

September 23, 2024

President Joseph R. Biden  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We, the undersigned 104 civil society organizations, write to respectfully request your administration's support for the restoration of United States funding to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) consistent with the recently introduced H.R. 9469: "UNRWA Emergency Restoration Act of 2024".

UNRWA remains the backbone of the humanitarian response in Gaza, as recently evidenced in the UN response plan to address the outbreak of polio. As U.S. Ambassador Wood rightly stated before the UN Security Council, "other United Nations agencies and humanitarian organizations have reiterated they are not equipped to replace UNRWA, as UNRWA performs essential government-like functions their organizations do not have the capacity or structure to deliver."

Following UNRWA's and the UN's swift and decisive response to the concerns raised by the Administration when it paused funding in January, we believe it is now time for the Administration to actively reengage with Congress with the goal of resuming US funding for UNRWA.

Fifteen other governments joined the United States in pausing funding to UNRWA; however, after having performed their own due diligence and rigorous oversight, all 15 have since resumed support to the Agency - leaving the United States the only holdout. In fact, several donor nations have even increased their contributions. While this is welcome news, it does not make up for the funding lost from UNRWA's largest contributor - the United States. With the situation nearing its one-year mark, the needs are even greater as the risk of famine and disease mount. UNRWA's role in responding to the acute humanitarian crisis is paramount to prevent widespread famine and disease outbreak.

Securing an immediate ceasefire, unconditional release of all remaining hostages, and unfettered humanitarian access are only a starting point for a long and difficult rebuilding process. Safeguarding the role of UNRWA, particularly as a provider of primary healthcare and education, is critical for the future of Gaza. Strong congressional support for H.R. 9469 will reflect the growing support of the American people for immediate and effective responses to the unimaginable humanitarian suffering in the Gaza Strip.

We appreciate your consideration of our request and hope we can continue to rely on your support for the humanitarian needs and human rights of displaced Palestinians.

Respectfully,

UNRWA USA National Committee  
Refugees International  
Oxfam America  
Foreign Policy for America  
J Street  
Friends Committee on National Legislation  
Arab American Institute (AAI)  
International Refugee Assistance Project (IRAP)  
Amnesty International USA  
American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC)  
Climate Refugees  
US Campaign for Palestinian Rights Action (USCPR Action)  
Jewish Voice for Peace Action  
Project South  
ReThinking Foreign Policy  
Demand Progress  
American Friends Service Committee  
Middle East Democracy Center (MEDC)  
The American Task Force on Lebanon  
Norwegian Refugee Council USA  
Women's Refugee Commission  
ACCESS of WNY  
We Are All America (WAAA)  
Emgage Action  
Minnesota Peace Project  
National Partnership for New Americans  
Just Foreign Policy  
RootsAction.org  
Action Corps  
Every Campus A Refuge  
Carolina Peace Center  
Presbyterian Church (USA), Office of Public Witness  
Oasis Legal Services  
MADRE  
Peace Action  
MoveOn  
The United Church of Christ  
Nonviolent Peaceforce  
Center for Security, Race and Rights  
Freedom Forward  
Oil Change International  
Avaaz

Disciples Center for Public Witness  
Migrant Roots Media  
The Episcopal Church  
Pittsburgh Area Pax Christi  
Pax Christi Young Adult Caucus  
Center for Victims of Torture  
DAWN  
Americans for Peace Now  
MPower Change Action Fund  
Alliance of Baptists  
Pax Christi USA  
Al Otro Lado  
Muslim Justice League  
Communities United for Status & Protection (CUSP)  
The Tahrir Institute for Middle East Policy (TIMEP)  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns  
National Council of Churches  
Center for Civilians in Conflict (CIVIC)  
Virginia Coalition for Human Rights  
Wind of the Spirit Immigrant Resource Center  
American Baptist Churches USA  
Muslim Advocates  
Mennonite Central Committee U.S.  
People's Action  
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd  
Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, U.S. Provinces  
THRIVE Center for Survivors of Torture  
Israel/Palestine Mission Network of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)  
Detention Watch Network  
Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights (CHIRLA)  
Human Rights First  
Common Defense  
Charity&Security Network  
Church World Service  
Free Migration Project  
Refugee Congress  
Hindus for Human Rights  
Transformations CDC  
Families For Freedom  
Witness at the Border  
Society of the flora, fauna & friend  
Center for Gender & Refugee Studies  
Reformed Church in America

Center for International Policy  
Jewish Activists for Immigration Justice  
Young Center for Immigrant Children's Rights  
Disciples Peace Fellowship  
Win Without War  
Center for Economic and Policy Research  
Never Again Action  
First Friends of New Jersey & New York  
ANAR  
Faith In Texas  
Florence Immigrant & Refugee Rights Project  
Civic Ark  
Welcoming America  
Immigrant Legal Resource Center  
Dorothy Day Catholic Worker, Washington DC  
Pennsylvania Immigration Coalition  
IfNotNow  
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice