

## **Joint Statement: UNRWA funding cuts threaten Palestinian lives in Gaza and region, say NGOs**

**29 January 2024**

As aid organisations, we are deeply concerned and outraged that some of the largest donors have united to suspend funding for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), the main aid provider for millions of Palestinians in Gaza and the region. This comes amid a rapidly worsening humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza.

The suspension of funding by donor states will impact life-saving assistance for over two million civilians, over half of whom are children, who rely on UNRWA aid in Gaza. The population faces starvation, looming famine and an outbreak of disease under Israel's continued indiscriminate bombardment and deliberate deprivation of aid in Gaza.

We welcome UNRWA's swift investigation into the alleged involvement of a small number of UN staff members in the October 7<sup>th</sup> attacks. We are shocked by the reckless decision to cut a lifeline for an entire population by some of the very countries that had called for aid in Gaza to be stepped up and for humanitarians to be protected while doing their job. This decision comes as the International Court of Justice ordered immediate and effective action to ensure the provision of humanitarian assistance to civilians in Gaza.

152 UNRWA staff have already been killed and 145 UNRWA facilities damaged by bombardment. UNRWA is the largest humanitarian agency in Gaza and their delivery of humanitarian assistance cannot be replaced by other agencies working in Gaza. If the funding suspensions are not reversed we may see a complete collapse of the already restricted humanitarian response in Gaza.

With approximately over one million displaced Palestinians taking shelter in or around 154 UNRWA shelters, the agency and aid organisations have continued to work in near impossible circumstances to provide food, vaccinations, and freshwater. The countries suspending funds risk further depriving Palestinians in the region of essential food, water, medical assistance and supplies, education and protection.

We urge donor states to reaffirm support for the vital work that UNRWA and its partners do to help Palestinians survive one of the worst humanitarian catastrophes of our times. Countries must reverse these funding suspensions, uphold their duties towards the Palestinian people and scale up humanitarian assistance for civilians in dire need in Gaza and the region.

### **Signed**

ActionAid

American Friends Service Committee

The Association of International Development Agencies - Aida

Caritas Internationalis

CCFD-Terre Solidaire  
DanChurchAid  
Danish Refugee Council  
Diakonia  
Humanity & Inclusion/ Handicap International (HI)  
International Council of Voluntary Agencies  
INTERSOS  
Johanniter International Assistance  
Médecins du Monde France, Spain, Switzerland, Canada, Germany  
Norwegian Church Aid  
Norwegian People's Aid  
Norwegian Refugee Council  
Oxfam  
Plateforme des ONG françaises pour la Palestine  
Première Urgence Internationale  
Save the Children  
War Child Alliance