Norway to make extraordinary contribution to Palestine refugees

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‘The UN’s agency for Palestine refugees (United Nations Relief and Works Agency, UNRWA) is in a critical financial situation following the US decision to cut all funding to the organisation. Norway has decided to make an extraordinary contribution of NOK 64 million. This will help to ensure that schools remain open and humanitarian needs continue to be met,’ said Minister of Foreign Affairs Ine Eriksen Søreide.

The Foreign Minister announced the contribution at an extraordinary meeting on UNRWA’s precarious situation in New York 27 September. The UN Secretary-General, UNRWA’s Commissioner-General and foreign ministers from several other countries also participated at the meeting.

‘UNRWA plays a crucial role in promoting regional stability while the efforts to find a political solution to the conflict between the Israelis and the Palestinians are ongoing,’ said Ms Eriksen Søreide.

UNRWA plays a key role in responding to the humanitarian needs of Palestine refugees in Palestine, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon, including those who have been displaced again as a result of the crisis in Syria. The organisation provides education, health services and other basic services, including schooling for over 526.000 Palestinian children. As things stand, UNRWA does not have the resources to keep schools open beyond the end of September. If the services provided by UNRWA are reduced, this could have serious consequences for the refugees and for regional stability.

For many years, Norway has been one of the biggest donors to UNRWA. This year, Norway has already contributed NOK 230 million to the organisation. The extraordinary contribution announced today brings Norway’s total support this year to NOK 294 million.