



**Statement**

by

**H.E. Ambassador Mira Daher  
Chief of Protocol  
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**at the  
Fourth Committee**

**Item 50: United Nations Relief and Works Agency for  
Palestine Refugees in the Near East**

**New York, November 5, 2014**

*Check Against Delivery*

*Permanent Mission of Lebanon to the United Nations  
866 United Nations Plaza, Suite 531, New York, NY. 10017*

Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, allow me to express Lebanon's profound appreciation for Commissioner-General Pierre Krähenbühl's presentation and reports regarding UNRWA's work over the past year.

It has been a particularly difficult year for the Palestinian people in Gaza and for UNRWA, more than 50 days of Israeli military aggression. Thousands upon thousands of killed, injured and displaced persons. UNRWA's losses were also great; my delegation would like to express its sincere condolences to you Mr. Commissioner-General and to the families of the deceased. We would also like to hail your determination in assisting Palestinian refugees and alleviating their plight.

Mr. Chairman,

A scared but determined young girl, a refugee, decided from her hiding place in Amsterdam that, quote: "I finally realized that I must do my schoolwork to keep from being ignorant, to get on in life, to become a journalist, because that is what I want." This is what Ann Frank said, on Wednesday, April 5, 1944.

From 1948 till today, many Palestinian young girls and boys are just as determined as Ann Frank, to conquer their fear of the occupier, to overcome ignorance, to do their schoolwork and to get on in their lives.

Since its inception pursuant to General Assembly resolution 302 (IV) of December 1949, UNRWA has been providing education, health care, emergency relief, social interventions, shelter and support, to the 5 million Palestine refugees that fall under its jurisdiction in Palestine, Lebanon, Syria, and Jordan.

UNRWA has been contributing "to regional stability until a just solution is reached, in accordance with relevant United Nations resolutions in particular GA resolution 194(III)".

Mr. Chairman,

It is of paramount importance to ensure structural financial stability to UNRWA. It is alarming that UNRWA continues to face financial deficit and that the forecast deficit in the Agency's General Fund is \$69.1 million. Notwithstanding several underfunded flash appeals.

Lebanon, as chair of the advisory committee for 2013-2014, reiterated its concern about this dire financial situation and called on donors to fulfill their pledges and increase their contributions to the agency. We welcome, in this regard, the conference held in Egypt for the reconstruction of Gaza and commend the generous financial commitments made.

Mr. Chairman,

In addition to the persistent financial deficit, UNRWA is facing an unjustified campaign of defamation by those who are responsible for the Palestinian tragedy. Year after year, UNRWA is accused of holding refugees in a state of dependency, and being inefficient when, year after year, it is Israel who: exacerbates UNRWA's financial shortfalls by imposing transit charges on shipments, and impeding the movements of personnel and goods in violation of the 1946 convention, forcing UNRWA to disburse a sum that should have been allocated elsewhere. (Paragraph 28 and 42 of the Secretary-General's report A/69/13).

It is Israel who continues to impose an illegal blockade on the Gaza strip.

And most importantly, Israel continues to occupy the territory of Palestine, undermining efforts to re-launch the peace process and protracting the independence of the State of Palestine.

Mr. Chairman,

In the midst of all the challenges facing my country, my government remains committed to implementing the policy to improve the livelihood of Palestine refugees during their temporary stay in the 12 camps.

Furthermore, we express our gratitude to donors who assisted in the completion of several phases of the reconstruction of the Nahr el Bared Camp, we would like to reiterate our call for full disbursement of pledges in order to close the \$140 million deficit and allow the camp to operate at full capacity, and in this regard, we express our appreciation to the generous contribution of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Moreover, the Lebanese-Palestinian Dialogue Committee intensified its meetings and endeavored to ensure better protection of rights of Palestinian refugees, from the adoption of the law 129 on August 8, 2010, regulating the access of the Palestinian worker to the Lebanese labor market, to the publication of the "Guide to the Palestinian workers, rights and obligations."

The right to education is another area that requires serious consideration. It is in this context that the former President of the Republic General Michel Sleiman published decree n 11737 on 29 of May 2014, allowing Palestinian students graduating from "Siblin center", to complete their technical or universities studies.

As for the right to healthcare, a joint campaign between UNRWA and the Lebanese Ministry of Health was held in March and October 2014. This health program provided Measles, Tuberculosis and Polio vaccines to Palestinians aged from 9 months to 30 years old. Access to these essential shots was ensured by the 27 UNRWA health facilities spread throughout Lebanon.

All these rights will improve the living conditions of those refugees during their temporary stay in Lebanon, pending the time for them to exercise their right to return to their homeland.

Mr. Chairman,

Since the beginning of the conflict in Syria, my Government welcomed more than 1,200,000 refugees from Syria, including 52,000 Palestine refugees. We commend the services provided by UNRWA to alleviate the suffering of those refugees. Actions are required now, support to UNRWA, those refugees and their host communities is crucial.

Despite exceeding its capacity and reaching the breaking point, my government reaffirms its readiness to continue working closely with the International Community while implementing its new policy regarding refugees from Syria.

Mr. Chairman,

It is the responsibility of the International Community to end Israeli occupation, to celebrate the independence of the State of Palestine and to allow the Palestine refugees to exercise their right to return to their homeland.