



UNRWA

PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

UNRWA APPEALS FOR \$186 MILLION IN EMERGENCY RELIEF FOR WEST BANK AND GAZA

Jerusalem – The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) today launched a \$185.8 million emergency appeal for the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt). The funding will allow the Agency to carry out crucial relief operations to the 1.6 million refugees in the West Bank and Gaza throughout 2005.

2004 has seen the worst levels of destruction of the four year intifada, as Israel has employed drastic measures against Palestinian militants firing rockets from Gaza and other security threats. The accelerating levels of demolitions, increasing deaths and injuries, and strict movement restrictions have contributed to ever-growing hardship for the refugee population. Over 2.2 million people in the oPt are now surviving on less than \$2 per person per day.

UNRWA cares for half the population of the oPt and is the largest humanitarian operation in the region. Funding for this appeal is essential if the Palestinian population is not to slip further into crisis.

Peter Hansen, UNRWA's Commissioner-General, launched the appeal to a meeting of donor representatives in East Jerusalem today.

He said: "The statistics of death, destruction and poverty in this appeal do little to convey the real suffering of the population of the occupied territory. Whole neighbourhoods in Jabalia and Rafah camps have been flattened. Our schools are seeing an entire generation grow up in an environment of terrifying violence. The curse of endemic poverty now touches two thirds of the population."

"The coming months will be crucial in determining the future of the West Bank and Gaza. By meeting the emergency needs of the refugee population, the donor community can replace some of the uncertainty with a modicum of stability – going a long way to allow families to contribute positively to their communities."

Under this appeal UNRWA would operate five main programmes to support the refugees.

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- Shelter Reconstruction: Since September 2000 over 25,000 Palestinians in the oPt have lost their homes to demolitions by the Israeli military. UNRWA has struggled to keep pace with the rate of demolitions and has so far re-housed just over 1,100 families and has another 210 family homes under construction. UNRWA is requesting \$67.7 million for its emergency reconstruction programme.
- Emergency Employment: UNRWA aims to create 2.6 million work days for thousands of unemployed breadwinners, allowing them to support over 250,000 dependents throughout the year. UNRWA is requesting \$40.9 million for its emergency employment programme.
- Food Assistance: The Agency aims to provide basic staples, such as flour, rice, milk powder and lentils to almost 230,000 families, or more than one million individuals, in the occupied territory. UNRWA is requesting \$53.7 million for its emergency food programme.
- Cash and In-Kind Assistance: UNRWA needs to be able to provide the most vulnerable families with emergency cash when their homes are demolished or when unemployment, imprisonment or death robs them of their breadwinner. UNRWA is requesting \$18.5 million for its emergency cash assistance programme.
- Emergency Health: The closures regime and construction of the wall/fence in the West Bank has left many communities without access to medical care. UNRWA's mobile medical teams will bring essential health services to 14,000 patients every month. UNRWA is requesting \$696,000 for its emergency health programme.

A further \$4 million is needed to allow the Agency to try to cover the costs of intifada-related movement restrictions and to safeguard the neutrality of its installations.

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For more information contact:

Paul McCann in Jerusalem on +972 (0)59 428 008

Matthias Burchard in Geneva on +41 (0)22 917 1166

Maher Nasser in New York on +1 212 963 2255