

Palestine National Council

Speaker Office

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President of the Asian parliamentary Assembly

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The Grave Developments Concerning

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency's Services

The Trump Administration informed the United Nations that it had frozen \$65 million to be paid earlier this year and decided not to pay \$45 million worth of food aid to Palestinian refugees, all this in the context of its blackmail and punitive measures against the Palestinian Arab people and their leadership. This Trump's behavior comes in full unison and concord with the Israeli policies.

The Palestine National Council would like to recall that the establishment of UNRWA came on the background of the catastrophic repercussions of the Catastrophe (Nakba) of 1948, which led to ethnic cleansing that led to the displacement of more than three quarters of a million Palestinian who were scattered, in that period, in the countries surrounding Palestine, beside the part unoccupied of Palestine, the West Bank and Gaza Strip. These repercussions led the international community to adopt Resolution 194, which was rejected by Israel. Followed by Resolution 302 (4) of December 8, 1949, which established UNRWA as interim measure pending implementation of the abovementioned Resolution 194.

For more than sixty-five years, the United States has been the largest single donor to UNRWA and has consistently praised UNRWA's quality, transparent and accountable services. In early 2017, with the arrival of President Trump, the Israeli entity requested the US administration cut its financial contributions to UNRWA. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu personally asked US ambassador to the UN, Nikki Haley to do her best to dismantle UNRWA and transfer of its services to the UNHCR, the main UN refugee agency.

The US administration has required the Agency to change the curriculum of its schools in order to write off all its assets related to the right of return and the Palestinian refugees issue, to relinquish the identity of Jerusalem as the capital of the desired Palestinian state, to renounce the struggle against the occupation, or the expression of Palestinian Intifada (uprising) and the cancellation of activities and festivals related to special events of the Palestinian cause, all these American requirements should be met in order to ensure the continuation of US support for UNRWA, which will be confined only to the regions of Jordan and the occupied Palestinian territories, excluding Syria and Lebanon, from the five areas of operation.

The main objective of these great pressures is to efface the Palestinian identity and to falsify the history and facts on which the Palestinian generation has been raised, and has become well aware of it, and has even influenced its behavior with the Israeli occupier. There have been explicit American and Israeli call for the amendment of the Palestinian curriculum, because it succeeded in establishing and raising generations capable of standing up, challenging, facing the occupation and adhering to national principles. The Palestinian curricula are based on international educational laws. The general principles of the Palestinian curriculum are derived from the General philosophy of the Palestinian Arab society and derive its principles from its heritage, religion, values, customs, traditions and the aspiration of the Palestinian people towards the future.

The Palestine National Council affirms that these steps conceal an Israeli-American goal that seeks to get ride of the most important issues embodied and bearing the Palestinian issue, namely the Palestinian refugee issue, through several steps, most notably, the freezing of financial allocations to the agency with the aim of reducing and paralyzing its services, dismantling and emptying it of all political implications, as the survival of its existence means the continuation of issue of refugees and Palestinian camps as witnesses to the Nakba, as well as what is related to this issue of international resolutions such as Resolution 194, which calls for the return of refugees. These steps will be followed by an attempt to dispose of and dismantle the Palestinian camps, to resettle and absorb the refugees living there.

The Palestine National Council warns of the grave consequences of the Trump administration decisions on Palestinian refugees. Which will put them at risk in all of the five areas of UNRWA operations in which it provides its services, increase the funding crisis and reduce the basic services that have already been reduced in the health and education sectors. This will also endanger the lives of about 75% of the refugees. The suffering and crisis will affect the camps in the Gaza strip, the West Bank and the diaspora, including more than 1 million Gazans living on relief assistance provided by UNRWA, which will lead to a real humanitarian disaster.

UNRWA faces a formidable challenge in upholding its mandate and preserving key services like education and health care for Palestine Refugees. This reduced contribution threatens one of the most successful and innovative human development endeavors on the Middle-East. At stake is the access of 525'000 boys and girls in 700 UNRWA schools, and their future. At stake is the dignity and human security of millions of Palestine refugees, in need of emergency food assistance and other support in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. At stake is the access of refugees to primary health care, including pre-natal care and other life-saving services. At stake are the rights and dignity of an entire community. The reduced contribution also impacts regional security at a time when the Middle East faces multiple risks and threats, notably that of further radicalization and terrorism.

Based on all of the above, the Palestine National Council calls on you and appeals to you to :

First : Refusing to harm the UNRWA Agency, insisting on maintaining its mission, linking the termination of its work with the implementation of Resolution 194 which calls for refugees return and compensation in accordance with the Agency's founding decision. And refusing all attempts to transfer its functions to host countries.

Second : calling on all partners-host Arab countries and donors- to further increase their mobilization in support of the Agency's services, which must continue until the return of Palestinian refugees to their homes, recalling the profound responsibility by the international community of states to assist the Palestine refugees, and continue UNRWA services of education, health care, relief and social services, which must continue until a just and lasting solution has been found.

Yours sincerely

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Speaker of the Palestine National Council