

Amid funding crunch, UN agency seeks \$800 million in lifesaving aid for Palestine refugees

30 January 2018 – Facing an acute funding shortage, the United Nations agency for Palestine refugees is seeking more than \$800 million for its emergency programmes for Syria and the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

The appeal would enable the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East ([UNRWA](#)) to “continue delivering [desperately needed relief](#) to those affected by deepening emergency situations,” UNRWA Commissioner-General Pierre Krähenbühl said at a launch event in Geneva.

“However, the Agency’s critical financial crisis following the reduction in US funds threatens our ability to deliver these vital services,” he added.

Programmes 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.

Mr. 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 programmes in an active conflict setting anywhere in the world.

Despite the immense security challenges, UNRWA is providing education to over 47,000 Palestine refugees, supplementing regular classes with psychosocial support and safety-awareness training. For those unable to reach our classrooms, UNRWA has developed distance-learning materials.

In Gaza, with employment opportunities stifled by the decade-old blockade – the unemployment rate remains among the highest worldwide – almost one million Palestine refugees are dependent on UNRWA for emergency food assistance, a tenfold increase on the 100,000 that required such support in 2000.

Three and a half years on from the 2014 hostilities, which caused unprecedented destruction and loss of life in Gaza, thousands of Palestine refugee families remain displaced and repairs to over fifty thousand homes have yet to be completed.

The situation in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, remains fragile. Palestine refugees continue to experience difficult socioeconomic conditions rooted in occupation-related policies and practices imposed by the Israeli

authorities. In addition to continued movement and access restrictions and shelter demolitions, Palestine refugees in the West Bank experience high levels of food insecurity.