

*Ireland pledges \$21 million for
UNRWA, slams Israel's
campaign of disinformation*

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A Palestinian student walks out of a UNRWA school with a lunchbox in her hand at al-Am'ari Refugee Camp after funding cuts to UNRWA in Ramallah, West Bank, on February 3, 2024. ISSAM RIMAWI / ANADOLU VIA GETTY IMAGES

Dublin, February 16 (RHC)-- Ireland's foreign ministry has announced that the country is pledging ?20 million, or about \$21.5 million, to the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) as Israel escalates its genocide of Palestinians and the humanitarian crisis in Gaza becomes yet more dire.

Deputy prime minister of Ireland and foreign minister Micheál Martin announced the funding during a visit by UNRWA Commissioner General Philippe Lazzarini to Dublin on Thursday, saying that the funding is needed now more than ever as other countries suspend their funding to the agency.

“In Gaza, we are bearing witness to a humanitarian catastrophe. People are in dire need of the most basic lifesaving provisions — food, water, shelter. In these most harrowing conditions, facing the prospect of further military escalation, UNRWA is the backbone of the humanitarian response. It urgently needs support from all UN Member States,” Martin said. “I urge other donors to resume and expand support to UNRWA so that it can deliver for the millions of Palestinian refugees in need.”

Irish leaders have long been allies to the cause of Palestinian liberation, having also been historic victims of colonialism. Ireland’s commitment is the highest annual contribution it’s ever given to the agency, officials said. Last year, Ireland gave \$19 million to the UNRWA directly, and another \$19 million to other projects supporting Palestinians.

Spain has also pledged to send an additional ?3.5 million, or about \$3.8 million, to the agency, while Portugal has committed an additional ?1 million, or about \$1.1 million. A number of other countries in the Middle East have also pledged their support.

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