

U.S. cuts all funding to UN agency for Palestinian refugees



Washington, September 1 (RHC)--- The United States has halted all funding to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), the agency that has provided assistance to Palestinians since they were deprived of their land some 70 years ago.

A spokesman for Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas denounced the decision as “a flagrant assault against the Palestinian people and a defiance of U.N. resolutions.”

In making the announcement on Friday, the Trump administration alleged that the agency’s business model and fiscal practices were an “irredeemably flawed operation.”

Set up in 1949 to serve the needs of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians who were driven from their homes after the creation of Israel, the organization has been providing refugees with access to food, education, healthcare, social services and employment.

U.S. President Donald Trump and his aides claim they want to improve the Palestinians’ plight, as well as start negotiations on an Israeli-Palestinian peace agreement. But under Trump, Washington has taken a number of actions that have alienated the Palestinians.

In January, a month after the recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital, a move that prompted widespread international condemnation, the White House decided to cut \$65 million in aid to UNRWA. It was later reported that the Trump administration had withheld about \$305m in funding, and only delivered \$60m to UNRWA.

The UN Palestinian refugee agency calls the decision by the Trump administration to no longer commit funding "deeply regrettable" and "shocking". UNRWA Spokesperson Chris Gunness said on Saturday that the move would affect "millions of people" including "some of the most disadvantaged and marginalized on this planet".

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