



# UNRWA

## PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **UNRWA LAUNCHES \$15.8 MILLION CRISIS APPEAL FOR RAFAH**

Jerusalem – The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) today launched an appeal to the international community for \$15.84 million to meet the immediate needs of the people of Rafah. The appeal follows weeks of the most intense destruction in Gaza since the start of the intifada.

UNRWA needs the funds to provide emergency cash, food and housing assistance to the hundreds of families who have lost their homes, had a breadwinner killed or wounded, or who are in need of ongoing medical care.

Under this appeal UNRWA would provide cash assistance to 760 families who need urgent help coping with the aftermath of the latest Israeli incursions. UNRWA is the only place most of these people can turn to for help. The Agency requires \$228,000 to fund this programme.

Included in this group are around 560 refugee families eligible to be re-housed under the Agency's emergency shelter scheme. In the short term they will need grants to help with renting accommodation. This will amount to 672,000. In the longer term the Agency will need the funds to build new shelters. UNRWA estimates it needs almost \$1.5 million to meet the permanent accommodation needs of these families. This also covers the repair of 244 shelters that sustained varying degrees of damage during the incursions.

As of May 30 a total of 21,142 people have now lost their homes in the Gaza Strip. UNRWA has been able to build new shelters for less than one third of them. To rehouse all of those still needing shelter in Gaza, UNRWA would need to receive \$38.5 million.

UNRWA is currently providing daily meals to around 2,500 people taking shelter in three of its schools in Rafah. To provide for them for at least two more months, and to supply the homeless with new household equipment, will require a further \$842,000. An additional \$110,000 is needed to replenish the Agency's medical stocks in Rafah and to provide wheelchairs and prosthetic devices for injured refugees.

UNRWA will also seek funds under this appeal to repair the damaged infrastructure of the Tel Es-Sultan quarter of Rafah where damage to sewage and water networks and other infrastructure poses a serious health hazard. The infrastructure component of this appeal will reach around \$928,000. Additional funds will also be required to cover UNRWA's operational costs.

Launching the appeal, Peter Hansen, UNRWA's Commissioner-General, said: "In the hardest-hit place in the Gaza Strip there are few places to turn for assistance. Rafah was always a poor place. It is now a devastated place. Hundreds of destitute families are relying on UNRWA and the international community to come forward and help them cope with a very grave humanitarian crisis."

*The overwhelming majority of those affected in Rafah have been refugees registered with UNRWA. The Agency, which chairs the Operational Coordination Group of UN agencies, NGOs and Palestinian ministries, has formulated its appeal in coordination with the other main relief actors in the Gaza Strip.*

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