

# *Study shows Israel's UNRWA ban beyond catastrophic for Palestinians*

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United Nations, January 23 (RHC)-- A new study warns that Israel's ban on the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) will result in a catastrophic humanitarian crisis in the occupied West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

The Israeli parliament ratified legislation on October 28 that bans UNRWA from operating in Palestinian and occupied territories. In less than one week --next Tuesday, the 28th -- this legislation will come into effect.

The new law effectively ends the UNRWA operations in the occupied West Bank and Gaza because the Israeli regime controls access to both regions.

About two million refugees depend on UNRWA aid in war-torn Gaza. As the deadline gets closer, the international community is grappling with how to respond, said the Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO).

“UNRWA provides a lifeline to some of the most vulnerable communities in the region,” said Jorgen Jensehaugen, co-author of the study, and a senior researcher at PRIO.

“In less than one week’s time, its collapse in Israeli-controlled areas could cripple the humanitarian operation in Gaza, and lead to a collapse of healthcare and education for thousands in the West Bank.”

Jensehaugen warned: “The clock is ticking and without coordinated global action, the repercussions will be serious, most acutely affecting Gaza, but also having the potential to push the situation in the West Bank across the brink.”

According to Jensehaugen, the acute challenges posed by the law, and the suspension of the agency’s services could exacerbate an already dire humanitarian situation. “Lifesaving relief delivery will plummet without UNRWA, even with increased aid under the ceasefire agreement, as the distribution structure will collapse.”

UNRWA provides services including development assistance, education, emergency humanitarian aid, and healthcare to 5.9 million Palestinian refugees in the Israeli-occupied Palestinian territories, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria.

It is also the backbone of the humanitarian operation in Gaza, where 2.1 million refugees are already relying on extremely inadequate amounts of aid allowed across the border by the Israeli regime.

The Palestinian resistance groups led by Hamas reached a ceasefire agreement with the Israeli regime on January 17th.

[ SOURCE: PRESS TV ]

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