

The Palestinian Association for Human Rights (Witness)

Beirut, Lebanon

Office of the Secretary-General

United Nations Headquarters

New York, NY, 10017, USA

Subject: Response to Israel's Withdrawal from the 1967 Agreement Recognizing UNRWA

Dear Secretary-General,

We, at the Palestinian Association for Human Rights, are writing to express deep concern regarding the recent decision by the State of Israel to formally withdraw from the 1967 agreement recognizing the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and the subsequent legislative restrictions on the agency's operations in the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip. This decision, combined with the legislative measures passed by the Knesset, poses significant threats to the welfare and rights of Palestinian refugees, impeding their access to essential services and undermining UNRWA's mandate.

UNRWA has long played an irreplaceable role in supporting Palestinian refugees, providing basic education, healthcare, and humanitarian aid to millions who remain in a protracted situation of displacement. Israel's decision not only disrupts UNRWA's mandate to uphold the dignity, well-being, and rights of Palestinian refugees, but also risks exacerbating an already fragile situation in the region. This move affects the most vulnerable, including children, women, and the elderly, who rely heavily on UNRWA's assistance.



Israel's legislative restrictions on UNRWA's operations threaten to cut off critical services that contribute to social stability and peace. The restrictions also undermine the UN's capacity to support Palestinian refugees and impedes the United Nations' work in the region and violates established principles of humanitarian assistance and non-discrimination. The UNRWA not only presents a lifeline for the Palestinian refugees' community in its area of operations, but also serves as a living proof of the historical Palestinian rights and as a witness for their displacement from their land.

We condemn the Israeli decision that aims to restrict aid into Gaza, undermine the resilience of the community, and escape the Palestinians right to return.

We call on the United Nations to take immediate, concrete steps to ensure that UNRWA's mandate is safeguarded and that the essential services it provides to Palestinian refugees are not disrupted. We urge a renewed commitment by the UN to secure necessary funding and support for UNRWA, reaffirming the international community's dedication to upholding human rights and humanitarian principles.

Urgent actions taken by the UN can convey a powerful message that the rights and dignity of Palestinian refugees remain a global priority.

Sincerely,

The Palestinian Association for Human Rights (Witness)

04th November 2024

