



UNRWA PRESS RELEASE

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UNRWA opens German-funded school in Husseinieh

Damascus – Touring a brand-new computer lab and talking to Palestine refugee students, HE Eberhard Schuppius, Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany to Syria, today inaugurated UNRWA's Al-Aqsa/Beit Jala school, which will provide enhanced education services to Palestine refugees in Husseinieh, a largely Palestinian community on the outskirts of Damascus.

The German Government responded to the need for additional education facilities in Husseinieh by donating US\$ 431,000 to build the school. The building offers 12 classrooms, a computer laboratory, library/multi-purpose room, science laboratory, three administrative offices and ancillary facilities. Operating on a double-shift basis, the building accommodates two administrative schools providing basic education for pupils in grades 7 to 9. Presently, 509 boys and 505 girls are enrolled in the school, which has a staff of 32 teachers. Al Aqsa/Beit Jala brings to 115 the number of UNRWA schools in Syria.

Another UNRWA school in Husseinieh became necessary following the relocation of hundreds of families from Jaramana and other parts of Damascus, mostly as a consequence of the Syrian Government's Urban Development Programme in the city. More than 15,000 refugees now rely on UNRWA's services in Husseinieh.

"This facility is yet another demonstration of the continued firm support of the German Government for the Palestine refugees and UNRWA's services to them," said Ambassador Schuppius in his inaugural speech.

Angela Williams, Director of UNRWA Affairs, thanked the German Government for its donation, noting that the construction of the school will significantly improve the educational environment and provide Palestine refugees with the needed skills to continue their education and qualify for good employment opportunities. She also thanked the Syrian Government for its steadfast support for the Agency's work.

The Federal Republic of Germany is a major donor to UNRWA. Since 1993, the German Government has provided the Agency with over US\$ 95 million in funds: for its regular budget activities, special projects and emergency programmes. Recently in Syria, Germany has funded pilot courses in 16 UNRWA schools on tolerance, peaceful conflict resolution and human rights. It also funded the construction and equipping of al-Mazzeah school, Damascus, which was opened in 1998, and 12 additional classrooms at Ijzem/Hitteen school in Husseinieh.

"Your donation will translate into better educational services to the refugee families living here," said Adnan Munawwar, deputizing for the Director-General of the General Authority for Palestine Refugees (GAPAR).

UNRWA, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees, is a humanitarian relief and development agency providing education, health care, social services, micro-credit and emergency relief to over four million Palestine refugees living in the Gaza Strip, West Bank, Jordan, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic. In Syria, the Agency provides assistance to some 409,000 refugees.

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