

United Nations Agency to Suspend Activities in Gaza by End of January



United Nations, January 23 (RHC)-- A UN agency tasked with providing aid for Palestinians will suspend its activities in the war-torn Gaza Strip due to a lack of funds. The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) will suspend its aid program in war-torn Gaza by the end of January, by which time it will have run out of money for the aid activities in Gaza.

UNWRA spokesperson Christopher Guinness said on Thursday that the agency had received only USD 135 million out of the roughly USD 720 million needed for its emergency operations to reconstruct damaged houses and provide shelters for displaced people in Gaza. "Because of this shortfall, we're going to be forced to suspend the program by the end of the month," Guinness told Reuters. "Our concern is the humanitarian impact this would have on the people of Gaza."

Meanwhile, aid agency Oxfam has said that heavy winter storms, power outages, and fuel and cooking gas shortages have deteriorated the situation in Gaza. "Many people are still displaced, many still lack heating and lighting and simply don't live in adequate conditions, more than six months after the end of the war," said Oxfam spokesperson in Gaza, Arwa Mhanna.

Israel unleashed attacks on Gaza in early July 2014 and later expanded its military campaign with a ground invasion into the besieged Palestinian territory. The war ended in late August that year. Nearly 2,200 Palestinians lost their lives and some 11,000 were wounded.

In recent months, heavy flooding has also forced thousands of people, already grappling with the destruction from the Israeli war, to leave their homes in brutal cold. The destruction of the only power plant in the besieged Gaza Strip has also worsened the dire living condition for people.

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