



The General Delegation of Palestine to Australia, Aotearoa New Zealand and the Pacific

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About UNRWA

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) is a humanitarian organization that has a mandate to provide **assistance** and **protection** to Palestine refugees.

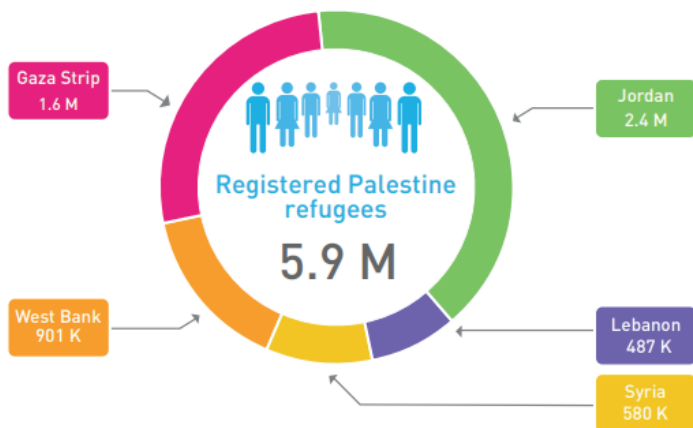
UNRWA was established as a subsidiary organ of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) on 8 December 1949 and became operational in May 1950. Created as a temporary agency until a just and durable solution for Palestine refugees was achieved, the UNRWA mandate was originally set to expire in one year. As no such solution for the plight of Palestine refugees has yet been achieved, its mandate has been repeatedly renewed by the UNGA.

Seventy years later, the Agency continues to constitute a safety net for Palestine refugees by providing emergency assistance and essential services for the well-being, human development and protection of Palestine refugees, pending a just solution to their plight, in accordance with UNGA Resolution 194 (which affirmed the right of the Palestine refugees to return to their homeland or/and to just compensation).

Palestine Refugees

UNRWA's operational definition of Palestine refugees is "people whose normal place of residence was Palestine during the period 1 June 1946 to 15 May 1948 and who lost both their homes and means of livelihood as a result of the 1948 conflict" also known as the Palestinian *Nakba* ("Catastrophe"). This definition applies to Palestine refugees as well as to their descendants, in line with international standards.

When the Agency began operations in 1950, it was responding to the needs of about 750,000 Palestine refugees. Today, some 5.9 million Palestine refugees are eligible for UNRWA services.



Funding

Almost all UNRWA funding comes from voluntary contributions, and mostly from donor states. The limited resources are prioritized among its most critical services, with particular emphasis on the most vulnerable.

Over the years, UNRWA has faced several critical financial crises. Financial support for the Agency has not kept pace with an increased demand for services caused by growing numbers of registered refugees, deepening poverty and rising conflict. As a result, the Agency's core fund, which supports essential services and most staffing costs, operates with a large deficit.

UNRWA Services

UNRWA is unique among UN agencies in that it delivers services directly. These services include education, health care, relief and social services, microfinance, infrastructure and camp improvement, emergency assistance, and the protection of refugees' rights under international law.

UNRWA services are available to Palestine refugees living in its area of operations who are registered with the Agency and who need assistance. The UNGA has also mandated UNRWA to offer services to certain other persons who require humanitarian assistance, on an emergency basis as and when required, in UNRWA fields of operations, including persons who are currently displaced and in serious need of continued assistance as a result of the hostilities of June 1967 and the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, and subsequent hostilities.

UNRWA services are delivered in accordance with the United Nations principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and operational independence. The Agency is bound by the principles of best practice of oversight that apply to the United Nations system as a whole.

