

Prime Minister  
10 Downing Street  
SW1A 2AA

30 April 2024

Dear Prime Minister,

Considering the findings of the UN Secretary General's Independent Review Group examining the neutrality of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), we urge you to immediately restore and increase funding to this vital organisation for Palestinian refugees in the region.

We appreciate UNRWA's existing work to maintain neutrality, and we welcome the fact that the UN Secretary-General and UNRWA Commissioner-General have accepted the findings of the report and will develop an action plan to implement them in full. This meets the requirements of the UK Government to restore funding, as the Deputy Foreign Minister set out in Parliament.

As the report of the former French Foreign Minister Catherine Colonna stresses, UNRWA "has established a significant number of mechanisms and procedures to ensure compliance with the Humanitarian Principles, with emphasis on the principle of neutrality." She notes, "it possesses a more developed approach to neutrality than other similar UN or NGO entities". A few areas for strengthening were recommended, some of which will require additional donor resources to implement.

The Colonna report highlights UNRWA as an irreplaceable and indispensable essential service provider for millions of Palestinian refugees in Gaza, West Bank, Lebanon, Jordan, and Syria. Indeed, it is currently a key lifeline for the survival of two million people in Gaza.

As you rightly highlighted to King Abdullah a few days ago, we all want to see far more aid arriving in Gaza. The Deputy Foreign Secretary has said he sees no alternative agency capable of carrying out the range of UNRWA's tasks. Other UN organisations and agencies like ours cannot replace them. In fact, we rely on UNRWA for critical logistical support, such as the provision of fuel, information, and distribution capacity.

The denial of funding to UNRWA will only lead to more deaths, at a time when the International Court of Justice has underscored the need to prevent the risk of genocide and fulfil the dire humanitarian needs of Palestinians.

Speaking at the UN Security Council, the Commissioner-General of UNRWA warned that the agency is facing a campaign by Israel to "push it out of the Occupied Palestinian Territory". Major donors, including the European Union, Canada, France and Germany, have restored funding to the agency; the United Kingdom is yet to follow suit.

We, as representatives of humanitarian organisations, call on you to meet our obligations to the Palestinian people and restore and increase funding for UNRWA to save lives and stem this accelerating humanitarian catastrophe.

Yours sincerely,

ABCD Bethlehem  
ActionAid UK  
Action for Humanity  
Age International  
Amos Trust  
BOND  
CAFOD  
Care International UK  
Christian Aid  
Embrace the Middle East

Gender Action for Peace and Security (GAPS)  
Humanity and Inclusion  
Humanity First UK  
International Rescue Committee  
Interpal  
Islamic Relief UK  
Lady Fatemah Charitable Trust  
Medical Aid for Palestinians (MAP)  
Mercy Corps Europe

Muslim Aid  
Norwegian Refugee Council  
Oxfam GB  
Plan International UK  
Save the Children UK  
SCIAF  
Trócaire  
War Child UK  
War on Want  
Welfare Association