



# **UNRWA**

## **PRESS RELEASE**

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## **UNRWA Commemorates World Refugee Day 2006**

East Jerusalem - The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) today commemorates World Refugee Day.

Speaking on the day, Karen Koning AbuZayd, Commissioner General of UNRWA, said: "World Refugee Day is an opportunity for us to say to the refugees: 'We recognize you. We acknowledge the difficulties you have suffered and continue to endure. We will stand with you as partners as you strive for lives filled with dignity and self-reliance.'"

World Refugee Day was founded by the United Nations General Assembly in 2000 and has been celebrated every year by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR). Since UNHCR's mandate does not extend to Palestine refugees, they were not included. This year, UNRWA commemorates the date, so that people will know that World Refugee Day commemorates refugees worldwide.

UNRWA is running public events at Al-Hoash Gallery and Al-Hakawati Theatre in East Jerusalem to draw attention to the plight of Palestine refugee children in the Gaza Strip.

Joining Koning AbuZayd in speaking at the event will be Alvaro de Soto, Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, John Ging (UNRWA), Allegra Pacheco (OCHA), Kirstie Campbell (WFP) and Ambrogio Maneti (WHO).

Special attention will be drawn to food insecurity and physical insecurity, problems that have been widespread since 2000 and cause physical and mental obstacles to the growth and development of children. Aside from the hunger and nutritional deficiency caused by food insecurity, children face widespread violence. Children in the north of Gaza find their homes and communities constantly pounded by shells and artillery. Fighting between rival groups in Gaza has caused many parents to forbid their children to go outside.

Koning AbuZayd says: "World Refugee Day should also be a day when we make a pledge to the refugee children of Palestine. A pledge that we will do what we can to keep hope alive."

UNRWA will be hosting the exhibition 'All I Have: The Lives of Palestine Refugee Children' at Al-Hoash Gallery. The exhibition combines pictures by contemporary photographers with images from UNRWA's archives to show the vivid moments in childhood that transcend the conflict.

Al-Hakawati Theatre will be screening the award winning UNRWA films 'Hoda's Story' and 'Mother Aysha' by filmmaker Johan Eriksson.

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