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Statement by the acting Humanitarian Coordinator for the oPt, Roberto Valent, on the reduction in funding to UNRWA



Area C community of Khan al Ahmar. Photo by UNRWA

I am deeply concerned about the significant reduction in funding for UNRWA, which is critical to the provision of humanitarian assistance in the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt). Some 2.5 million Palestinians in this area, or about half of the population, need humanitarian aid, including 1.4 million Palestine refugees, who are among the most vulnerable groups in the oPt. The reduction is particularly worrying against the backdrop of an overall decline in humanitarian funding in the oPt in recent years.

Some 53 per cent of the funding requirements for humanitarian interventions in the oPt for 2018 are for UNRWA activities, in the areas of health, food security, shelter, water and sanitation, and education among others; US$286.7 million out of $539.7 million.

It is crucial that decisions related to humanitarian financing be guided by the principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence, in order to ensure that the essential needs of the most vulnerable are met. Member states are encouraged to increase funding towards meeting humanitarian needs of Palestine refugees in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip at this critical juncture.