
8,500 FAMILIES IN GAZA RECEIVE SHELTER SUPPORT

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The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) continued today with the disbursement of Temporary Shelter Cash Assistance (TSCA) in Gaza. The funds – US\$ 9.3 million – are part of the German contribution for the repair and reconstruction of homes that have been rendered uninhabitable during the 2014 conflict. With support from the Government of Germany, 8,500 eligible families who are in the process of or are waiting to repair or reconstruct their shelters that were damaged or destroyed during the 2014 conflict will receive payments to help them with the repair/reconstruction process.

Commenting on the start of the disbursement, Peter Beerwerth, Head of the German Representative Office in Ramallah, said: "Thousands of families in Gaza, who need these funds the most, will benefit from this measure. Germany is committed to continuing its support to the people in Gaza in close cooperation with UNRWA." UNRWA will be able to disburse TSCA to eligible families within one week; the disbursement will cover all of the monthly payments for the first quarter of 2016.

"We are very grateful for this support, which attests to the strong partnership between Germany and UNRWA," said Bo Schack, Director of UNRWA Operations in Gaza. "This support will enable families to live in dignity while rebuilding their homes," he added.

Germany has been a key partner of the UNRWA shelter repair and reconstruction response in Gaza following the 2014 conflict, providing a total of US\$ 65.4 million (EUR 57 million).

Overall, in 2015, Germany contributed US\$ 91.7 million (EUR 83.2 million) to UNRWA. Germany is the Agency's fifth largest donor and has been a member of the UNRWA Advisory Commission since 2005.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

UNRWA is confronted with an increased demand for services resulting from a growth in the number of registered Palestine refugees, the extent of their vulnerability and their deepening poverty. UNRWA is funded almost entirely by voluntary contributions and financial support has been outpaced by the growth in needs. As a result, the UNRWA Programme Budget, which supports the delivery of core essential services, operates with a large shortfall, projected for 2016 to stand at US\$ 81 million. UNRWA emergency programmes and key projects, also operating with large shortfalls, are funded through separate funding portals.

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

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