



**UNRWA
PRESS RELEASE**

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UNRWA Opens Nimreen Children's Music Centre in Yarmouk

To the rhythms of classical Arab and Palestinian music, UNRWA Commissioner-General Peter Hansen today inaugurated the Nimreen Children's Music Centre, which for the first time will provide professional music tuition on classical Arabic instruments to 40 gifted students from UNRWA elementary schools in Yarmouk. The children will be selected from a pool of more than 8,000 pupils in the age range 7-9 years, grades 3-5.

The Centre, housed in a classroom in UNRWA's Nimreen school revamped for its new purposes, is a small but well-furnished music studio, with sound and recording equipment, air conditioning and sound insulation. The facility was made possible with donations totalling just over US\$ 42,000 from Music in Me, Rotary International and UNESCO. Here, Palestinian children will absorb the rich tradition of Arabic music and extend their knowledge to wider musical traditions.

Boys and girls will come twice weekly outside school hours, for hourly sessions led by tutors from the Syrian High Institute for Music and the Arab Music Institute. Following a general introduction to classical Arab music, the children will be divided into four groups of ten, according to their interest and potential. Each will be trained on one of the principal Arab instruments: the 'oud (lute), qanoun (zither), nay (flute) and iqa'a (percussion, including the tabla (drum)).

"UNRWA has always placed a high value on creative arts and is very fortunate in linking with Music in Me to create this exciting opportunity for Palestine refugee children," said Mr Hansen at the inauguration ceremony, attended by representatives from the Ministry of Education, Music in Me, Rotary International, the Syrian High Institute for Music, Arab Music Institute, UN officials and the Yarmouk community. "The Centre will produce young musicians who will one day become ambassadors of peace, justice, friendship and humanity," Hansen added.

"We hope that this project will help improve communication and understanding among people. Music in Me seeks to contribute to the preservation of musical heritage in the region and reach people who would otherwise be deprived of music due to war and poverty. It aims to develop musical life and therapy, to enhance the joy of life for each and every one," said Frans Wolfkamp, Managing Director of Music in Me.

The Director-General of the General Authority for Palestine Arab Refugees (GAPAR), 'Ali Mustafa, expressed pleasure in participating in the inauguration of the Centre and thanked Music in Me, Rotary International and UNESCO for their welcome initiative. He looked forward to the achievement of peace, justice and stability in the region, based on the implementation of United Nations resolutions, at which time such projects would really bear

fruit. In the meantime, he looked to the international community to continue supporting UNRWA, to enable it to assist the Palestine refugees in the best possible manner, especially in the occupied Palestinian territories. He also thanked the Syrian Government for its generous support to Palestine refugees living in Syria. The Nimreen Children's Music Centre establishes yet another constructive link between UNRWA and the Syrian Government, through the collaboration with the High Institute for Music.

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, the West Bank, Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic. In Syria, the Agency provides assistance to some 417,400 refugees.

For more information only.

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