



GA Ad Hoc Committee Meeting for the Announcement of Voluntary Contributions to UNRWA, 12 July 2024

Malta Statement delivered by Her Excellency Ambassador Vanessa Frazier
Permanent Representative of Malta to the United Nations, New York

President

I thank you for convening this important pledging conference at such a critical period for UNRWA. I also thank the Secretary-General, the PGA, and Commissioner-General Lazzarini for their pertinent remarks.

Presently millions of Palestinians across the occupied Palestinian territory, Lebanon, Syria and Jordan are facing unprecedented challenges. Rising regional escalations and the raging conflict in Gaza has left UNRWA facing a daily struggle to provide the services which ensure basic levels of humanity for millions of Palestinians.

Malta strongly reaffirms that UNRWA is indispensable. The Agency is a lifeline for Palestinians, a stabilising force in the region and the backbone for humanitarian efforts in Gaza.



Since 7 October, close to 200 UNRWA colleagues have been killed in Gaza, while over 180 UNRWA facilities upon which Gazan civilians depend for survival, have been damaged or destroyed. This week alone four schools have been struck, one of which was an UNRWA school sheltering displaced persons.

Meanwhile, in the West Bank the Agency faces violence and the imposition of arbitrary measures that severely hamper its work. We underline that humanitarian personnel cannot be targeted and that full, transparent investigations into such instances is critical.

Malta welcomed the UN's swift response in the wake of serious allegations that several UNRWA personnel participated in the heinous 7 October Hamas attacks against Israel. We take note that the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) remains engaged in investigations on the allegations.

We are encouraged to note that the inquiry into the Agency's neutrality, led by former French Foreign Minister Catherine Colonna, determined that it has in place significant mechanisms to ensure compliance and respond to neutrality breaches.



We welcome the Agency's commitment to implementing the recommendations put forward by the report. It is important to ensure that any gaps in compliance are bridged. This needs to be accompanied by the financial and political support necessary from influential donors and Member States.

For 75 years, UNRWA has spearheaded Palestinian refugees' health, education and development needs. Malta particularly commends the Agency's mission to ensure that Palestinian children have the educational opportunities they deserve. We are deeply concerned that it is consistently lacking the necessary resources to deliver on this crucial mandate.

Malta has been a regular contributor to UNRWA and in-keeping with this we are pleased to announce an additional contribution during today's Conference. We stress the necessity of a funding model which ensures predictable and sustained funding for the Agency.



The importance of political support for the Agency also cannot be understated. Attacks against its mandate not only jeopardize its ability to address critical challenges but also undermine the multilateral system.

Malta has consistently called for an urgent return to a political horizon, in-line with the two-State Solution, as the main path towards peace in the Middle East. An immediate and permanent ceasefire in Gaza and the release of all remaining hostages are paramount to this end.

In the absence of a comprehensive political solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, UNRWA remains a key pillar for Palestinians. It demands the international community's consistent financial and political support. Malta remains steadfastly committed to supporting UNRWA's vital role as the primary lifeline for millions of Palestinians.

I thank you.