



syria regional crisis emergency appeal 2015

Executive Summary

The Conflict

The conflict in Syria becomes ever more complex and deadly. All 12 Palestine refugee camps and all 560,000 registered Palestine refugees in the country have been profoundly affected. UNRWA has learned to adapt, to move as the conflict permits, and to innovate and find solutions that allow the Agency to continue to fulfil its mandate to assist Palestine refugees. However, violence is escalating, making movement and access more difficult and causing increasingly severe hardship. UNRWA estimates that 95 per cent of the 480,000 Palestine refugees remaining in Syria are in continuous need of humanitarian aid. UNRWA has repeatedly decried the futility of the pursuit of military solutions in Syria and has demanded parties to the conflict desist from conflict in Palestine refugee camps and other civilian areas. UNRWA appeals to the parties to the conflict to peacefully seek a negotiated solution.

UNRWA services

One third of UNRWA facilities in Syria have been rendered inoperable as a result of damage or active conflict. However, the depth and breadth of UNRWA operations in Syria, Jordan and Lebanon lends the Agency an extraordinary staying power and means it is ideally placed to ensure the resilience of these most vulnerable people. UNRWA more than ever is a critical life-line for Palestine refugees. By adaptation and innovation, the Agency has maintained the capacity to provide services and assistance to all Palestine refugees in Syria and those displaced to Lebanon, Jordan and Gaza.

Protection

Throughout the crisis, UNRWA has taken every opportunity to stress to staff and refugees the imperative of maintaining their neutrality at all times. UNRWA has consistently called on all parties to the conflict in Syria to comply with their obligations under international humanitarian and human rights law, condemning in particular the scant regard for the protection of civilians. The particular vulnerabilities of Palestine refugees and their sensitive status in the region compound the already stark and violent devastation they share with Syrians. Jordan effectively closed its borders to Palestinian refugees from Syria early in the conflict; Lebanon followed suit in May this year. When they do find relief from the conflict, they suffer marginalization and acute vulnerability. In Lebanon, Jordan and Egypt, many Palestine refugees from Syria do not have legal status and are unable to access civil registration procedures and basic social services. Their movement is limited and they live in constant fear of arrest and forced return to Syria. Palestine refugees speak of feeling trapped, singled out and unwelcome in the region. In increasing numbers, Palestine refugees are leaving Syria by unsafe routes to Turkey and often risk their lives by placing themselves at the mercy of sea traffickers. The regional protection needs of Palestine refugees are acute and urgent and supporting them is an imperative of regional humanitarian, political and strategic importance.

Funding

The 2014 UNRWA appeal was only 50 per cent funded. Only by substantially reducing individual assistance has UNRWA been able to continue serving all those in need. If funding levels continue to decline, critical efforts in emergency education and health care will cease, and cash assistance – the central pillar of the UNRWA humanitarian response – will be threatened. By focusing solely on staving off humanitarian disaster, decades of development gains made possible by the international community will be lost. UNRWA requires US\$ 415.4 million to meet minimum needs of Palestine refugees affected by the Syria crisis in the region.