

Freezing Humanitarian Support to Palestine: Trump Administration Pressuring Nations to Stop Funding The UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA)

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Both Trump and Netanyahu want the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) eliminated – pretending millions of Palestinian refugees don't exist.

Established in 1949, it provides healthcare, education and other vital social services for millions of displaced Palestinians – in the West Bank, East Jerusalem, Gaza, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria.

The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) provides similar services for refugees elsewhere.

Netanyahu accused UNWRA of “incitement against Israel” – the same blame game his regime uses against anyone criticizing Israel.

He, Trump, and hardliners want vital aid for millions of Palestinian refugees ended.

They want their fundamental rights denied, including continued occupation and land theft, self-determination in name only, along with East Jerusalem as their exclusive capital and right of return for diaspora Palestinians denied.

They want refugee status for millions of dispossessed Palestinians and UNWRA providing them vital humanitarian aid abolished – part of their scheme to impose Trump's no-peace/peace plan “deal of the century” on Palestinians, forcing them to abandon all rights.

After cutting \$200 million in humanitarian aid to Palestinians and ending all US aid to UNWRA, the Trump regime began pressuring other countries to cease funding the agency next year, according to Israel's Hadashot TV, citing senior Netanyahu regime officials.

They want to “close down UNWRA altogether,” according to the report. They falsely claim only 500,000 Palestinians exist, only 20,000 abroad, not over five million as defined by the UN and under international law.

They pressured Jordanian King Abdullah to take over for UNWRA. He rejected the scheme so far.

On August 31, the State Department said the US will no longer “make...contributions to UNWRA,” calling the agency and its humanitarian operations “irredeemably flawed,” wanting it shut down.

The US provided about one-third of its funding. Eliminating it created a major budget shortfall.

On Saturday, in response to Trump policy, an EU statement pledged increased funding support for UNWRA, saying it’s

“committed to secure the continuation and sustainability of the agency’s work which is vital for stability and security in the region,” adding:

“(M)any others in the international community, including many Arab states, have pledged their support to the continuity of the work that UNRWA is doing.”

A Palestinian Authority (PA) statement denounced Trump’s action. So did Hamas spokesman Sami Abu Zuhri, calling its move a scheme “to wipe out the right of return...a grave US escalation against the Palestinian people.”

“US leadership is the enemy of our people and of our nation, and we will not surrender before such unjust decisions.”

Palestinian refugees are unlike other displaced people. They have no homeland to return to – 78% of it stolen by Israel in 1948, the rest in June 1967.

In July 1980, Israel’s Jerusalem Law annexed the city as its exclusive capital, ignoring Security Council Resolution 465 (March 1980), fundamental international law, stating:

“(A)ll measures taken by Israel to change the physical character, demographic composition, institutional structure or status of the Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, or any part thereof, have no legal validity...”

In July 2004, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) ruled that “Israeli settlements in the Occupied Territory, including East Jerusalem, are illegal and an obstacle to peace and to economic and social development (and) have been established in breach of international law.”

As long as Washington supports Israeli actions, no matter how harmful to Palestinians and others, it can do what it pleases unaccountably.

Settlements keep expanding exponentially. Gaza remains oppressively blockaded, solely for political reasons unrelated to security.

The Trump and Netanyahu regimes are waging war on Palestinians without declaring it.

On Saturday, UNWRA head Pierre Krahenbuhl said

"I wish to convey – with confidence and steadfast determination – to Palestine refugees in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, in Gaza, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria, that our operations will continue and our agency prevail," adding:

"The funding decision of (America) will not modify or impact the energy and passion with which we approach our role and responsibility towards Palestine refugees. It will only strengthen our resolve."

"All staff will be at their duty stations, and will keep our installations open and safe. It is crucial to project the strongest sense of unity and purpose."

Keeping UNWRA operating and viable depends on the world community making up for the funding shortfall created by the Trump regime's action – rejecting its demand to end all agency funding next year and shut it down.

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