

Press Release

The United Arab Emirates contributes extraordinary US$ 50 million to UNRWA

in strong show of solidarity with Palestine Refugees



Students at the UNRWA Birzeit Girls' School, West Bank, 22 November, 2018. © 2018 UNRWA Photo by Marwan Baghdadi.

29 July 2019
East Jerusalem

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) announced a US$ 50 million contribution to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), thus reiterating its commitment to support the vital and life-saving services provided by the Agency to over five million Palestine refugees in Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Gaza and the West Bank. The UAE is a valued and reliable partner to the Agency, and one of a select few donors whose regular support over several decades has greatly contributed to the Agency's ability to carry out its mandate.

UNRWA Commissioner-General Pierre Krähenbühl commended the outstanding show of support from the UAE and said: "At a time of intense pressure on our Agency, the immense generosity of the United Arab Emirates sends a clear message that Palestine refugees are not alone. In addition to a crucial financial contribution, it is also a show of solidarity by the UAE for which I am deeply grateful."

This extraordinary financial support will go a long way in helping UNRWA maintain its programmes for 2019 as planned, namely in the areas of primary healthcare, education and social services, all vital for the life and dignity of Palestine refugees, and an anchor for their feeling of stability.

UNRWA remains grateful to the UAE for its renewed trust and support. In 2018, the UAE's extraordinary contribution of US$ 50 million to the Agency enabled it to open the doors of its 708 schools for the 2018-2019 academic year, and made the UAE the sixth largest donor for that year.

UNRWA is mandated to provide life-saving services to some 5.4 million Palestinian refugees registered with the Agency across its five fields of operation in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, the West Bank, including East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip. Its services include education, health care, relief and social services, camp infrastructure and improvement, protection and microfinance.

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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.

For more information, please contact:

Tamara Alrifai

UNRWA Spokesperson
Mobile: +962 (0)79 090 0140
t.alrifai@unrwa.org

Sami Mshasha
Director of Communications, Arabic Language Spokesperson
Mobile: +972 (0)54 216 8295
Office: +972 (0)2 589 0724
s.mshasha@unrwa.org