



UNRWA

PRESS RELEASE

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UNRWA Receives US\$ 60,000 in Emergency Assistance from Syrians

Damascus – UNRWA has received US\$ 60,000 from the Syrian Arab Popular Committee for cash assistance to some of the hundreds of families who have seen their homes demolished or severely damaged in the recent violence in the Gaza Strip, the Agency said today.

The cheque was handed over to Lex Takkenberg, the Officer in Charge of UNRWA Affairs, Syria, by Ghiath Nabulsi, a member of the Syrian Arab Popular Committee (SAPC) on 20 May.

“We were told earlier today by SAPC Chairman Ahmed Abdel-Karim that the Committee very much appreciates the efforts UNRWA is currently making in alleviating the plight of the affected families, often at considerable personal risk,” said Takkenberg after receiving the cheque at the UNRWA Field Office.

The handover comes shortly after the Israeli military started to demolish residential buildings in the Gaza Strip in one of the most intense periods of destruction since the start of the *Intifada*. In early May, some 131 residential buildings in the Gaza Strip were demolished or damaged, leaving some 1,100 people newly homeless. The latest incursions bring the number of people to lose their homes in the Gaza Strip to 17,594.

The US\$ 60,000 SAPC contribution is expected to go towards cash assistance to some 300 families in Rafah, which has seen the brunt of recent destruction.

This is just the latest in a string of SAPC donations to UNRWA. In October, the Committee donated US\$ 75,000 in emergency cash assistance for people who had their homes destroyed or damaged in Rafah. The Committee also donated US\$ 699,000 for the Agency’s emergency food aid programme in 2003, and nearly US\$ 2 million towards UNRWA’s emergency appeal in 2002.

The Committee was established in May 2001 to ease the suffering of Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza who face continued violence and financial hardship. It represents all walks of life in Syria, from doctors, lawyers, journalists to labourers.

UNRWA has been providing people affected by the recent violence with water, food, blankets and cash assistance. With funding from donors it has been able to build new shelters in safe places for several hundred of the homeless families, but Agency resources are unable to meet the growing humanitarian crisis.

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

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For more information contact:

Hala Mukhles
613-3035 ext 314 Mobile 093-416591

Malene Arce
613-3035 ext 312 Mobile 093-316693