

East Jerusalem
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UNRWA **PRESS RELEASE**

UNRWA LAUNCHES FLASH APPEAL AS THE MILITARY OPERATION CONTINUES IN GAZA

Jerusalem/Gaza: The United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) has launched an appeal for US\$ 34 million as the needs of the population of Gaza continue to mount in the face of the ongoing military operation. This Appeal is in addition to UNRWA's US\$ 275 million 2009 Emergency Appeal issued earlier this month for the occupied Palestinian territory.

Speaking from the Agency's Headquarters in Gaza, UNRWA Commissioner General, Karen AbuZayd said "In my eight years in UNRWA, the urgency of an appeal for the people here has never been so acute. I am appalled and saddened when I see the suffering around me. This appeal covers life-saving humanitarian requirements for a four month period. I call on the international community to respond with the promptness and generosity demanded by the desperate situation in Gaza today".

The Flash Appeal will enable UNRWA to provide essential health supplies, food, cash assistance, materials for housing repair and fuel. These were already in short supply owing to the months of closure of Gaza's borders and are now critically scarce. At a time when winter has set in, this Appeal will also allow UNRWA to respond to the growing shelter needs of an increasing number of Palestinian civilians displaced by damage to or destruction of their homes. Air strikes have inflicted considerable damage to already fragile public infrastructure and erased Gaza's public service capacity, thus making UNRWA's humanitarian interventions more crucial than ever.

"Tomorrow, we will resume our food distributions which were suspended on 18th December", said AbuZayd. "People are without the most basic food commodities and have suffered enough. If we are to meet the needs of our beneficiaries, who comprise about two thirds of Gaza's 1.5 million residents, the crossings must be open on a permanent basis, including the Karni Crossing which is the only access point through which we can bring in wheat in adequate quantities to meet the requirements of people here."

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