
SWEDEN DONATES US\$ 4.8 MILLION IN EMERGENCY SUPPORT FOR PALESTINE REFUGEES IN THE WEST BANK AND GAZA

28 May 2015

The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) has announced a new SEK 40 million (US\$ 4.8 million) contribution to the UNRWA Emergency Appeal for the occupied Palestinian territory.

The Emergency Appeal addresses the humanitarian needs of Palestine refugees in the Gaza Strip and West Bank, including East Jerusalem, through interventions such as emergency food and livelihood support for the most vulnerable families, and the promotion and protection of the rights of refugees and living through acute crises.

This contribution from Sweden forms part of a multi-year agreement for 2014-2016.

"Sweden's continued support for UNRWA through multi-year agreements provides sustainability and predictability that is essential for UNRWA to continue supporting refugees living through humanitarian crises," said the Director of UNRWA Operations in Gaza, Robert Turner. "The un-earmarked funds allow the Agency to react quickly to urgent and evolving needs, and are reflective of the excellent humanitarian support that Sweden is known for."

Sweden is the fourth-largest UNRWA donor, contributing over US\$ 989 million to the Agency since 1951. This support provides vital assistance to Palestine refugees living through humanitarian emergencies in Syria, Lebanon, Gaza and the West Bank, and helps UNRWA provide more than 5 million registered refugees with vital health care, education, relief and social services. Sweden has been a member of the UNRWA Advisory Commission since 2005, and currently holds the rotating chairmanship of the commission.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

UNRWA is a United Nations agency established by the General Assembly in 1949 and is mandated to provide assistance and protection to a population of some 5 million registered Palestine refugees. Its mission is to help Palestine refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, West Bank and the Gaza Strip to achieve their full potential in human development, pending a just solution to their plight. UNRWA's services encompass education, health care, relief and social services, camp infrastructure and improvement, and microfinance.

Financial support to UNRWA has not kept pace with an increased demand for services caused by growing numbers of registered refugees, expanding need, and deepening poverty.

As a result, the Agency's General Fund (GF), supporting UNRWA's core activities and 97 per cent reliant on voluntary contributions, has begun each year with a large projected deficit. Currently the deficit stands at more than US\$ 106 million.

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