
THE ITALIAN GOVERNMENT SUPPORTS THE SAFETY OF PALESTINE REFUGEE IN GAZA THROUGH OUTREACH ACTIVITIES ON EXPLOSIVE REMNANTS OF WAR

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One year after the summer hostilities of 2014, more than 7,000 explosive remnants of war (ERW) are estimated to remain in the Gaza Strip. Only 30 per cent of the ERW have been identified and removed. The remaining 70 per cent pose a threat to the population of Gaza, especially children and the adults who work on agricultural land littered with ERW. Since the beginning of last summer's hostilities, 16 people have been killed and 90 wounded, including 38 children, due to contact with these unexploded remnants.

With a generous contribution of EUR 250,000 (US\$ 272,500) approved by the Italian Directorate General for Development Cooperation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Palestine refugees, through UNRWA and the UN Mine Action Service (UNMAS) in Gaza, will benefit from outreach activities on safety and risk education on explosive remnants of war (ERW). Implemented by UNRWA and UNMAS, the aim of these activities is to reduce the risk of contact with ERW in the Gaza Strip.

Thanks to the contribution from the Italian government, UNRWA will be able to provide training opportunities to its staff, especially those working on the front line, including social workers, engineers and teachers. They will be trained by UNMAS on how to recognize, demarcate and signal the presence of ERW safely.

The 8,000 teachers who receive the training will pass on the information to approximately 251,000 UNRWA students. The value to the Palestine refugee community does not end there; the knowledge on issues related to dealing with ERW will be shared with the families of the teachers and the community at large.

The Agency will also produce printed materials for distribution in all UNRWA facilities and installations such as schools, area offices, and health and distribution centres. In addition to the UNMAS awareness films, which have already been broadcast, the UNRWA satellite channel (UNRWA TV) will produce short films to raise awareness on the correct procedures for identifying and safely responding to ERW contaminations. The educational films will be broadcast on UNRWA TV and YouTube, benefiting millions of people at risk outside of Gaza.

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, and microfinance.

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<http://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/press-releases/italian-government-supports-safety-palestine-refugees-gaza-through-outreach>