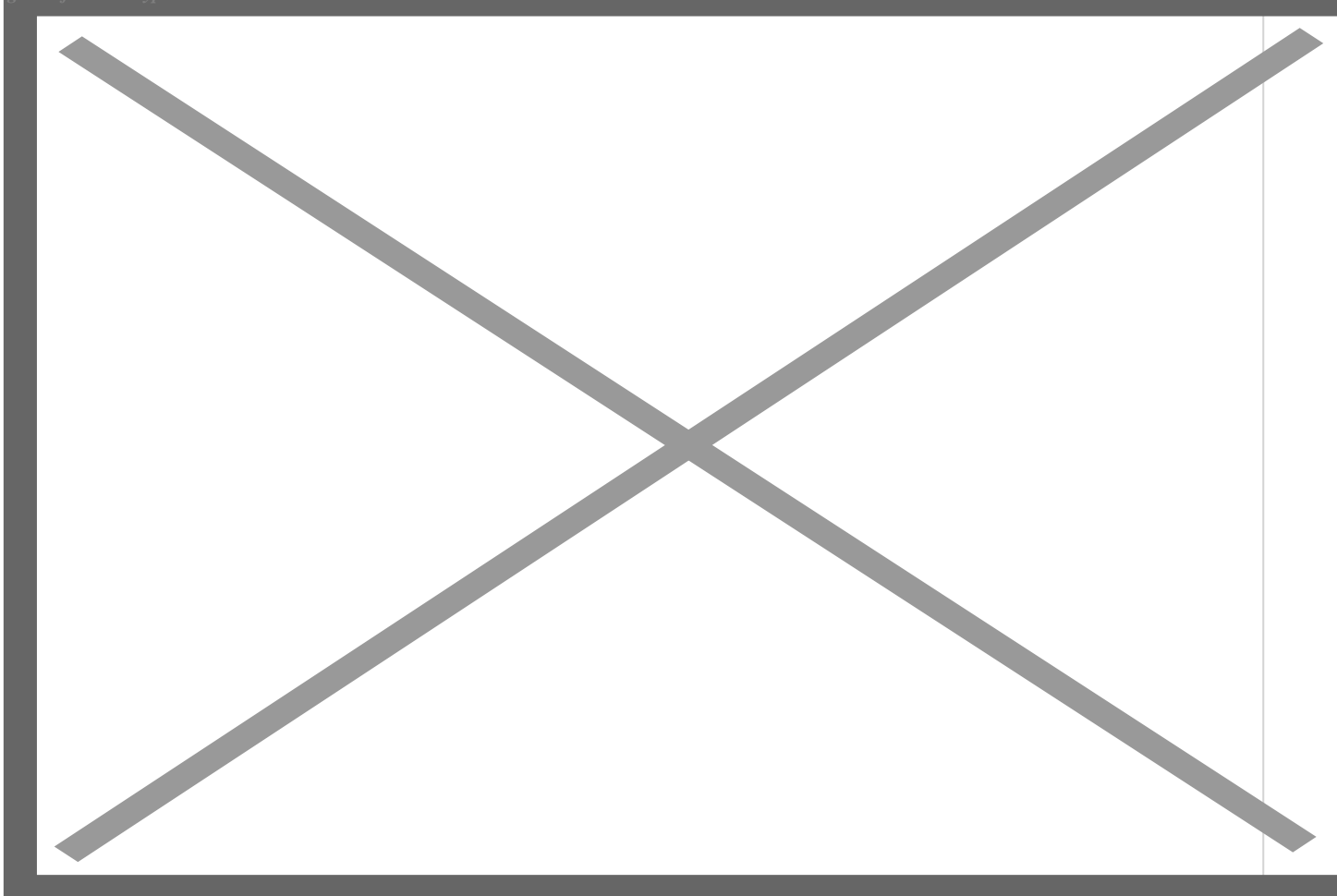


Japan lifts pause in funding for UNRWA, following Canada and Australia

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Japanese Foreign Minister Yoko Kamikawa last week met with UNRWA Commissioner General Philippe Lazzarini in Tokyo [Yuichi Yamazaki/AFP]

Tokyo, April 2 (RHC)-- Japan has announced it will lift its pause on funding to the United Nations agency for Palestinian refugees. Japanese Foreign Minister Yoko Kamikawa confirmed the resumption of

funding to UNRWA on Tuesday after meeting with UNRWA chief Philippe Lazzarini last week.

During their meeting in Tokyo, Kamikawa and Lazzarini discussed ways the UN agency could strengthen its transparency and governance. The European Commission, Canada, Australia, Sweden and Finland have also lifted similar funding pauses in recent weeks.

Japan was one of 16 countries that suspended funding to UNRWA amid Israeli allegations that 12 of the agency's staff participated in Hamas's attacks on southern Israel.

Israeli authorities later claimed that more than 450 UNRWA employees are "military operatives in terror groups in Gaza." The UN, which has launched an investigation into the claims, has said Israel has not provided it with evidence to support the allegations.

UNRWA, founded in 1949, provides food, healthcare and education to some 5.9 million Palestinian refugees.

Japan is the sixth-biggest donor to the agency, which received funding pledges worth \$1.2 billion in 2022.

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