



UNRWA PRESS RELEASE

Press Release
15 July 2007
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

UNRWA CALLS FOR URGENT AID FOR GAZA

East Jerusalem, 15th July 2007: The United Nations Relief and Works Agency, UNRWA, has called for urgent aid for Gaza as fears about a humanitarian crisis mount. The call came during a meeting, in Cairo, between the UNRWA Commissioner General, Karen AbuZayd and the Secretary General of the Arab League, Amr Musa.

"We have identified nearly thirty million dollars worth of emergency projects for which we need urgent funding and I make a special appeal to Arab donors to contribute", said AbuZayd. Nearly half the funds will be spent on job creation schemes while the remainder will fund cash assistance programmes and shelter repair and reconstruction. "The violence in Gaza, coupled with the tight closures imposed by Israel has led to a desperate humanitarian situation," said AbuZayd. "The economic deterioration manifests itself amongst the population in Gaza in the form of unemployment, which is running at around thirty six percent and poverty, which is already affecting an estimated two thirds of households – to give just two examples."

To alleviate the current poverty and economic hardships temporarily, UNRWA will provide employment opportunities to the most needy refugee families throughout the Gaza Strip. These employment projects will create some 640,000 days of work for unemployed refugees. They will offer employment in UNRWA facilities and installations as well as with community based organizations and the private sector.

UNRWA also appealed for nearly eight million dollars for emergency cash assistance, as a means of enabling refugees to meet basic needs and as a complement to food aid. In addition, the UN Agency called on donors to fund nearly nine million dollars for shelter repair and reconstruction. "People are living in dire conditions", said AbuZayd. "The recent violence has damaged or destroyed thousands of buildings and there is an urgent need to have these repaired."

-Ends-

For Information Only

For more information and interviews please call:

Christopher Gunness: +972 542 402 659

Rula Khalafawi: +920 103 434 0636

Sami Mshasha: + 962 0542 168 295