food and material to the flood victims.

Working closely with NCSS, the Tunisian Red Crescent began distributing tents, blankets, clothing, rubber boots, and foodstuffs to the victims. Food stocks were low because flood waters in the spring had destroyed private dwellings where family

supplies were kept. An urgent appeal for aid was made to the League of Red Cross Societies.

ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY THE U.S. GOVERNMENT:

On December 13, 1973 Government of Tunisia (GOT) officials contacted U.S. Ambassador Talcott W. Seeyle requesting helicopters to rescue people stranded by high flood waters in central and southern Tunisia. The Tunisian Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs reaffirmed the GOT's request stating that torrential rains had caused flooding in most of southern Tunisia and that many areas were isolated. The Ambassador determined the floods were of a magnitude to warrant U.S. assistance and exercised his disaster relief authority, authorizing \$25,000 from the A.I.D. contingency fund for flood relief.

The Ambassador contacted the Commander of the U.S. Navy Sixth Fleet in Gaeta, Italy, requesting that helicopters be dispatched immediately to operate in the Sousse-Kairouan area. He appointed A.I.D. Director Sumner Gerard as the Mission Disaster Relief Coordinator and designated Colonel Jack Butler, Chief, U.S. Liaison Officer, to serve as the military liaison officer with the Sixth Fleet and Tunisian military.

On December 14 at 4:15 P.M. two CH-46 and one CH-53 helicopter of the U.S. Marine Amphibious Unit (MAU) from the USS Iwo Jima arrived at the Tunis/Carthage International Airport. A U.S. Navy HH-46 helicopter from Naples, Italy, arrived at the airport several hours later. Within four hours, all aircraft were loaded with emergency supplies of tents, medicines, blankets, and food and departed for the Monaster-Sousse area. The next day an additional CH-46 helicopter of the MAU arrived to give added support. The "Iwo Jima", a helicopter carrier, was positioned off the coast near Sousse to provide essential maintenance support plus backup aircraft for the relief mission.

By December 16 the flood waters had receded throughout most of the affected area and many major roads were open for the movement of bulk supplies by trucks. The U.S. flood relief operation was terminated at 7:00 P.M. on that date, and all helicopters returned to the USS Iwo Jima. During the two-day mission the five helicopters flew a total of 109 sorties transporting an estimated 105,700 pounds of material and 197 passengers. The cost of the U.S. Navy Sixth Fleet operation reimbursable to the Department of Defense from the A.I.D. contingency fund was \$28,695

ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY OTHER NATIONS AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS:

Governments

- ✓ France—Provided one Transval fixed-wing aircraft that made two supply flights from Tunis *
- ✓ Italy—Furnished five helicopters that were used primarily to transport relief supplies to the Kairouan area *
- ✓ Libya—Provided two helicopters that flew relief missions out of Djerba to the Gabes area *

League of Red Cross Societies

The League of Red Cross Societies (LICROSS) made an international appeal to all National Societies and 12 responded with contributions valued at more than \$218,000.

Red Cross Societies which contributed to or reported their assistance through LICROSS were:

✓ Algeria—cash	\$ 5,506	
Canada—cash and supplies	\$ 8,096	
Government—cash	11,152	19,248
✓ Finland—supplies	12,109	36,843
✓ France—supplies	709	
✓ Germany (Federal Republic of)—supplies	5,470	24,042
✓ Great Britain—supplies	4,970	48,012
✓ Greece—supplies	3,792	
✓ Netherlands—supplies	5,806	51,807
✓ Norway—supplies	5,402	52,610
✓ Sweden—cash and supplies	138,418	63,012
✓ Switzerland (Red Cross & Government)—supplies	15,490	20,143
✓ Yugoslavia—supplies	1,390	216,920
		8310

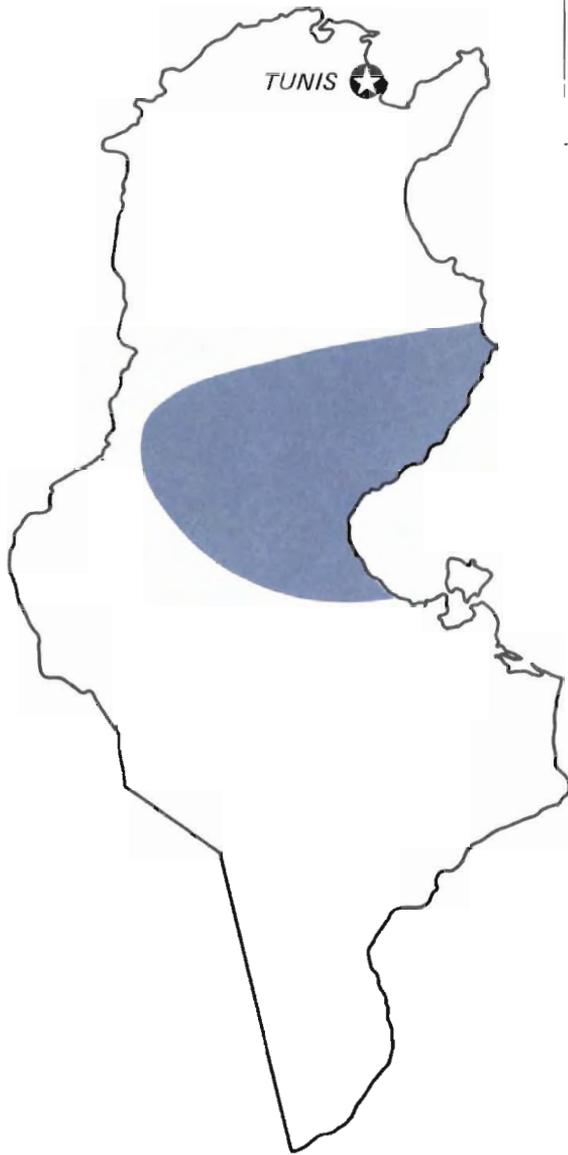
* Value of assistance not reported.



Transportation by roads was at a standstill where roads and bridges were washed away by flood waters.



A joint United States and Tunisian Flood Reconnaissance Team met with the Governor of Sousse after making surveillances by air of the affected areas.



TUNISIA