

UNRWA Funding Cuts Threaten Palestinian Lives in Gaza and Region, Say NGOs

By [Norwegian Refugee Council](#)

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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 7th 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 for 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

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Featured image: A view of a United Nations Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) school sheltering displaced Palestinians in Khan Yunis, Gaza on October 22, 2023 [Abed Zagout/Anadolu Agency]

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