# BELGIUM CONTRIBUTES EUR 7 MILLION TO UNRWA FOR SHELTER REPAIR IN GAZA AND EDUCATION IN EMERGENCIES

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The Kingdom of Belgium has contributed EUR 7 million to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) in support of the Agency's efforts to meet the education and shelter needs of Palestine refugees. This comes in addition to the EUR 6.25 million (US$ 7.14 million) that Belgium contributed earlier this year towards the UNRWA Programme Budget, which supports the Agency's core programmes and services.

Of the total contribution, EUR 5 million will go towards the Agency's pioneering Education in Emergencies (EiE) programme to support 314,900 Palestine refugee children in Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Gaza and the West Bank through the first half of 2018. Through innovative approaches, including safe learning and recreational spaces, interactive self-learning materials, learning support activities, and safety and security training, the Agency's EiE response helps ensure that Palestine refugee children can continue to access quality education and learning opportunities, even in times of crisis and conflict. The support from Belgium is crucial in enabling UNRWA to not only continue to respond to the education needs of Palestine refugee children within an increasingly volatile context, but also to strengthen and further diversify the response.

The remaining EUR 2 million comes in response to the 2016 Emergency Appeal for the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt), specifically targeting the shelter repair programme in the Gaza Strip. This support will ensure that some 92 Palestine refugee families (approximately 450 individuals) are provided with the financial means to repair their shelters that were severely damaged and rendered uninhabitable during the 2014 summer hostilities in Gaza, over the course of 12 months.

"We are truly grateful for this latest contribution from Belgium and for our continued partnership and cooperation," said UNRWA Commissioner-General Pierre Krähenbühl. "By supporting our Education in Emergencies and shelter repair programmes, this contribution will be significant in helping to mitigate the impact of repeated conflict and crises on Palestine refugees."

Belgium has long been one of the Agency's most reliable donors. In 2015, Belgium contributed US$ 11.6 million to UNRWA, including EUR 6.25 million (US$ 6.99 million) towards the Agency's core programmes and services. In 2015, the Government of Belgium contributed EUR 2.45 million (US$ 2.6 million) in support of the Agency's humanitarian response in the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt) (of which EUR 2 million went to shelter assistance in Gaza and EUR 450,000 to community health in the West Bank) and EUR 1.5 million (US$ 1. 6 million) to the Syria Regional Crisis Emergency Appeal.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

UNRWA is confronted with an increased demand for services resulting from a growth in the number of registered Palestine refugees, the extent of their vulnerability and their deepening poverty. UNRWA is funded almost entirely by voluntary contributions and financial support has been outpaced by the growth in needs. As a result, the UNRWA Programme Budget, which supports the delivery of core essential services, operates with a large shortfall, projected for 2016 to stand at US$ 96.5 million. UNRWA encourages all Member States to work collectively to exert all possible efforts to fully fund the Agency's Programme Budget. UNRWA emergency programmes and key projects, also operating with large shortfalls, are funded through separate funding portals.

UNRWA is a United Nations agency established by the General Assembly in 1949 and mandated to provide assistance and protection to some 5 million registered Palestine refugees. Its mission is to help Palestine refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, West Bank and the Gaza Strip achieve their full human development potential, pending a just and lasting solution to their plight. UNRWA services encompass education, health care, relief and social services, camp infrastructure and improvement, protection and microfinance.

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