



# UNRWA

## PRESS RELEASE

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### **UNRWA Reaches Agreement with the Palestinian Authority and UAE Red Crescent Society on Rebuilding 400 Homes in Rafah**

#### Gaza

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) has today reached agreement with the Palestinian Authority for land to be provided to the Agency to build 400 new shelters for the homeless in Rafah in the Gaza Strip.

Peter Hansen, UNRWA's Commissioner-General, met with President Arafat in Ramallah to conclude the agreement. Under its terms, the Palestinian Authority will provide two tracts of land in the crowded strip for UNRWA to begin its re-housing project.

The UNRWA-PA agreement follows a multi-million dollar agreement made in the United Arab Emirates on Monday between Mr Hansen and H.E Sheikh Hamdan bin Zayed Al Nahyan, deputy prime minister and minister of state for foreign affairs of the UAE. The Sheikh pledged the financial support of the UAE Red Crescent Society, of which he is President, to build 400 replacement homes in Rafah. The size of the UAE Red Crescent donation is still to be finalised.

The UAE's generous pledge will go towards UNRWA's US\$15.8 million crisis appeal for Rafah. That appeal was launched last month following Israeli's major military operations in the South of the Gaza Strip in May. Mr Hansen informed President Arafat that US\$6.3 million had already been pledged for Rafah and that further pledges are imminent.

Over 15,000 people have lost their homes in Rafah since the start of the intifada and UNRWA has been providing them with tents, food, water and cash assistance to rent temporary accommodation. The Agency has also built hundreds of new shelters to re-house those who have lost their homes, but the pace of destruction in 2004 has meant that demand has outstripped the Agency's ability to meet all of Rafah's needs.

Mr Hansen also thanked the President for his direct intervention to calm the situation in Jenin camp where UNRWA was forced to suspend work on its major re-housing project following a shooting incident in the project's offices. UNRWA now plans to re-start its Jenin project on Sunday June 27 2004.

The Jenin Rehabilitation Project was financed by a US\$27 million donation to UNRWA by the UAE Red Crescent Society in 2002. The project is due to be completed in October.

*-Ends-*

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