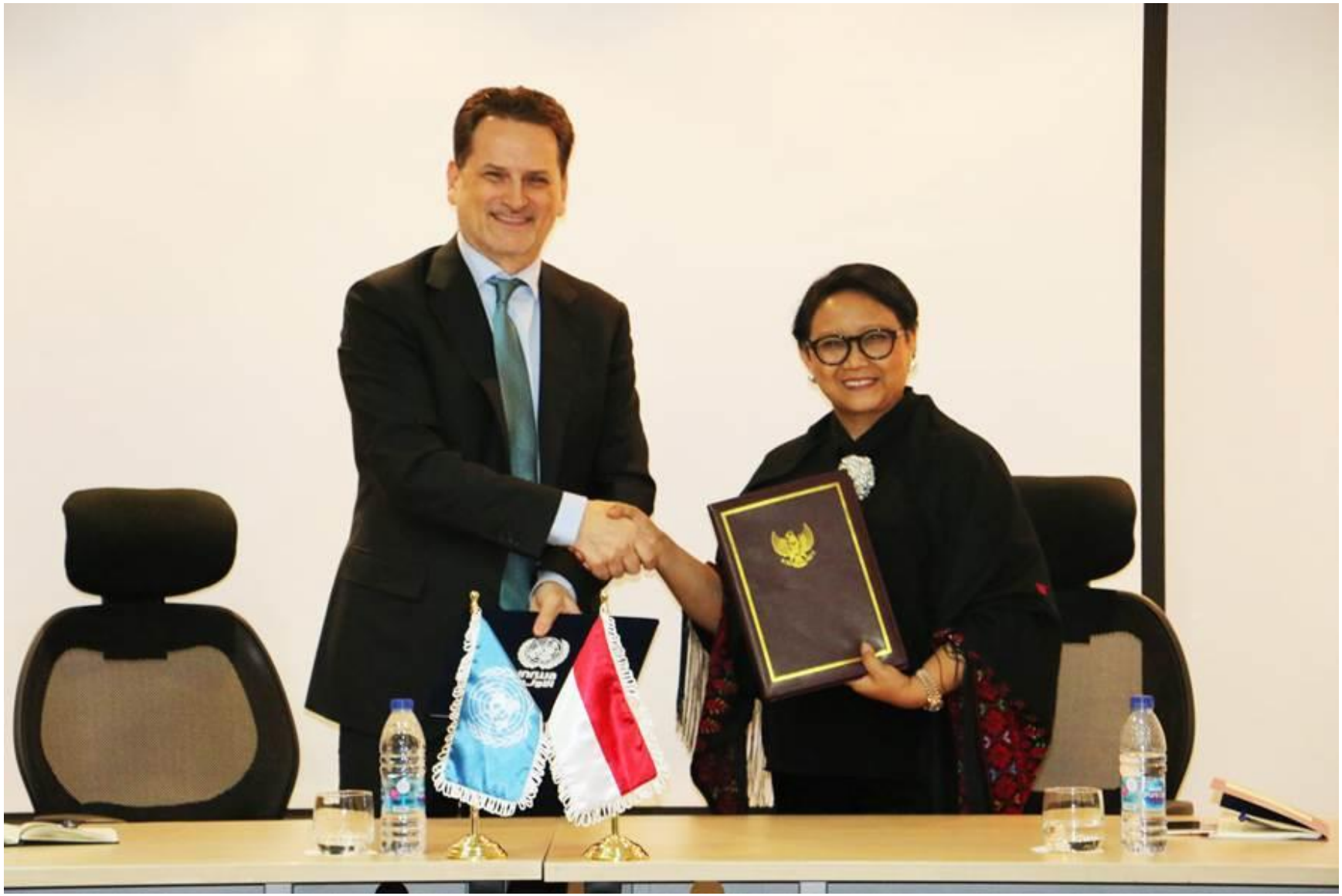
Press Release

Indonesian Foreign Minister visits UNRWA in Jordan and announces US$ 1 million contribution for Palestine refugees



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East Jerusalem

The Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, Her Excellency Retno Marsudi paid a landmark visit to the headquarters of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), in Amman, Jordan. During her meeting with the Commissioner-General, Pierre Krähenbühl, H.E. Marsudi announced a US$ 1 million contribution for Palestine refugees, representing a remarkable five-fold increase of Indonesia's support to UNRWA.

"Palestine is at the heart of Indonesia's foreign policy, and in the heart of Indonesian people," said H.E Marsudi. "I know that UNRWA is facing another difficult year, so I wanted to come to you to show Indonesia's support, hoping that this will attract increased support by other countries."

H.E. Marsudi also visited an UNRWA school in Amman New Camp, meeting students and visiting a family of Palestine refugees. During a special dialogue with student parliamentarians, the Foreign Minister conveyed a message of commitment and empowerment to female students.

Commissioner-General Mr. Krähenbühl expressed heartfelt gratitude for Indonesia's important partnership: "Our appreciation goes to Minister Marsudi, to the government and people of Indonesia for the remarkable political and financial support to UNRWA. Today's visit represents a source of great encouragement for our students and all our staff. We value the increase in funding and Indonesia's important advocacy for the dignity of Palestine refugees in diverse international fora."

The agreement signed today will help provide important health services to some 29,000 Palestine refugees - and food assistance to over 9,500 - living in and around Jerash refugee camp in Jordan. The support will focus on a particularly vulnerable community known as Ex-Gazans, in reference to the Gaza Strip where they originate from.

Indonesia has been a long-standing supporter of Palestine refugees. The growing partnership with UNRWA is of special significance both in terms of increased bilateral assistance and in multilateral initiatives such as the establishment of a Developmental Waqf Fund for Palestine refugees, adopted in the presence of Foreign Minister Marsudi and with the support Indonesia at the recent Council of Foreign Ministers of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation in Abu Dhabi.

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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. 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 5.4 million Palestine refugees registered with UNRWA across its five fields of operation. Its mission is to help Palestine refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, West Bank, including East Jerusalem 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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