# GOVERNMENT OF AUSTRIA CONTRIBUTES EUR 1.95 MILLION TO SUPPORT UNRWA HEALTH SERVICES IN THE OPT



Marc Lassouaoui, Chief of Donor Relations UNRWA Department of External Relations and Communications signs the contribution agreement with Representative of Austria in Ramallah, Astrid Wein. © 2019 UNRWA Photo by Elisabeth Meyer

Today, the Government of Austria signed an agreement amounting to EUR 1.95 million with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) in support of the Agency's health programme in the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt).

Guided by the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals on health and standards set by the World Health Organization (WHO), UNRWA delivers basic health services from its forty-three health centres across the West Bank, and is responsible for contributing to a healthy living environment for Palestine refugees. UNRWA fielded some 8.5 million patient consultations across its five fields of operation during 2018, including some 1 million consultations in the West Bank. The Agency's efforts to provide life-saving health care to Palestine refugees is part of the joint mission of the UN and host governments to address the disparities in social determinants of health and to achieve health equity.

The contribution from Austria will support the protection of Palestine refugees' health and the reduction in disease burden. Funds will go towards ensuring adequate and timely availability of essential

medicines and supplies, as well as educational materials in UNRWA health centres and clinics in the occupied Palestinian territory.

“We are grateful to the long-standing partnership with UNRWA which gives us the certainty that quality health services are provided to Palestinian refugees. In particular, we welcome the approach of the family health team as well as the urgently needed psychosocial support interventions for Palestinian refugees suffering from the current situation and status” said Astrid Wein, Austrian Representative in Ramallah.

“On behalf of the Agency, I thank and commend the Austrian government for nearly doubling its support to UNRWA health programme thus responding to the Agency’s call for increased support for basic services it provides at a time of great needs for the Agency,” said Marc Lassouaoui, Chief of Donor Relations.

Austria is a long-standing supporter of UNRWA, and especially the Agency’s health programme, having contributed a total of EUR 10 million to the health programme in the oPt since 2011.

# 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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