

UN Agency Seeks \$800 Million in Lifesaving Aid for Palestinian Refugees



Geneva, January 31 (RHC)-- The United Nations has launched an urgent financial appeal for its emergency programs for Palestinian refugees in in Syria and the occupied Palestinian territories.

UN's Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) said on Tuesday it needs 800 million dollars to provide life-saving aid including food, water, shelter and medical assistance.

Pierre Krähenbühl, UNRWA's commissioner-general, said the funds were needed to enable the agency to "continue delivering desperately needed relief to those affected by deepening emergency situations".

"However, the agency's critical financial crisis following the reduction in the U.S. funds threatens our ability to deliver these vital services," he said.

Washington slashed its funding for the agency after the UN rejected President Donald Trump's recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital.

The United States said this month that it was withholding half of the 125 million dollars it had planned to give to the agency.

UNRWA received 360 million dollars from the U.S. in 2017, but this year, Washington has only cleared 60 million.

Programs for Syria and the Occupied Palestinian Territory, which consists of Gaza and the West Bank, require \$400 million each. The appeal covers some 50,000 Palestine refugees from Syria who have fled to Lebanon and Jordan.

Krähenbühl explained that the majority of Palestine refugees in the occupied Palestinian territory and from Syria “rely on UNRWA to provide aid which is literally life-saving, including food, water, shelter and medical assistance.”

Inside Syria, UNRWA is reaching over 400,000 Palestine refugees with cash assistance, one of the largest such programs in an active conflict setting anywhere in the world.

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