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# Al Shuraka

A publication of the Arab Partners Unit

October 2013 - March 2014



united nations relief and works agency  
for palestine refugees in the near east  
[www.unrwa.org](http://www.unrwa.org)



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# Donor Contributions



## UNRWA and EAC Sign \$4.9 Million Agreement for Palestine Children affected by Syrian Crisis

Doha - A new agreement with the Educate a Child (EAC) programme of the Education Above All Foundation, led by Sheikha Moza, signed in Doha, Qatar, will help UNRWA provide emergency education support to over 67,000 Palestine refugee children from Syria, including those who remain in Syria as well as those who have fled to Jordan and Lebanon. The agreement will enable UNRWA to mitigate some of the effects of the ongoing armed conflict on the Agency's schooling and students. The agreement focuses on three main activities over a two-year period:

- Providing food for pupils
- Psychosocial support
- Mobile schools

Following the signing, EAC Director Dr. Mary Joy Pigozzi said: "We are pleased to have some role in addressing this profoundly difficult situation, especially as it is in our neighbourhood."



Marcio Barbosa, Chief Executive Officer of EAC-EAA (left), and Peter Ford, Representative of UNRWA's Commissioner-General (right)

## Qatar Charity Donate \$1 Million to Palestine Refugees in Gaza

Gaza - Qatar Charity and UNRWA have signed an agreement to support the UNRWA Health programme in Gaza. Under this agreement, worth \$1 million, UNRWA is procuring urgently needed medicines and physiotherapy equipment for Palestine refugees through UNRWA's network of health centers.



Vital medicine ready for distribution at a health centre in Gaza.

During his visit to UNRWA on 26 December 2013, Eng. Mohammed Abu Haloub, Deputy Director of Qatar Charity in Gaza said,

**"Qatar Charity is committed to support the needs of Palestine refugees through UNRWA."**

He added, "We have to express our deep thanks and gratitude to all people who trust Qatar Charity, particularly those who have invested in our humanitarian assistant programs and responded to Qatar Charity appeals with donations."

# Donor Contributions



## IIROSA Pledge \$1million for Job Creation Programme in Gaza

Amman - The International Islamic Relief Organization – Saudi Arabia (IIROSA) and UNRWA signed a \$1million agreement to support job creation in the Gaza Strip.

The donation will provide training for 210 university graduates to receive training and provide employment through the Agency's Job Creation Programme. Peter Ford, Representative of the Commissioner General, said UNRWA "is delighted to be renewing its cooperation with IIROSA, a valued partner in our task of supporting Palestinian refugees".



Beneficiary from the Job Creation Programme in Gaza

The announcement follows the recent signing of a memorandum of understanding between IIROSA and UNRWA to establish a mutual cooperation framework to provide assistance to Palestine Refugees, as an extension of their previous mutual cooperation providing emergency food assistance for Palestine refugees in Gaza and Syria, job creation in Gaza and supply of medical equipment to Gaza.

## SAP Middle East and North Africa Supports Schoolchildren in Gaza for the Second Year

SAP MENA, a market leader in enterprise application software, renewed its employee-driven "Back to School" Initiative, for the second consecutive year, supporting this year Palestinian Refugees from Syria who fled to Gaza. The contribution (\$2,000), is used to buy school items for beneficiaries.

## Human Appeal International Provides Winter Clothes for Palestine Refugees from Syria in Jordan

Human Appeal International (HAI) provided UNRWA with 254 vouchers to buy winter clothes from Daraghmeh Stores. The vouchers, worth \$24 each, were distributed to Syrian and Palestinian children who, having fled the conflict in Syria, are currently attending UNRWA schools in Baqa'a and Marka camps, near Amman.



Palestinian Woman Receiving Vouchers to Fend Off the Winter Cold - December 2013

The number of Palestine refugees in Jordan from Syria has now reached 11,000, about half of them being children. As of 1 December 2013, a total of 1,810 students – 762 Palestinians from Syria and another 1,048 Syrians – were enrolled at UNRWA schools.



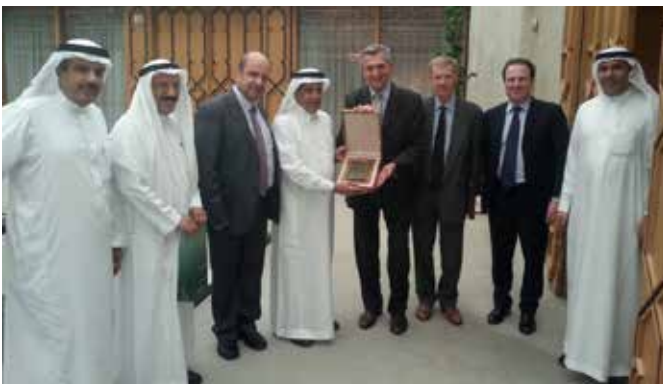
Distribution of Hygiene Kits donated by HAI In Cyber City, October 2013.





## UNRWA Commissioner-General Thanks Saudi Arabia for its Support

Riyadh - The Commissioner General of UNRWA, Filippo Grandi, visited the Saudi capital on 3 March in a final visit before leaving his post with UNRWA to thank officials of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for the Kingdom's generous and consistent support for the Agency during his tenure.



The outgoing Commissioner General, Filippo Grandi (center), receives a plaque from H.E. Eng. Yousef Al Bassam, SFD Vice Chairman and Managing Director (center-left), in recognition of his work for Palestine refugees with UNRWA.

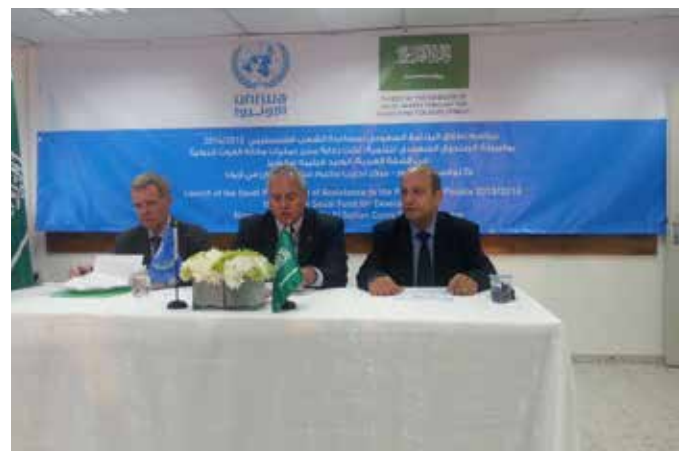
Mr Grandi, who will be leaving the Agency at the end of March, expressed gratitude for a series of important donations which in 2011 and 2013 made the Kingdom the third largest contributor to UNRWA. Donations in 2013 worth \$151 million, delivered mainly through the Saudi Fund for Development, allowed UNRWA to fund vital education, healthcare, housing and infrastructure projects which improve the lives of Palestinians living under occupation in the West Bank and Gaza, as well as in Lebanon, and alleviate the suffering of Palestinians trapped in Syria.

## UNRWA and Saudi Arabia Launch \$14 Million West Bank Projects

West Bank - In November 2013, UNRWA held a ceremony launching a group of reconstruction projects funded by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, through its Saudi Fund for Development, at a total value of \$14 million.

Mr. Ford, speaking on behalf of UNRWA Commissioner General Filippo Grandi, expressed his appreciation for the generous donation.

This programme includes the reconstruction of 180 housing units and the rehabilitation of 750 homes in Palestine refugee camps across the West Bank. Funds have also been allocated for the reconstruction and rehabilitation of three schools, as well as the Hebron Health Centre.



Peter Ford (left), Felipe Sanchez (centre), Munir Manneh (right), during the launch Ceremony in the Ein el-Sultan Camp

# Regional Visits & Events



## American University of Sharjah Exhibition Highlights Plight of Palestinians

Sharjah - UAE - The living conditions of Palestine refugees were discussed by UNRWA in an exhibition at the American University of Sharjah (AUS), titled "Space, Time, Dignity, Rights: Improving Palestinian Refugee Camps, from 5th to 14th November.

The exhibition was held under the patronage of His Highness Dr. Shaikh Sultan Bin Mohammad Al Qasimi, Member of the UAE Supreme Council and Ruler of Sharjah, a generous supporter of UNRWA who has recently contributed to an important Palestinian refugee records project. It holds a mirror to the difficult conditions of life in camps and their development over time through photos, documents and personal accounts by refugees from six camps in Jordan, Palestine, Lebanon and Syria.

It was inaugurated by Shaikh Sultan Bin Mohammad Bin Sultan Al Qasimi, Crown Prince and Deputy Ruler of Sharjah, and attended by Margot Ellis, Deputy Commissioner-General of UNRWA and UNRWA's Infrastructure and Camp Improvement team.



Shaikh Sultan Bin Mohammad Bin Sultan Al Qasimi (centre), Ms Muna Budeiri, Deputy Director of Infrastructure & Camp Improvement at UNRWA (right), and Dr. Thomas Hochstettler, Acting Chancellor, American University of Sharjah (left).

## Liberty Dental Clinic Contributing Towards Health Care in Lebanon

Dubai - UAE Dr. Majd Naji, Director of the UAE-based Liberty Dental Clinic, donated 100,000 UAE Dirhams (approximately \$27,000) to UNRWA. Dr Naji handed the cheque to UNRWA Regional Youth Ambassador Mohammed Assaf, during a ceremony held at Jumeirah Emirates Towers in Dubai.

Mohammed Assaf addressed the audience, congratulating Dr Naji on the annual Liberty Clinic celebration, expressing gratitude for his contribution. Assaf reminded the audience of the mandate of



Dr Naji (left) with Mohammad Assaf (right)

UNRWA and the services it provides to five million Palestine refugees. He explained that as a Palestine refugee himself, he is no stranger to the dire conditions Palestine refugees live in, and he understands UNRWA's often challenging working environment. Assaf also called on the attendees to support UNRWA firstly by disseminating information on its message and current funding needs, and secondly by donating.



# Regional Visits & Events



مؤسسة أحمد بن زايد للأنشطة الخيرية والإنسانية  
AHMAD BIN ZAYED FOUNDATION

مؤسسة خالد  
أحمد الحبتور  
للأنشطة الخيرية  
KHALAF AHMAD  
AL HABTOOR  
FOUNDATION

## Tulkarem Health Centre now Serving Camp Residents

West Bank - The Arab Partners Unit visited Tulkarem Health Centre, in Tulkarem Refugee Camp, which started to receive patients in September 2013. Ahmad bin Zayed Charity and Humanitarian Organization funded the construction and equipment of the health centre, with a budget of \$1.4 million. The health centre will provide medical services to the 18,000 residents of the camp.



Maria Mohammadi (centre) with the Staff at Tulkarem Health Centre



Medical Equipment in Tulkarem Health Centre

## Field Visit to Khalaf Ahmad Al Habtoor Foundation Projects in the West Bank



Maria Mohammadi talks with Um el Kheir Community members

West Bank - The Arab Partners Unit visited in November Wadi Fukin and Um El Kheir villages, which are the two communities in the West Bank who benefited from a job creation programme funded by Khalaf Ahmad Al Habtoor Foundation. Thanks to a generous contribution amounting to \$180,000, 39 food insecure Palestine refugees in Um El Kheir and 52 from Wadi Fukin were given temporary jobs. These beneficiaries undertook various agricultural works to strengthen the presence of Bedouin communities threatened by settlement expansion.



A Newly Planted Olive Tree Takes Root in the West Bank



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# Regional Visits & Events



## Arab and Other Donors Reassert Support to UNRWA at Meeting in New York

New York - A ministerial level meeting to support UNRWA's work was held in the margins of the UN General Assembly in September, jointly chaired by UN Secretary-General Mr Ban Ki-Moon and Arab League Secretary-General Dr Nabil Elaraby.

The meeting was attended by the Prime Minister of the State of Palestine, Dr Rami Hamdallah, senior delegates from Members of the League of Arab States and from UNRWA's principal donors. Participants focused on the critical situation of UNRWA caused by the escalating demand for its services and the need to address growing hardships facing Palestine refugees, especially in the occupied Palestinian territory and from regional upheavals provoked by the Syria crisis.

Ministers expressed particular concern about UNRWA's financial plight and emphasized the importance of maintaining a strong UNRWA as a contributor to stability in the region. In the conclusions of the meeting they reaffirmed their commitment to providing UNRWA with reliable long-term support. Arab donors reiterated an engagement to achieve and sustain the target of 7.8 per cent for Arab contributions to the budget supporting UNRWA's basic programmes, as set out in previous Arab League resolutions.



UNRWA Commissioner-General Filippo Grandi (right) during the New York Meeting Addresses Attendees

## IDB funded Construction Continues Apace in Gaza

Gaza - Engineer Munir Manneh, Senior External Relations and Projects Officer at the Arab Partners Unit, visited the Gaza Bridge Construction Project to check on the project's progress. Once complete at the end of 2014, the bridge will connect southern and northern areas of the Gaza strip. The \$1,605,000 project was generously funded by the Islamic Development Bank.



Eng. Munir Manneh speaks with workers at Gaza Bridge Construction Site.

Engineer Munir Manneh also visited the Rafah Health Centre construction project in Gaza worth \$3,210,000. The money was again generously provided by the Islamic Development Bank. Once complete in 2014, the Health Center will be providing healthcare services for around 50,000 Palestine refugees.



## Photo Exhibition Documents the Palestine Experience

East Jerusalem - The United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) unveiled the first part of its newly digitized archive, which consists of over half a million negatives, prints, slides, films and videocassettes covering all aspects of the life and history of Palestine refugees from 1948 to the present day. The project was made possible by the generous support of the Welfare Association, Bank of Palestine, PADICO, Wataniya and PalTel, as well as the Governments of France and Denmark.

The first group of iconic photographs and films are part of an exhibition, 'The Long Journey', which opened on 28 November at the Al-Ma'mal Centre in the Old City of Jerusalem. The archive was inscribed on the UNESCO 'Memory of the World' register, which includes collections of outstanding cultural and historical significance.

Once the exhibition closes at the Al-Ma'mal Centre, on 28 January 2014, it will go on tour to key cities in UNRWA areas of operations - the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria, when the situation there allows. It will simultaneously tour centres of culture and politics in Europe and North America.

In tandem with the digitized archive, UNRWA is also launching a website, where the 1,948 images will be available: <http://archive.unrwa.org>.



Students in the Auto Mechanics course at UNRWA's vocational training centre in Gaza Strip

## UNRWA Attends Education Summit

Doha - A delegation from UNRWA, headed by the Commissioner General Filippo Grandi, attended the 2013 edition of the World Innovation Summit for Education (WISE) in October.

The World Innovation Summit for Education (WISE) was established by Qatar Foundation in 2009 under the patronage of its Chairperson, Her Highness Sheikha Mozabint Nasser.

WISE is an international, multi-sectoral platform for creative thinking, debate and purposeful action in order to build the future of education through innovation. WISE is now an ongoing initiative and a global reference in new approaches to education.

WISE is now an ongoing initiative and a global reference in new approaches to education. Through both the annual Summit and a range of continuing programs WISE is promoting collaboration and building the future of education.



From the left, H.H. Sheikha Moza, Former British Prime Minister, Gordon Brown, Representatives of UNESCO, UNICEF, UNHCR and UNRWA,

# Voices from... Gaza



## A Universal Voice from Khan Younis- UNRWA Good Will Ambassador: Mohammad Assaf

Mr. Mohammed Assaf, winner of Arab Idol, was appointed UNRWA Ambassador for Palestine refugee youth in June, by Commissioner-General Filippo Grandi. He is the first goodwill ambassador in UNRWA History. The 23-year-old is himself a Palestine refugee, who grew up in the Khan Younis camp in the Gaza Strip.

In November, in New York, Assaf joined UNRWA's delegation, the United Nations (UN) and Member States in the UN Headquarters in New York as they marked the thirty-fifth International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

During his tour in the United States, Mr. Assaf performed for hundreds of delegates and civil societies at the UN, bringing the sounds and rhythms of Palestine to New York with a song for solidarity. Describing the honour of bringing the voice of Palestine refugee youth to New York, he said:

**"I would like to remind you of the millions of other Palestine refugees just like me - the young men and women who are not standing here before you today. When we celebrate this International Day of Solidarity, they are the ones we need to remember. We are here to show solidarity with them and support their hope for, and their right to a better, brighter future".**

Outlining Mr. Assaf's role as Regional Youth Ambassador, Mr Filippo Grandi, UNRWA's Commissioner-General

said that he had been tasked with taking UNRWA's message to young people, explaining its efforts to help them acquire the skills and knowledge they need. It is equally important that Mohammed helps the international community better understand the hopes, desires and needs of Palestine refugee youth. Both Mr. Grandi and Mr. Assaf stressed that Palestine refugees are facing extreme challenges throughout the region, and that in Gaza the situation is growing increasingly precarious.

The past several years of conflict and closure have had a crippling impact on the people of the Gaza Strip, particularly the younger generation, who grow up in an environment of increasing poverty, insecurity and isolation. The hope of these young people for a secure, peaceful future depends on the support of the international community.



The Commissioner-General thanked Assaf for taking on the role of UNRWA Regional Youth Ambassador for Palestine refugees, in UNRWA Headquarters in Gaza, last June



# Spotlight on Syria



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Of the **540,000 Palestine Refugees in Syria**, almost all are in need of assistance.

**63% of Palestine refugees from Syria have been displaced.**

Prior to the conflict, UNRWA operated 23 primary health care facilities in Syria. Currently, the Agency maintains 11 health centres and 8 health points across the country.

Of the 118 UNRWA schools in Syria, only 42 are currently operational. The Ministry of Education has provided access to 36 additional schools, allowing UNRWA to reach some 47,000 of its students.

Tragically, since the start of the conflict, 10 UNRWA staff members were killed.



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Jaramana Camp in Syria

**Cash assistance has reached over 100,000 beneficiaries in Damascus alone.**

**Nearly 140,000 family food parcels have been distributed.**



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# Spotlight on Syria

## Crossroads of Crisis: Yarmouk, Syria and the Palestine Refugee Predicament - Lecture by Filippo Grandi, Commissioner-General of UNRWA at American University of Beirut, 25 February -2014

In Syria, Palestinians found secure, sympathetic refuge in 1948. For over six decades they nurtured families and communities, integrated economically, and formed a subset of the cultural and intellectual fabric of a vibrant and proud Syrian society. The Palestinian camps, and UNRWA services in them, formed the locus of their community. They were places where UNRWA was at its best in supporting Palestine refugees.

Then came this cruel war. Next month marks the beginning of the fourth year of the conflict. Even two years into it, we retained hopes that Palestinians and their camps might be spared. The turning point was in December 2012, when Yarmouk - a Damascus suburb hosting one of the largest Palestinian communities in exile - was overwhelmed by fighting.

Throughout part of last year, entry and exit were tightly controlled by the warring parties, but residents continued to receive some assistance. Access became tighter until it was all but sealed in September. For several months, and until a fragile agreement between the parties allowed us to distribute some food starting on 18 January, we were unable to provide any assistance.

Residents whom I saw yesterday emerging like ghosts from the depths of Yarmouk, as in a medieval siege, reported that they subsisted on grass, spices mixed in water, and animal feed. They burned furniture on their balconies to keep warm; they suffered severe malnutrition and dehydration. Many died from readily treatable conditions.

Yarmouk has come to represent all places where - for Palestinians and especially refugees - control over one's life is an illusion, where the safety of decades can disappear overnight, where land is confiscated, homes are demolished, rights are denied, travel is restricted, jobs are lost, resentments and prejudices prevail. Yarmouk is Gaza, the open-air prison. Yarmouk is Nahr el-Bared, destroyed by bombs. Yarmouk is Jenin, it is Sabra and Shatila, it is Tel az-Zaatar. Yarmouk is the expulsion from Kuwait, it is 1967, all the way back to the Nakba. It was a beacon of resilience. Unless we act quickly, it risks becoming a symbol of dispossession, and of a history of repeated dispossessions.



Gathered on Yarmouk Street, residents begin hurrying to reach the distribution point

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