

UNRWA faces deepening financial crisis amid Israel's pressure on donor countries



United Nations, January 16 (RHC)-- UNRWA, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees, faces a deepening financial crisis due to reduced international support following Israel's allegations and pressure on donor countries.

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees, known as UNRWA, has been a lifeline for millions of Palestinian refugees over the past decades.

UNRWA, however, has faced difficulties, including financial problems in the past year because of Israel's terrorism allegations against the agency.

The allegations and the subsequent Israeli pressure on donor countries have reduced international support for UNRWA. Jordan is one of the countries where the agency delivers aid to Palestinian refugees, numbering 2.3 million.

Ayman Safadi, Jordanian Foreign Minister, said: "UNRWA must continue to operate according to its mandate until the issue of refugees is resolved within the context of a comprehensive solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict on the basis of the [so-called] two-state solution and addresses the rights of Palestinian refugees."

UNRWA delivers primary health care services through 25 centers across Jordan. A suspension of support would lead to critical shortages in medicine and health care services, leaving thousands of vulnerable families without the food and relief assistance they depend on.

One UNRWA spokesperson said: Any reduction or suspension of UNRWA humanitarian services will result in significant challenges in education, healthcare, and, social relief. Around 161 schools depend on the agency. UNRWA also operates 25 health centers, providing 61 million medical consultations annually.

On October 28, 2024, Israel enacted a law banning UNRWA activities in the areas under its control, and preventing Israeli authorities from having contact with the agency. The law is set to take effect later this month, raising concerns over UNRWA's closure.

This comes as the agency's officials have already expected tougher times due to budget cuts in some donor countries.

Speaking with reporters, Filippo Lazzarini, UNRWA General Commissioner, said: "The forecast for 2025 is a little bit grim for the time being, because we have a number of donor country [sic] having indicated that they will enter into an austerity period, an austerity budget."

The suspension or reduction of UNRWA services is placing additional pressure on the Jordanian government, which is already grappling with significant economic challenges.

Amid the UNRWA crisis in Jordan, the agency and the government have called for urgent international support, warning the situation threatens both refugees' lives and regional stability.

[SOURCE: PRESS TV and NEWS AGENCIES]

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