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**Syria: UN agency warns no food left in besieged Palestinian refugee camp**

19 April 2014 – The United Nations has renewed its demand for unimpeded humanitarian access to the besieged Palestinian refugee camp of Yarmouk, warning that there is no UN food aid left there as of Saturday given that the recent escalation fighting between the parties to the Syrian conflict has prevented the delivery of desperately needed assistance.

Spokesman Chris Gunness said the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) was not authorised to distribute food aid on 18 April in Yarmouk, where more than 20,000 civilians are dependent on UN assistance.

"This is the tenth consecutive day that UNRWA has been unable to distribute food assistance inside Yarmouk. Given that an UNRWA food parcel lasts for a maximum of 10 days, from tomorrow there will be no UN food in the camp," he said yesterday.

Prior to the armed conflict in Syria, which began in March 2011, Yarmouk was home to over 160,000 Palestine refugees. Since December 2012, fighting has caused at least 140,000 Palestine refugees to flee their homes in Yarmouk, as armed opposition groups established a presence in the area, with Government forces controlling the periphery.

"UNRWA remains deeply concerned about the desperate humanitarian situation in Yarmouk," said Mr. Gunness, noting that the repeated resort to armed force has, over the previous month, repeatedly disrupted efforts to alleviate the plight of trapped civilians.

As a result, UNRWA was able to access Yarmouk on only 10 days over the 30-day period between 11 March and 10 April, distributing only 3,390 food parcels.

"UNRWA demands that all parties cease hostilities and seek to resolve their differences exclusively by peaceful means. UNRWA also demands that continuous, substantial and safe humanitarian access is ensured," Mr. Gunness stated.