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**Report of the
Commissioner-General of the
United Nations Relief and
Works Agency for Palestine
Refugees in the Near East**

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

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Note

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Contents

	<i>Page</i>
Letters of transmittal	4
Letter dated 23 August 2019 from the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East addressed to the President of the General Assembly	4
Letter dated 18 June 2019 from the Chair of the Advisory Commission of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East addressed to the Commissioner-General of the Agency	6
<i>Chapter</i>	
I. Contextual overview	9
A. Political, economic and security developments	9
B. Operational and organizational developments	13
C. Legal matters	15
D. Financial overview	20
II. Subprogramme review	25
A. Subprogramme 1	25
B. Subprogramme 2	26
C. Subprogramme 3	27
D. Subprogramme 4	29
E. Subprogramme 5	31

Letters of transmittal

Letter dated 23 August 2019 from the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East addressed to the President of the General Assembly

In 2019, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) continues to face serious challenges on many fronts. A decision by the Agency's largest bilateral donor to reduce its contribution by \$300 million in 2018 confronted the Agency with an existential crisis. In response, the extraordinary mobilization of support by a broad range of donors brought a shortfall of \$446 million down to zero by December 2018, allowing the Agency to preserve its operations throughout the year. We have called on UNRWA partners to provide the same level of financial contributions in 2019 in order to ensure a continuation of UNRWA essential services in support of a population of some 5.4 million Palestine refugees. For the Agency's part, we are maintaining a regime of financial discipline that has resulted in cost savings of approximately \$500 million over the past five years. This year, our partners and the Agency's own internal measures will be needed to compensate for the additional loss of \$60 million from the United States of America, effectively ending all United States funding to UNRWA in 2019.

Owing to efforts by the Agency and its partners, UNRWA has been able to keep its schools open, its clinics staffed and its vital assistance to the most vulnerable refugees flowing. This has not been easy. Financial constraints test the limits of providing quality assistance, an inevitable consequence when we have 50 students per classroom and 100 patient visits daily per doctor. The operating environment for UNRWA programmes and activities is also extremely challenging across its five fields of operation. The socioeconomic conditions of refugees have deteriorated in most areas. In the Syrian Arab Republic, the situation remains precarious, with most Palestine refugees there, as well as Palestine refugees from the Syrian Arab Republic in Jordan and Lebanon, still relying on UNRWA for their most basic needs. In Gaza, tensions remain high, after several cycles of violence across the Gaza perimeter and more than a year of protests there, in which hundreds of Palestinians were killed and thousands wounded; 13 UNRWA students were killed and 284 wounded. The devastating economic situation leaves nearly 1 million refugees in Gaza dependent on UNRWA for food. In the West Bank, Israeli settlements continue to expand, coinciding with an increase in evictions and the demolition of homes of Palestinians. Meanwhile, Israeli authorities have taken some steps that challenge UNRWA operations in East Jerusalem, following an announcement by the Jerusalem municipality of a plan to terminate UNRWA service provision there.

I wish to express my profound appreciation to both host and donor Governments for their continued support for UNRWA and its mandate. UNRWA made significant strides in expanding and diversifying its donor base in 2018, with 42 countries becoming new donors or increasing their contributions. UNRWA now enjoys 27 multi-year agreements with donor countries, up from 22 in 2017, which increases the

predictability of funding and aligns with Member State commitments made at the World Humanitarian Summit. At the pledging conference held in New York on 26 June 2019, Member States generously pledged \$110 million. UNRWA continues to pursue new sources of funding as well, including through its own digital campaigns seeking individual funding, and in collaboration with authorities in various countries that support Islamic giving. We welcome the important decision by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation on 2 March 2019 to establish a waqf endowment fund on behalf of UNRWA at the Islamic Development Bank.

Despite all of these efforts, the Agency's financial shortfall as at the date of this letter stands at \$151 million. It is imperative that the remaining shortfall be bridged as quickly as possible to enable us to sustain operations and continue implementing our mandate by addressing the dire situation on the ground. Given the difficulties that Palestine refugees face daily, it is no surprise that deep despair has taken hold in many quarters, with a dramatic increase in psychosocial trauma. Against this backdrop, in delivering essential assistance to these refugees, UNRWA addresses individual needs and provides a sense of hope and a foundation for a better future. This represents a significant contribution to stability in all five fields of operation.

I recently announced that UNRWA schools in all five fields would open on time for the 2019/20 school year. The education we provide in over 700 schools represents in many ways the heart and soul of what UNRWA stands for: investing in human capital and development. Our students show determination every morning as they make their way to school, especially those having to cross checkpoints or living in areas of conflict or under occupation. In UNRWA schools, they acquire knowledge and skills and, just as importantly, they nurture dreams and pursue opportunities for healthy and productive lives. More than half a million girls and boys make the most of this precious opportunity to gain a quality education. It is the greatest investment that the international community can make in the future of a society.

UNRWA was established to provide essential services to Palestine refugees, thereby protecting a vulnerable population and supporting their human development while they await a just and lasting solution to their plight. In the absence of such a solution, UNRWA contributes to regional stability, playing an indispensable humanitarian role that is recognized by the international community on whose support it continues to rely for the implementation of its mandate.

(Signed) Pierre **Krähenbühl**
Commissioner-General

Letter dated 18 June 2019 from the Chair of the Advisory Commission of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East addressed to the Commissioner-General of the Agency*

At its regular session, held at the Dead Sea on 17 and 18 June 2019, the Advisory Commission of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) considered your annual report on UNRWA activities and operations, covering the period from 1 January 2018 to 31 December 2018, to be submitted to the General Assembly at its forthcoming session.

The Commission strongly commends UNRWA for its determined effort to fulfil its duties, in accordance with its mandate, to deliver necessary and essential services within its education, health, and relief and social services programmes for some 5.4 million currently registered Palestine refugees in the UNRWA fields of operation, despite the existential crisis faced in 2018. Palestine refugees affected by displacement and its consequences for more than 70 years continue to need the Agency's steadfast assistance.

The Commission reaffirms that the role played by UNRWA is vital until a just and lasting solution for the Palestine refugees is reached in accordance with relevant United Nations resolutions (General Assembly resolutions 194 (III) and 302 (IV)). In this respect, and until this solution is found, the Commission emphasizes that the sustainable human development and humanitarian assistance provided by UNRWA to Palestine refugees in the region is also a direct contribution to regional peace and stability.

The Commission therefore expresses its sincere gratitude to hosts and donors for their support to UNRWA.

The Commission is seriously concerned about the continued and dramatic deterioration in the socioeconomic conditions of Palestine refugees. The Commission is of the view that this is contributing to greater reliance on UNRWA services, which must continue until the above-mentioned solution is found, despite all the challenges. This is also increasing desperation and frustration among Palestine refugees, which remains a challenge. Displacement and its consequences are generating increasing challenges for Palestine refugees and to regional stability. These challenges must be addressed.

The Commission stresses that violence, forced displacements, the destruction of homes, missed economic opportunities, movement restrictions in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the blockade of the Gaza strip continue to negatively affect Palestine refugees' lives. The Commission emphasizes that the volatile situation in the region, where violence, marginalization, displacement and poverty are rampant, affects Palestine refugees in all the UNRWA fields of operation.

The Commission expresses its profound concern for the immense loss of life and injuries to people, including peaceful protestors, members of the media, first responders and children, related to the Great March of Return, and the stress this placed on health services in Gaza, and commends the UNRWA health-care staff for their dedication in response.

The Commission calls for the refraining of actions that put in danger UNRWA services and staff, and urges respect at all times for the inviolability and neutrality of UNRWA installations and for the interests and rights of Palestine refugees under the

* Brazil and the United States of America do not associate with the text of the letter.

UNRWA mandate. The Commission considers incursions, misuse of facilities for unauthorized political or other events and the disruption of services by forced closures or protests unacceptable, underlining the importance of recognizing staff rights. Such actions seriously risk the inviolability and neutrality of UNRWA installations as well as the provision of essential and needed services.

The Commission recalls the necessity to respect obligations under international humanitarian, human rights and refugee law, relevant United Nations resolutions, the Agreement on Movement and Access and all relevant international agreements to facilitate and support UNRWA services in accordance with its mandate. Measures leading to additional costs should be avoided in particular. The Commission, in this respect, recalls the obligation to grant rapid and unimpeded access to UNRWA.

The Commission remains concerned about the level of threats and attacks against UNRWA personnel in conflict areas. The Commission deplores the death of UNRWA personnel as a result of conflict and offers its condolences to the families, friends and colleagues of the 30 staff who were missing, detained, kidnapped or presumed detained in 2018.

The Commission also remains concerned about the restrictions imposed by Israeli forces on UNRWA staff within the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem. The Commission stresses its deep concern at the plans expressed by the Israeli authorities to terminate UNRWA service provision in occupied East Jerusalem and breach the inviolability owed to United Nations installations by obstructing the Agency's provision of services in East Jerusalem. The Commission takes this opportunity to remind the Israeli authorities of the applicable privileges and immunities owed to the Agency under the 1946 Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations and the Comay-Michelmore Agreement of 1967.

The Commission expresses its utmost concern over the existential crisis that UNRWA faced in 2018, as well as over its continuing financial difficulties. UNRWA services in protection, relief, health and education are critically needed, and uncertainty regarding their continuation feeds into the frustration and despair felt by Palestine refugees. This also increases the risk of young people without hope and opportunity being radicalized. In this respect, the Commission commends the Commissioner-General for his determination to reopen the UNRWA schools, despite financial duress, at the start of the school year, in August. The Commission recognizes the value of this decision for more than 500,000 Palestine refugee students.

The Commission urges all donors to assist in finding new ways to support the predictable, sustained and sufficient funding of UNRWA, in line with the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General on the operations of UNRWA (A/71/849) and with the UNRWA Resource Mobilization Strategy for the period 2019–2021. Accordingly, the Commission calls on donors to intensify their efforts to increase awareness of UNRWA activities for Palestine refugees and thus to encourage the wider international community to increase their support, including financial.

The Commission, in reference to the Secretary-General's recommendations, welcomes the adoption of the statute of the developmental waqf fund for the Palestine refugees at the forty-sixth session of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation Council of Foreign Ministers, held in Abu Dhabi on 1 and 2 March 2019, which will act as a tool to potentially increase support for Palestine refugees through UNRWA.

The Commission commends the Commissioner-General and the management of UNRWA and its staff for their resolve to utilize available resources efficiently, to enact reforms, to streamline the budget and to obtain the funding required to

implement the Agency's mandate. At the same time, the Commission urges the Commissioner-General and the management of UNRWA to take further steps to set UNRWA on a sustainable financial trajectory so as to ensure that services continue to reach Palestine refugees in line with the Agency's mandate, keeping in mind the negative impact of austerity measures on UNRWA services, refugees and staff.

The Commission would like to thank Egypt, Germany, Japan, Jordan, Sweden, Turkey and the European Union for their successful holding of the ministerial meeting on UNRWA in New York on 27 September 2018, on the margins of the high-level segment of the General Assembly. The Meeting contributed immensely to drawing further attention to the invaluable work done by UNRWA and consolidating support to the Agency.

The Commission calls for and encourages the renewal of the UNRWA mandate by the General Assembly, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 302 (IV).

The Commission welcomes Qatar as its new member, in the spirit of the further expansion of its membership.

(Signed) Ambassador Korkut **Güngen**
Chair of the Advisory Commission

Chapter I

Contextual overview

A. Political, economic and security developments

1. Within a volatile regional environment in 2018, conflict, violence and marginalization continued to affect Palestine refugees, in different ways, across all five fields of United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) operation: Jordan; Lebanon; the Syrian Arab Republic; the West Bank, including East Jerusalem; and the Gaza Strip. Within this context and in line with its mandate provided by the General Assembly, the Agency continued to deliver development and humanitarian assistance in the areas of education, health, relief and social services, infrastructure and camp improvement, microfinance and protection.

Gaza Strip

2. In a highly volatile political, security and socioeconomic context, UNRWA continued to provide assistance to 1,421,282 registered Palestine refugees in Gaza.¹ Inhabitants of this territory endure a humanitarian crisis driven by the Israeli land, air and sea blockade that entered its twelfth year in 2018. This has been coupled with cycles of violence, political instability and restricted entry and exit at the Rafah border crossing with Egypt. In addition, the effects of the current political divide have been compounded by an energy crisis that hinders the delivery and availability of essential services and severely undermines economic activity.

3. In the context of the Great March of Return demonstrations, which started in March 2018, the deaths of 180 Palestinians and 1 Israeli and injuries to 23,384 Palestinians and 3 Israelis were reported.² Caring for the injured places enormous pressure on an already crumbling health system that also contends with chronic shortages of electricity, medical supplies and equipment, a continuing salary crisis and access and movement restrictions affecting vulnerable patients requiring health care that is unavailable in Gaza. Within this context, as a primary health-care service provider for Palestine refugees, UNRWA responded to increased emergency health needs at its 22 health centres, with patients often presenting with severe and long-term needs for injury care, physiotherapy and psychosocial support.

4. Deteriorating socioeconomic conditions have given rise to ever more despair across Gaza, especially among young people. According to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, unemployment stood at 52 per cent in 2018, up from 44 per cent in 2017.³

5. At the political level, despite the landmark reconciliation deal signed between Hamas and Fatah in October 2017, key steps towards ending the political divide that has persisted for over a decade failed to materialize in 2018. This further fuelled

¹ UNRWA, *Annual Operational Report 2018* (Amman, 2019). It should be noted that 101,384 persons who are categorized as “married to non-refugees” and an additional 47,629 “other registered persons” are registered with the Agency in Gaza. “Other registered persons” is a term that refers to those who, at the time of original registration, did not satisfy all of the UNRWA Palestine refugee criteria but were determined to have suffered significant loss or endured considerable hardship for reasons related to the conflict of 1948 in Palestine, and those who belong to the families of other registered persons.

² As at 31 December 2018. United Nations, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, “Humanitarian snapshot: casualties in the context of demonstrations and hostilities in Gaza – 30 March–31 December 2018”, 21 January 2019.

³ Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics “Press release on the results of the labour force survey, 2018”.

political uncertainty, despair and frustration, compounded through: (a) a 30–50 per cent reduction in the salaries of government employees of the State of Palestine, directly affecting approximately 62,000 Gaza-based civil servants, their families and the general economy; and (b) an energy crisis, with power cuts lasting for 16–20 hours per day. Electricity deficits, coupled with the effects of the blockade and decreased desalination capacity⁴ are negatively affecting access to clean water and the flow of sewage into the Mediterranean Sea.⁵

West Bank

6. In 2018, 846,465 Palestine refugees were registered with UNRWA in the West Bank including East Jerusalem.⁶ During the reporting period, the Israeli military occupation continued to affect the daily lives of Palestine refugees.

7. During the reporting period, the Israeli security forces conducted over 7,000 security-related operations in which 40 Palestinians, including 9 refugees, 2 of whom were minors, were killed and 6,131 were injured.⁷ During the same period, 11 Israeli fatalities and 159 injuries were recorded. In 2018, the Israeli security forces conducted, on average, almost two security operations per day in the 19 West Bank refugee camps. Many of those operations involved the use of live ammunition and the deployment of large amounts of tear gas, often resulting in injuries, property damage and pronounced psychosocial consequences.

8. During the reporting period, Israeli settlement expansion continued in the West Bank, including in East Jerusalem, in parallel with the destruction of Palestinian homes and property. Palestinian communities, especially those in Area C, routinely faced the threat of and actual home demolitions and confiscations, contributing to an overall coercive environment that placed them at risk of forcible transfer. In 2018, at least 475 Palestinian-owned structures were demolished,⁸ of which 139 belonged to Palestine refugees. This represents a 12 per cent increase compared with 2017 (423) and a 40 per cent increase in demolished structures owned by refugees.⁹

9. During 2018, the overall unemployment rate for Palestine refugees in the West Bank reached 19 per cent, with joblessness rising to 24 per cent for those living in camps.¹⁰ This contributed to high levels of poverty and food insecurity in Palestine refugee households.

Syrian Arab Republic

10. The conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic continued to have dramatic consequences, including for Palestine refugees. Violence, economic disruption and the destruction of infrastructure, coupled with a decrease in public services and social security programmes, created and compounded vulnerabilities throughout the population. In the absence of a durable political settlement, and with attacks by extremist groups persisting in parts of the country, intense and widespread hostilities

⁴ United Nations, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, “Gaza Strip: early warning indicators – October 2018”, 19 November 2018.

⁵ Illness caused by water pollution is a leading cause of child mortality and over a quarter of all illnesses in Gaza are caused by poor water quality and access (Shira Efron and others, *The Public Health Impacts of Gaza’s Water Crisis: Analysis and Policy Options* (Santa Monica, California, United States of America, RAND Corporation, 2018)).

⁶ *Annual Operational Report 2018*. It should be noted that 49,328 persons who are categorized as “married to non-refugees” and a further 152,197 “other registered persons” are registered with the Agency in the West Bank.

⁷ United Nations, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs database.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Annual Operational Report 2018*.

¹⁰ UNRWA, “Occupied Palestinian territory: Emergency appeal 2019” (Amman, 2019).

have resulted in countless deaths and injuries, massive internal displacement, large-scale migration, lost livelihoods and continued humanitarian need.

11. In 2018, the previously hard-to-reach and inaccessible areas of Yarmouk, Yalda, Babila and Bayt Saham became accessible; however, Dera'a camp and the villages of Muzayrib and Jallayn remained hard to reach or inaccessible throughout most of the reporting period. Despite this, services continued to be provided to the extent possible by UNRWA staff inside those areas. Towards the end of the year, in coordination with Syrian authorities, the Agency was able to access the south of the Syrian Arab Republic and immediately resumed the provision of basic services and emergency assistance to Palestine refugees.

12. UNRWA estimates that 438,000 Palestine refugees remain in the Syrian Arab Republic, compared with the 560,000 registered with the Agency prior to the hostilities.¹¹ Almost 60 per cent of Palestine refugees have been displaced at least once since the beginning of the conflict and, according to UNRWA estimates, more than 180,000 have seen their homes either destroyed or severely damaged. Yarmouk, Dera'a and Ein el Tal camps, previously home to more than 30 per cent of the Palestine refugee population in the Syrian Arab Republic, have been almost completely destroyed. The Agency has estimated that 90 per cent of Palestine refugees in the Syrian Arab Republic live on less than \$2 per person, per day, and rely on humanitarian assistance to meet their most basic needs.

Lebanon

13. Lebanon hosts the highest number of refugees, per capita, of any country in the world.¹² As of the end of 2018, there were approximately 950,000 refugees from the Syrian Arab Republic registered with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees,¹³ accounting for 30 per cent of the country's population, and an additional 29,038 Palestine refugees from the Syrian Arab Republic recorded with UNRWA in Lebanon. Furthermore, as at 31 December 2018, 475,075 Palestine refugees in Lebanon were registered with the Agency. This figure does not represent the actual number present in the country as, for example, many have left over the years and UNRWA does not track the habitual movement of refugees out of its fields of operation.¹⁴ A verification exercise conducted in July and August 2018 by the Agency indicated a gradual reduction in the number of Palestine refugees from the Syrian Arab Republic in Lebanon, as a result of either onward movement or return to the Syrian Arab Republic.

14. The crisis in the Syrian Arab Republic continues to have a negative impact on the socioeconomic climate of Lebanon, placing further pressure on already weak public finances, infrastructure and service delivery. Within an environment

¹¹ *Annual Operational Report 2018*. The Agency serves an additional 37,818 persons who are categorized as "married to non-refugees" and 45,185 "other registered persons" in the Syrian Arab Republic.

¹² European Commission, European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations, "Lebanon", 8 March 2019.

¹³ UNHCR, "Lebanon", fact sheet, June 2019.

¹⁴ *Annual Operational Report 2018*. It should be noted that 34,389 persons who are categorized as "married to non-refugees" and an additional 24,421 "other registered persons" are registered with the Agency in Lebanon. According to an official Lebanese–Palestinian 2017 census, 174,422 "Palestinian refugees" were found to reside in the 12 official Palestine refugee camps and in 156 gatherings across Lebanon (for the census, refugees physically present in these areas at midnight on 17 July 2017 were counted; the census was not intended to count all Palestine refugees living in the country). Using a different methodology, a 2015 survey by the American University in Beirut and UNRWA estimated that 260,000–280,000 Palestine refugees resided in Lebanon (J. Chaaban and others, *Survey on the Socioeconomic Status of Palestine Refugees in Lebanon 2015* (Beirut, American University of Beirut and UNRWA, 2016), p. 23).

characterized by high unemployment and intense competition for scarce opportunities, Palestine refugees are among the most vulnerable and marginalized, confronting discrimination in the labour market – they are barred from 39 professions – and precarious legal status.¹⁵ As a result, Palestine refugees struggle with high rates of poverty and food insecurity and face difficulties in securing their livelihoods. On a positive note, during the reporting period, the Lebanese authorities started to facilitate birth registration for Palestine refugee children from the Syrian Arab Republic,¹⁶ removing the need for their families to go through costly court procedures to secure this documentation.

15. On the political stage, following parliamentary elections in May 2018, Lebanon experienced months of political deadlock, impeding the formation of the Government. The return of refugees to the Syrian Arab Republic remained a divisive issue and dominated post-electoral debate. From July onwards, various programmes were announced to facilitate the return of refugees to the Syrian Arab Republic, including initiatives by the Government of Lebanon. The Palestinian embassy in Lebanon also supported the voluntary return of Palestine refugee families from the Syrian Arab Republic families to the Syrian Arab Republic.¹⁷

Jordan

16. In Jordan, 2,242,579 Palestine refugees are registered with UNRWA, the majority of whom are understood to possess Jordanian citizenship, thereby allowing them to enjoy the same rights as other Jordanian nationals.¹⁸ The approximately 158,000 Palestine refugees who fled Gaza in 1967 do not have Jordanian nationality and face restricted access to public services and livelihood opportunities. During the reporting period, conditions for these refugees improved when the Government allowed them to purchase a limited amount of property and assets, including land and cars, and apply for driving licences.

17. Throughout the reporting period, Jordan remained a relative beacon of stability within a fragile region. Nevertheless, refugees from Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic have placed considerable pressure on the nation's economy and infrastructure. Unemployment remains a major challenge, with joblessness rising from 18.3 per cent at the end of 2017 to 18.6 per cent at the end of 2018.¹⁹ Young people have been especially affected.

18. The number of Palestine refugees from the Syrian Arab Republic recorded with UNRWA in Jordan stood at 17,750 at the end of the reporting period, owing in part to a government policy of non-admission that was introduced in 2013. The approximately 13 per cent²⁰ of Palestine refugees from the Syrian Arab Republic without legal status in Jordan are particularly vulnerable as they face restrictions on

¹⁵ According to UNRWA monitoring data (2018), over 40 per cent of the Palestine refugees from the Syrian Arab Republic in Lebanon do not hold valid legal residency documents.

¹⁶ These measures apply to all Palestine refugee children from the Syrian Arab Republic children aged 1 year and above and born in Lebanon between January 2011 and February 2018.

¹⁷ UNRWA is unable to confirm any actual returns facilitated under these initiatives. According to Agency monitoring, 1,400 Palestine refugees from the Syrian Arab Republic were recorded as returning to the Syrian Arab Republic in 2018, compared with 522 Palestine refugees from the Syrian Arab Republic arriving in Lebanon, indicating an increase in returns and a decrease in arrivals as compared with same period in 2017, when 750 Palestine refugees from the Syrian Arab Republic returned to the Syrian Arab Republic and 1,159 arrived in Lebanon.

¹⁸ *Annual Operational Report 2018*. It should be noted that 33,736 persons who are categorized as “married to non-refugees” and an additional 100,166 “other registered persons” are registered with the Agency in Jordan.

¹⁹ World Bank, “The World Bank in Jordan” (1 April 2019).

²⁰ UNRWA vulnerability assessment report (Jordan), May 2017.

employment, limited access to the courts and civil status and registration processes and the threat of forcible return. Many also face restrictions on accessing humanitarian assistance available to the non-Palestine Syrian refugee population. Palestine refugees from the Syrian Arab Republic are referred to the Agency as their main provider of health, education, emergency assistance and social safety net and protection services. UNRWA continued to appeal to the Government of Jordan to uphold the principle of non-refoulement and the equal treatment of all refugees, in accordance with international law, and to consider temporary access for Palestine refugees fleeing the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic, for humanitarian reasons.

19. In October 2018, following a three-year closure, the Nasib border crossing with the Syrian Arab Republic was reopened for the passage of people and goods. As of December 2018, the Agency recorded some 273 Palestine refugees from the Syrian Arab Republic returning to the Syrian Arab Republic; however, of this number, 107 subsequently returned to Jordan. While the reopening of the border may contribute to the spontaneous return of refugees to the Syrian Arab Republic, on the basis of currently observed trends, UNRWA expects that the majority of Palestine refugees from the Syrian Arab Republic will remain in Jordan during 2019.

B. Operational and organizational developments

20. In 2018, UNRWA was able to rapidly and effectively deliver development and humanitarian assistance by drawing on its operational strengths, in particular its almost 30,000-strong workforce, the majority of whom are Palestine refugees and members of the communities they serve, and the collective commitment of the Agency, its donors and host countries. At the same time, while all UNRWA installations remained open throughout the year, financial constraints affected the delivery of emergency services in several fields, leading to loss of employment for hundreds of staff members and triggering severe protests in the Gaza Strip. The 2018 emergency appeal for the occupied Palestinian territory was funded at the level of 25 per cent and the UNRWA regional appeal for the Syrian Arab Republic was funded at the level of 31 per cent.

21. During the reporting period, UNRWA succeeded in providing over 8.5 million primary health-care consultations, education for 532,857 children (for the 2018/19 school year), social safety net assistance (including cash and food) for over 255,000 persons, technical and vocational education and training for 7,564 youth and microfinance loans for 38,183 persons, including 13,052 Palestine refugees. In addition, 1,138 families benefited from shelter rehabilitation or construction assistance and, in accordance with Agency protection and safety standards, 6 health centres and 16 schools were either constructed, reconstructed or upgraded. Protection assistance extended across all fields of Agency operations, with a notable emphasis on advocacy and further equipping UNRWA personnel to deliver practical protection outcomes for Palestine refugees. Emergency humanitarian assistance was extended to 1.5 million refugees, primarily in the occupied Palestinian territory and the Syrian Arab Republic.

22. Throughout the reporting period, the provision of vital humanitarian assistance to Palestine refugees in the Syrian Arab Republic and Palestine refugees from the Syrian Arab Republic in Jordan and Lebanon remained a priority. Through available resources deployed in the Syrian Arab Republic, the Agency provided emergency cash assistance to 405,644 Palestine refugees and in-kind food assistance to 395,499 Palestine refugees. Collective shelters in the Syrian Arab Republic were evacuated and all Palestine refugees residing there received support to find alternative accommodation. Decommissioned shelters were rehabilitated and reopened as schools in time for the 2018/19 academic year.

23. Supported by emergency appeal funding, UNRWA provided education to more than 50,500 Palestine refugee students in the Syrian Arab Republic and, facilitated by the Syrian authorities, rehabilitated and reopened schools and other installations in newly accessible areas, ensuring that Palestine refugees spontaneously returning had safe access to humanitarian assistance. Primary health care was made available through 24 health-care facilities. Protection services continued to be provided to Palestine refugees in the Syrian Arab Republic through five family support offices. In Lebanon, emergency cash grants were provided for food, housing and winterization to over 28,880 Palestine refugees from the Syrian Arab Republic. Also in Lebanon, UNRWA continued to provide quality, inclusive and equitable education to 5,482 Palestine refugee children from the Syrian Arab Republic, primary health-care services through 27 health centres and vital protection and legal aid services to 5,552 Palestine refugees from the Syrian Arab Republic. In Jordan, cash grants for basic needs were provided to 16,602 Palestine refugees from the Syrian Arab Republic. In addition, 247 extremely vulnerable Palestine refugee families from the Syrian Arab Republic were supported through one-off emergency cash grants to help them respond to specific protection concerns. In addition, medical services were extended to over 15,200 Palestine refugees from the Syrian Arab Republic and the Agency continued to provide basic education to 1,353 Palestine refugees from the Syrian Arab Republic and Syrian children in Jordan through a network of 141 schools.

24. In 2018, despite the financial crisis threatening its existence, described in paragraph 26 below, the provision of food assistance remained a priority for UNRWA in Gaza. Through emergency funds, the Agency supported the food and nutritional needs of 933,979 vulnerable Palestine refugees, including 18,116 female-headed households. Emergency cash-for-work opportunities were provided to over 10,000 refugees, including 3,633 women. Under the education in emergencies programme, schools were supplied with essential educational materials for 278,938 students. Health services were maintained through 22 health centres and 10,284 children with special needs received a comprehensive medical examination.

25. In the West Bank, food assistance for vulnerable Palestine refugee families was provided through a variety of modalities. In partnership with the World Food Programme, e-vouchers were provided to 45,887 food-insecure refugees outside camps, while in-kind food assistance was extended to some 37,000 Bedouin and herder individuals assessed to be food-insecure or vulnerable. Emergency cash-for-work opportunities supported over 5,900 food-insecure refugee households. Six emergency mobile health clinics improved access to primary health care for 78,762 persons living in hard-to-reach locations, while 11,162 were assisted through counselling and psychosocial support. Owing to funding constraints, emergency cash-for-work, mobile health and community mental health services were discontinued during the second half of the year.

26. During the reporting period, the Agency faced the abrupt loss of \$300 million in planned funding, which represented about a quarter of its essential requirements for the year. Through the generosity of a number of Member States, coupled with emergency-intervention reductions and internal cost-saving measures that collectively avoided interruptions in the provision of critical assistance, the Agency was able to overcome the funding shortfall to keep services operational throughout the year.

27. UNRWA recognizes that its capacity to help Palestine refugees achieve their full potential depends, among other things, on the ability of its staff to uphold and promote the highest standards of ethical and professional conduct. With regard to sexual misconduct, during the reporting period, the Agency went beyond the Staff Regulations and Rules of the United Nations that prohibit staff from engaging in this form of conduct by establishing an Agency-wide sexual misconduct task force to

ensure that Palestine refugee needs are met within an environment that is free from sexual misconduct. In addition, sexual misconduct was the subject of a number of “zero tolerance” communications from the Commissioner-General to all UNRWA staff, and awareness-raising activities on the issue were provided to over 3,500 personnel.

C. Legal matters

Agency staff

28. Israeli authorities, citing security concerns, continued to restrict the freedom of movement of UNRWA personnel in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem. Restrictions included: (a) the prohibition of Agency local staff who are not resident in Jerusalem to travel in United Nations vehicles across the Erez crossing and the Allenby Bridge, or to drive in Israel and East Jerusalem; and (b) time-consuming and cumbersome procedures to obtain permits for local staff who are not resident in Jerusalem to enter Israel and East Jerusalem. On many occasions, permits were not granted even though procedures had been followed. On average, permits to enter East Jerusalem from the rest of the West Bank were not issued to 24.1 per cent of UNRWA personnel (161 individuals) where they were required.

29. Israeli procedures at the Allenby Bridge continued to require that United Nations vehicles be subjected to a search unless an occupant thereof held an identification card issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, even though such searches represent a violation of United Nations immunity. Those procedures restricted the movement of international UNRWA staff based in Amman, to whom the Ministry does not issue such cards.

30. The Israel authorities announced new procedures beginning in April 2018 for United Nations vehicles at the Erez crossing, citing security measures. These measures stipulated that only United Nations vehicles driven by a staff member holding an identification card issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Israel were permitted to drive through the Erez crossing, unless special arrangements had been made. The Israeli authorities also introduced new procedures for the crossing of United Nations vehicles through Erez, requiring all vehicle doors to be opened for inspection by a sniffer dog and luggage to be removed and subjected to an X-ray. With the exception of senior officials, all passengers were required to walk through a metal detector and, unless holding an identification card issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Israel, were also required to undergo a body scan. The United Nations protested the new procedures, in particular the requirement to open United Nations vehicles, as effectively eroding the exemption of United Nations property and assets from any form of search or interference pursuant to the 1946 Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations. United Nations staff complied with the procedures under protest.

31. In the West Bank, staff movement continued to be restricted and unpredictable at several checkpoints, notably those controlling access to East Jerusalem or through the West Bank barrier. In 2018, movement restrictions in the West Bank resulted in the loss of at least 62 staff days, a significant decrease compared with 2017. On 18 occasions at checkpoints in the West Bank, including for entry into East Jerusalem, Israeli authorities demanded to search Agency vehicles. In addition, on at least 23 occasions, personnel assigned to the UNRWA West Bank Field Office were prevented from attending work because access through checkpoints was denied. While the majority of searches were avoided through UNRWA interventions, rerouting or turning back, on at least three occasions, searches were carried out. Despite several requests for unimpeded humanitarian access, it remained difficult to deliver UNRWA

services in the “seam zone” (areas between the Green Line and the barrier). The situation regarding requirements for the Agency and other United Nations trucks to use specific commercial checkpoints to enter Jerusalem remained unchanged.

32. The aforementioned restrictions are inconsistent with the Charter of the United Nations, the 1946 Convention, relevant United Nations resolutions and the Comay-Michelmores Agreement of 1967, by which the Government of Israel is obligated to facilitate the task of UNRWA to the best of its ability, subject only to regulations or arrangements that may be necessitated by considerations of military security. The Agency applied for permits for local staff to enter East Jerusalem for operational and humanitarian reasons only and without prejudice to relevant United Nations resolutions, including resolutions relating to the status of Jerusalem. Israeli authorities maintained that the restrictions were necessary to protect against terrorist attacks.

33. In 2018, the Rafah crossing between Egypt and Gaza was open for public use for 198 days for humanitarian cases, students and holders of visas for a third country. Citing security concerns in the Sinai, the ban imposed by the United Nations on duty travel for staff travelling through Rafah remained in place.

34. In Lebanon, the volatile security situation in Palestine refugee camps in the Saida and north Lebanon areas resulted, at times, in movement restrictions that affected UNRWA staff and operations. No significant movement restrictions were imposed on Agency staff by the Governments of Jordan or the State of Palestine.

35. The de facto authorities in Gaza restricted the movement of UNRWA staff on three occasions and searched Agency vehicles on at least five occasions during the reporting period. The Agency protested these measures with the relevant authorities.

36. Local staff in Gaza continued to require permits from the Israeli authorities to transit the Erez crossing. During 2018, of 525 applications, 353 permits (67 per cent) were granted. Compared with 2017, the number of applications decreased by 42 per cent and the overall percentage of permit applications not granted decreased from 47 per cent to 33 per cent; however, this continued to negatively affect UNRWA operations. Despite repeated requests, the Agency has not received a substantive justification as to why the permits were not approved.

37. The Israeli embassy resumed consular services in Amman in January 2018. Subsequently, the Israeli authorities rejected a visa application for one staff member based in Amman, citing security reasons. UNRWA continued to be unable to secure appropriate visas from the Israeli authorities for Agency internships requiring such visas. Citing misrepresentation, Israeli authorities denied entry to an intern at the Allenby crossing.

38. Since 2017, UNRWA has been unable to secure residencies for three expatriate area staff in Jordan, owing to the refusal of the Government of Jordan to exempt such staff from the requirement for a labour permit and its associated fees. During the reporting period, delays continued to be experienced with respect to the issuance of residency permits for new international staff in Jordan.

39. In the Syrian Arab Republic, the security situation in the capital and in the south and central areas stabilized. However, armed conflict, terrorist attacks and generalized insecurity continued to seriously affect free movement and humanitarian access. While some checkpoints in the capital and in central areas were removed, checkpoints in other areas remained. In 2018, all visa applications (residency and for visits) for international personnel, including renewals, were approved by the Syrian authorities.

40. At the end of 2018, 30 Agency staff were missing, detained, kidnapped or presumed detained: 15 were believed to be missing, detained or kidnapped in the Syrian Arab Republic, either by the Syrian authorities or other parties, 5 were detained

by the Israeli authorities, 3 by the de facto authorities in Gaza, 5 by the Jordanian authorities, 1 by the Lebanese authorities and 1 by the Palestinian authorities. Despite requests in accordance with General Assembly resolution 36/232, the Syrian authorities did not provide the Agency with access, but provided information about certain staff who remained in their custody during the year. The Israeli authorities did not provide information or access to staff members in their custody. The Jordanian authorities provided information about four staff members. The Palestinian authorities provided information on the reasons for detention with respect to four staff detained during 2018. The Lebanese authorities provided information on the detained staff member in their custody and granted access to two other staff detained and released during 2018. The de facto authorities in Gaza granted access but did not provide information in writing on the staff members in their custody.

Agency services and premises

41. The Israeli authorities continued to impose transit charges on shipments entering Gaza, obliging UNRWA to pay \$0.93 million in 2018. The Agency considers such charges a direct tax from which it ought to be exempt under the 1946 Convention. In the view of Israel, the charges are a fee for service, from which there is no exemption. Since November 2016, UNRWA vehicles can only be imported through Erez. For all other Agency imports, the Kerem Shalom crossing remained the sole crossing for imports into Gaza. It was fully closed for imports for 19 of its 261 scheduled operating days (7 per cent) and partially closed for security reasons on 37 days. The continuing closure of the Karni crossing and the prohibition of containerized imports, in place since 2006, contributed to increased expenditure resulting from storage, palletization, sterilization and additional mileage and staff, amounting to some \$6.9 million, in addition to transit charges levied on imports through the Kerem Shalom and Erez crossings.

42. Conditions relating to UNRWA construction projects in Gaza and related approvals remained in place. During 2018, the Agency continued to employ an additional international staff member (in addition to existing international staff), local staff engineers and security guards to meet daily monitoring and coordination requirements previously introduced by the Israeli authorities, amounting to almost \$0.26 million in extra costs. UNRWA also continued to provide the Israeli authorities with written confirmation of Agency monitoring of each project, in addition to requirements predating 2017 for documentary material to facilitate the monitoring, by Israel, of construction projects. Cumbersome clearance procedures and frequent processing delays of import requests for materials, some of which Israel classifies as dual-use items, and equipment continued to negatively affect Agency operations.²¹

43. Overall, in 2018 alone, additional staffing, transit and logistical costs resulting from Israeli requirements regarding access and monitoring of all UNRWA imports into Gaza amounted to \$8.09 million. This does not include similar access costs that private contractors incurred to ship construction materials into Gaza through Kerem Shalom under the Gaza Reconstruction Mechanism.

44. During 2018, Israeli authorities destroyed a consignment of radios which had been pending clearance since 2016 owing to the frequencies of the radios, which are prohibited by the Ministry of Communications of Israel. The Agency had sought to import the radios, totalling \$869,824 in value, into Gaza for its official use in support of its operations and staff security. UNRWA protested the refusal to release the

²¹ In 2018, Israeli authorities approved the entry into Gaza of six forklifts, personal protective equipment for international staff and four out of the eight armoured vehicles previously referenced. As at 31 December 2018, clearance remained pending for the remaining four armoured vehicles.

shipment and the destruction of the radios with the Israeli authorities as contrary to the privileges and immunities relating to Agency imports and Agency assets under the 1946 Convention. In addition, from March 2018, the Israeli authorities prohibited the entry of tyres into the Gaza Strip; three such shipments for use by UNRWA were pending Israeli approval for importation as of 31 December 2018.

45. Israeli authorities continued to require standards testing for educational, electronic, medical and other items for official use. The Agency imports goods for its official use that conform to international standards and the United Nations considers that Israeli requirements are contrary to the exemption from prohibitions and restrictions on imports, under the 1946 Convention, in respect of articles imported by the United Nations for official use. As at the end of the reporting period, the Agency was unable to confirm the status of the 15 shipments that were pending clearance, as previously reported ([A/73/13](#), para. 45).

46. Arrears of \$90.9 million accrued as value added tax (VAT) paid for services and goods procured for the West Bank and Gaza before arrangements were agreed in 2013 with the Palestinian Ministry of Finance remained outstanding. During 2018, UNRWA further accrued VAT in the amount of \$0.26 million in addition to VAT accrued since 2013. While the Agency received a reimbursement in the amount of \$0.632 million in 2018, the cumulative total owed to the Agency for reimbursement of VAT paid for services and goods procured in the West Bank and Gaza amounted to approximately \$100.59 million as at 31 December 2018.²²

47. During the reporting period, Israeli authorities paid \$6.05 million in VAT reimbursements owed to the Agency. While approximately \$7.47 million²³ remained outstanding in VAT reimbursements as at 31 December 2018, progress was being made towards further reimbursements.

48. The Agency was required, as in the past, to pay port fees and other charges to the Syrian authorities, in contravention of the Agreement of 1948 between the United Nations and the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic. In 2018, fees and charges totalling \$79,758 were paid.

49. In Jordan, UNRWA continued to face difficulties in securing exemptions from relevant taxes, custom duties and other fees imposed on imports and insurance contracts made and entered into by the Agency for official purposes. UNRWA considers those restrictions to be contrary to its exemption from taxation and restrictions on imports under the 1946 Convention and its bilateral agreement with Jordan of 1951. Jordan considers those charges as fees for service. In 2018, the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources in Jordan imposed a new “fuel price difference” charge on electricity consumption, which has led to increased Agency costs in excess of 55,000 Jordanian dinar. In 2018, UNRWA continued to pay for the inspection fees of official UNRWA vehicles under protest.

50. During 2018, UNRWA Operational Support Office teams were restructured owing to a shortage of funds. While installation inspections continued, responsibilities were reorganized in accordance with new standard operating procedures.

51. The 1946 Convention provides that the premises of the United Nations shall be inviolable. Contrary to this, the Israeli security forces entered UNRWA premises in the West Bank without authorization on two occasions. On at least seven occasions, tear gas canisters, stun grenades, plastic-coated metal bullets or live ammunition used by the Israeli security forces landed in Agency premises, including schools, or

²² Reflecting unaudited financial information.

²³ Ibid.

damaged UNRWA property. In Gaza, the Agency recorded seven incidents of ammunition fired by the Israeli security forces landing inside or damaging UNRWA premises.

52. Following the announcement by the Jerusalem municipality of a plan to terminate UNRWA service provision in East Jerusalem, municipal officials entered Agency premises in East Jerusalem on one occasion in breach of the inviolability owed to United Nations installations. On two occasions, the municipality sought to enforce Israeli licensing requirements for the provision of Agency services and operations in East Jerusalem, in a notable departure of arrangements in place since 1967. In addition, beginning on 26 October 2018, municipal contractors obstructed Agency access to its solid waste transfer station in Shu'fat camp in East Jerusalem and used UNRWA property without authorization. The Agency protested these measures with reference to applicable privileges and immunities under the 1946 Convention and the Comay-Michelmore Agreement of 1967.

53. During the reporting period, and within the financial constraints resulting from severe funding shortfalls, UNRWA continued implementing the recommendations of the Board of Inquiry conducted by United Nations Headquarters into incidents that occurred in Gaza between 8 July and 26 August 2014, which have been referred to in previous reports. Owing to funding gaps, UNRWA was required to reduce the number of personnel assigned to after-hours guarding duties at its installations in Gaza.

54. On 22 March 2018, the United Nations submitted a claim to Israel for the reimbursement of losses that the Organization had sustained as a result of incidents that were the subject of the Board of Inquiry and that had occurred on UNRWA premises during the hostilities of 2014 in Gaza. According to publicly available information, on 14 August 2018, the Israel Defense Forces reported that the criminal investigation into the incident affecting the UNRWA Bayt Hanun Elementary Coeducation "A" and "D" School on 24 July 2014, which resulted in the killing of at least 12 people and the injury of at least 93 individuals, had been closed by the Military Advocate General without any further legal proceedings – criminal or disciplinary – to be taken against those involved. The Agency remains concerned as to the need for accountability regarding these and other incidents during which UNRWA installations were directly or indirectly affected, contrary to their inviolability, and as a result thereof UNRWA personnel and civilians sheltering in them were killed.

55. In the West Bank, there were three incursions into UNRWA premises by armed Palestinians. There were six incidents of misuse of Agency installations for unauthorized political or other events involving factions of the Palestinian Liberation Organization, camp services committee members or other actors. In addition, Agency premises and services were disrupted on at least 230 occasions by forced closures or protests, including by members of camp services committees.

56. In Gaza, there were five incursions by Hamas authorities, some involving armed individuals. The Agency protested these incidents with relevant authorities. From 23 July until early October 2018, unauthorized protests were staged by the staff union, first within the Agency's compound in Gaza and later outside, blocking access to the compound. The protests were against the Agency's management decision to implement workforce adjustments as a result of financial challenges. During those protests, which involved staff and external protesters, actions were taken in disregard of the status of UNRWA premises and personnel were subject to acts of intimidation, threats and violent confrontations with protesters. Acts by the protestors included detonating an improvised explosive device and forcefully breaking through the closed gates separating the Gaza Training Centre from the Field Office compound. As a result, the Agency did not always have full control over the UNRWA Gaza Field

Office and, at one point, had to temporarily withdraw some of its international staff members from Gaza. There were also instances of closure of all installations in Gaza as a result of these protests. The Agency intervened with the de facto authorities to ensure the safety and security of UNRWA operations and staff. There were a further 61 incidents that disrupted service delivery or the movement of UNRWA staff in Gaza.

57. In the Syrian Arab Republic, as previously reported, UNRWA has sustained conflict related property losses amounting to millions of dollars since hostilities began in 2011. During 2018, Agency premises were hit by artillery on at least three occasions and three UNRWA vehicles were damaged by stray bullets. Assessments carried out in late 2018 indicated that almost all Agency installations were in need of major rehabilitation and many were severely damaged and needed reconstruction, especially in Yarmouk unofficial camp and in the Dera'a and Ein el Tal camps. During the reporting period, Syrian authorities forcibly entered UNRWA installations on at least eight occasions. The Agency also documented at least one instance of a hand grenade found in an installation. Generally, however, UNRWA remained unable to verify other reports regarding the military use of certain Agency installations due to insecurity and the presence of armed groups in the areas concerned. Despite protests, the Agency's sanitation office in Khan Dannun continued to be used by military personnel at the adjacent checkpoint.

58. In 2018, there were closures of Agency installations on at least 78 days in Lebanon. Closures were mostly the result of violent actions by beneficiaries and the lack of security more broadly owing to civil unrest and armed factions. Insecurity and armed clashes between factions in the Mieh Mieh refugee camp led to at least 20 days of closures of UNRWA installations in that camp. The Lebanese security forces entered an Agency installation without authorization on one occasion. There were also at least three incidents of political or armed factions entering UNRWA premises without authorization. The Agency protested those incidents and liaised with the relevant parties.

Other matters

59. Some \$680,000 seized by the Government of Lebanon in 2013 has yet to be returned. UNRWA continued to dispute any liability for payment demanded by the Government of Lebanon in the amount of \$167.1 million for electricity consumed by Palestine refugees outside of Agency installations in camps in Lebanon.

60. In relation to the internal justice system, the UNRWA Dispute Tribunal, established in 2010, operates on a full-time basis and is composed of one judge and a part-time ad litem judge. During 2018, the Tribunal issued 70 judgments and 240 orders, disposing of 287 cases. As of the end of 2018, 537 cases were pending, including two cases on remand, of which 535 had been filed by area staff and 2 had been filed by international staff. There were also seven appeals pending before the United Nations Appeals Tribunal.

Legal status of Palestine refugees in the Agency area of operations

61. The legal status of Palestine refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic, the West Bank and Gaza remained substantially the same as that described in the report of the Commissioner-General to the General Assembly for 2008 (A/64/13, paras. 52–55).

D. Financial overview

62. With the exception of 158 international staff posts funded by the General Assembly through the regular budget, UNRWA operations are supported through voluntary contributions. In this regard, the Agency receives funding through: (a) a

programme budget fund that supports core operations (including recurrent staff and non-staff costs), including education, health, camp improvement, relief and social services, protection and support systems and structures; (b) emergency appeals for humanitarian interventions; and (c) specific, time-bound projects that improve services without increasing recurrent costs.

63. In 2018, Agency resource-mobilization efforts yielded a total pledged amount of \$1.3 billion (including United Nations Secretariat support for international staff), with part of these funds relating to planned expenditure for projects and emergency appeals in 2019. During the reporting period, planned programme budget (cash view) income was \$650 million under the approved programme budget against planned expenditure of \$747 million and a deficit approaching \$97 million. Subsequently, the shortfall increased to \$446 million as a result of the loss of an expected \$300 million from the Agency's largest donor and shortfall that was carried forward. The shortfall was fully covered during 2018, including the cash necessary to repay a Central Emergency Response Fund loan. According to unaudited financial statements, in 2018, the Agency spent \$1.19 billion. The largest expenditure was \$764 million, under the unrestricted regular budget, accounting for 64.19 per cent of total expenditure. Emergency activities and projects (including restricted fund activities) accounted for 23.26 per cent and 12.55 per cent, respectively. Education remained the largest programme funded through the programme budget, with an expenditure of \$461.8 million, or 61 per cent of the total unrestricted programme budget.

Table 1
Expenditure by programme, 2018

(Thousands of United States dollars and percentage)

<i>Programme budget</i>	<i>Gaza</i>		<i>Lebanon</i>		<i>Syrian Arab Republic</i>		<i>Jordan</i>		<i>West Bank</i>		<i>Headquarters</i>		<i>Total</i>	<i>Total as percentage</i>
Education	216 096	28	46 803	6	31 116	4	99 716	13	66 419	9	1 854	0	462 003	60
Health	34 570	5	23 552	3	7 874	1	21 091	3	26 612	3	602	0	114 300	15
Relief and social services	10 628	1	11 264	1	1 503	0	9 160	1	8 850	1	1 041	0	42 446	6
Infrastructure	9 602	1	6 670	1	620	0	5 396	1	6 600	1	1 185	0	30 072	4
Executive direction	2 773	0	2 331	0	2 410	0	2 480	0	2 546	0	18 950	2	31 490	4
Protection	49	0	25	0	6	0	1	0	77	0	403	0	562	0
Support	17 076	2	7 463	1	2 071	0	3 752	0	12 398	2	40 323	5	83 084	11
Total	290 793	38	98 108	13	45 600	6	141 597	19	123 502	16	64 358	8	763 957	100

<i>All funding streams</i>	<i>Gaza</i>		<i>Lebanon</i>		<i>Syrian Arab Republic</i>		<i>Jordan</i>		<i>West Bank</i>		<i>Headquarters</i>		<i>Total</i>	<i>Total as percentage</i>
Education	231 014	19	63 419	5	42 270	4	108 741	9	69 186	6	2 933	0	517 564	43
Health	52 121	4	30 710	3	14 276	1	25 023	2	34 154	3	2 357	0	158 641	13
Relief and social services	131 080	11	40 542	3	88 769	7	16 969	1	22 145	2	1 196	0	300 701	25
Infrastructure	34 324	3	26 883	2	1 587	0	6 118	1	9 274	1	1 232	0	79 419	7
Executive direction	7 384	1	6 395	1	5 517	0	3 908	0	4 331	0	22 802	2	50 338	4
Protection	1 073	0	1 327	0	1 460	0	287	0	1 762	0	1 119	0	7 028	1
Support	30 822	3	8 020	1	6 185	1	3 969	0	12 891	1	6 154 ^a	1	68 040	6
Microfinance	1 519	0	0	0	598	0	3 298	0	3 079	0	–	0	8 493	1
Total	489 337	41	177 297	15	160 662	13	168 312	14	156 822	13	37 793	3	1 190 223	100

^a This does not include \$35.517 million relating to the interfund elimination of indirect support costs.

Table 2
Expenditure by medium-term strategic outcome, 2018

(Thousands of United States dollars and percentage)

<i>Programme budget</i>	<i>Gaza</i>		<i>Lebanon</i>		<i>Syrian Arab Republic</i>		<i>Jordan</i>		<i>West Bank</i>		<i>Headquarters</i>		<i>Total</i>	<i>percentage</i>
Refugees' rights under international law are protected and promoted	1 950	0	795	0	924	0	867	0	1 826	0	403	0	6 765	1
Refugees' health is protected and the disease burden is reduced	34 097	4	23 022	3	7 539	1	20 698	3	25 684	3	–	0	111 040	15
School-age children complete quality, equitable and inclusive basic education	209 762	27	42 303	6	28 988	4	91 748	12	58 179	8	–	0	430 980	56
Refugee capabilities are strengthened for increased livelihood opportunities	5 241	1	3 944	1	1 870	0	6 635	1	7 720	1	378	0	25 787	3
Refugees are able to meet their basic human needs of food, shelter and environmental health	15 131	2	14 751	2	399	0	12 527	2	11 690	2	–	0	54 497	7
Management and operational effectiveness	24 613	3	13 292	2	5 880	1	9 123	1	18 403	2	63 577	8	134 887	18
Total	290 793	38	98 108	13	45 600	6	141 597	19	123 502	16	64 358	8	763 957	100

<i>All funding streams</i>	<i>Gaza</i>		<i>Lebanon</i>		<i>Syrian Arab Republic</i>		<i>Jordan</i>		<i>West Bank</i>		<i>Headquarters</i>		<i>Total</i>	<i>percentage</i>
Refugees' rights under international law are protected and promoted	5 314	0	3 273	0	2 520	0	1 573	0	3 652	0	1 383	0	17 715	1
Refugees' health is protected and the disease burden is reduced	51 560	4	30 089	3	11 868	1	24 590	2	33 103	3	3	0	151 214	13
School-age children complete quality, equitable and inclusive basic education	223 443	19	55 286	5	38 768	3	98 224	8	59 933	5	–	0	475 654	40
Refugee capabilities are strengthened for increased livelihood opportunities	7 422	1	17 268	1	3 055	0	12 164	1	12 768	1	378	0	53 055	4

<i>All funding streams</i>	<i>Gaza</i>		<i>Lebanon</i>		<i>Syrian Arab Republic</i>		<i>Jordan</i>		<i>West Bank</i>		<i>Headquarters</i>		<i>Total</i>	<i>percentage</i>
Refugees are able to meet their basic human needs of food, shelter and environmental health	157 414	13	51 352	4	87 517	7	20 342	2	26 096	2	–	0	342 720	29
Management and operational effectiveness	44 184	4	20 029	2	16 934	1	11 420	1	21 269	2	36 030	3	149 866	13
Total	489 337	41	177 297	15	160 662	13	168 312	14	156 822	13	37 793	3	1 190 223	100

Chapter II

Subprogramme review

A. Subprogramme 1

Refugees' rights under international law are protected and promoted

64. UNRWA aims to ensure that Palestine refugees enjoy human rights to the fullest extent possible by mainstreaming protection into and through its service delivery and by promoting enhanced respect for international law with relevant duty bearers. Palestine refugees continue to face protection challenges owing to the lack of a just and durable solution to their plight, the ongoing conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic, 50 fifty years of occupation in the occupied Palestinian territory, 12 years of blockade in Gaza and a precarious legal status in some host countries.

65. Throughout 2018, UNRWA continued to address protection concerns faced by Palestine refugees across the Agency's five fields of operation. During the reporting period, protection mainstreaming, both in and through UNRWA service delivery, was enhanced, while advocacy efforts were undertaken in relation to Palestine refugee rights.

<i>Expected accomplishment</i>	<i>Indicator of achievement</i>	<i>Measurement</i>	
		<i>Unit of measure</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
(a) Duty bearers are held accountable for violations of international law through monitoring, reporting and advocacy	Number of protection (advocacy) interventions, including formal letters, concerning protection issues	Baseline (2018)	329
		Target (2018)	325
		Actual (2018)	480
(b) Vulnerable and at-risk individuals and communities benefit from protection responses	Number of individuals experiencing gender-based violence provided with assistance	Baseline (2018)	4 978
		Target (2018)	4 900
		Actual (2018)	4 905

Outputs

- UNRWA provided assistance to an estimated 4,978 survivors of gender-based violence, 2,530 children and 545 persons with disabilities experiencing a protection risk. Access to rehabilitation services and disability-specific support was facilitated for an estimated 25,000 Palestine refugees with disabilities.
- Mental health and psychosocial support assisted 92,795 Palestine refugees.
- Legal assistance (including the provision of counselling and legal information and referral to legal service providers) benefited 15,908 Palestine refugees on a range of issues including civil status, registration and gender-based violence.
- UNRWA made 16 confidential submissions/briefings to international human rights mechanisms.
- A range of protection initiatives were implemented across Agency programming to eliminate violence against children, promote gender equality, women's empowerment and disability inclusion, and integrate prevention and mitigation of and response to gender-based violence.
- Protection training benefited 5,609 UNRWA personnel.

B. Subprogramme 2 Refugees' health is protected and the disease burden is reduced

66. In 2018, UNRWA continued to deliver comprehensive primary health care to Palestine refugees while supporting the ability of the most vulnerable to secure secondary and tertiary care. Universal access to primary health care was provided on the basis of the family health team approach that focuses on the provision of comprehensive care for the entire family. Emphasizing long-term relationships between the provider and the patient or family, the approach improves the quality, efficiency and effectiveness of health services. By the end of 2018, all 144 health centres across the five fields of Agency operation were implementing the family health team approach.

67. While the Great March of Return demonstrations and the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic placed a considerable burden on the provision of health care, Agency-wide targets were met in relation to the number of Expanded Programme on Immunization,²⁴ vaccine-preventable disease outbreaks; the percentage of the targeted population (aged 40 years and above) screened for diabetes mellitus was fractionally below the target. In response to the increasing incidence of non-communicable diseases among the Palestine refugee population, UNRWA continued to introduce new tests, medicines and public awareness campaigns to promote the prevention and management of such diseases. Maternal and child health outcomes, including immunization rates, remained strong. Agency-wide targets were not met in relation to the average daily medical consultations per doctor, the number of health centres fully implementing eHealth (a health management information system) or the percentage of UNRWA hospitalization accessed by social safety net programme beneficiaries.

<i>Expected accomplishment</i>	<i>Indicator of achievement</i>	<i>Measurement</i>	
		<i>Unit of measure</i>	<i>Percentage/number</i>
(a) Universal access to quality, comprehensive primary health care	Average number of daily medical consultations per doctor	Baseline (2018)	78.1
		Target (2018)	77.6
		Actual (2018)	82.0
(b) Protection and promotion of family health	(i) Percentage of women in compliance with the minimum four antenatal care visits	Baseline (2018)	92.1
		Target (2018)	90
		Actual (2018)	91.4
	(ii) Percentage of targeted population (aged 40 years and above) screened for diabetes mellitus	Baseline (2018)	20.8
		Target (2018)	21.9
		Actual (2018)	21.7
(iii) Number of Expanded Programme on Immunization vaccine-preventable disease outbreaks	Baseline (2018)	0	
	Target (2018)	0	
	Actual (2018)	0	
Efficient hospital support services provided	Percentage of UNRWA hospitalization accessed by participants in the UNRWA social safety net programme	Baseline (2018)	20.5
		Target (2018)	20.9
		Actual (2018)	17.2

²⁴ For more information, see World Health Organization, "The Expanded Programme on Immunization", 1 December 2013.

Outputs

- UNRWA provided 8,554,035 medical consultations to Palestine refugees.
- Diabetes screening was provided to 175,825 Palestine refugees aged 40 and above.
- Secondary or tertiary hospitalization care subsidies were provided to 96,521 patients.
- During the reporting period, 4 per cent of UNRWA health centres were renovated to improve patient care; 57.5 per cent of all Agency health centres now meet enhanced quality care standards.

C. Subprogramme 3 School-age children complete quality, equitable and inclusive basic education

68. Despite the challenging context in which the UNRWA education programme was delivered during the reporting period, the embedding, enriching and sustaining of education reform through the medium-term strategy for the period 2016–2021, coupled with the Agency’s approach to education in emergencies, continued to positively affect programme outcomes, with the majority of targets being achieved.

69. The student survival rate, that is, the proportion of children expected to reach the final grade of the basic education cycle, increased slightly over the reporting period; Agency-wide cumulative dropout rates for all UNRWA school children (boys and girls), at both the elementary and preparatory levels, decreased; and repetition rates fell across all fields of Agency operation. Agency successes in reducing repetition have decreased the number of students who drop out of school. Similarly, the UNRWA education system is becoming increasingly efficient, with decreasing student dropout rates despite a larger number of students in each class (the student classroom ceiling number is set at 50 for purpose-built schools). Although the Agency has continued to make progress in a number of key areas, challenges remain, particularly at the field level, in understanding, and hence addressing, where solutions are within the Agency’s control, contextual reasons that are factors in students’ decisions to drop out, such as early marriage for girls, financial hardship for families and wider economic, political and security situations.

70. On a specific strategic and operational issue, the Agency has continued to improve its rigorous review of host country textbooks and other learning materials against the UNRWA framework for the analysis and quality implementation of the curriculum:²⁵ in 2018, 465 learning materials were reviewed under programme budget funding and an additional 1,320 learning materials were reviewed under project funding, including funding for education in emergencies. In addition, the full roll-out of the student module of the Agency-wide education management information system, coupled with a methodological review of all education indicators, has improved the quality of data collected and associated analysis and is beginning to help UNRWA better understand the dynamics that may affect student retention and learning outcomes.

71. The achievements of the Agency education programme over the period of the reform, which were sustained and enriched within the current medium-term strategy

²⁵ The framework for the analysis and quality implementation of the curriculum is a key component of the UNRWA education reform strategy that serves as a policy reference document, an evaluation tool, a framework for analysis and a tool for professional development.

period, combined with the education in emergencies programme, have resulted in significant improvements in results against key indicators across the programme, with the majority of targets met. In order to sustain and improve upon these achievements, it is vital that the Agency is able to continue to enhance and build upon its work to date.

<i>Expected accomplishment</i>	<i>Indicator of achievement</i>	<i>Measurement</i>	
		<i>Unit of measure</i>	<i>Rate/number</i>
(a) Inclusive access to basic education is ensured	(i) Cumulative drop-out rate (elementary)	Baseline (2018/19)	1.17
		Target (2018/19)	1.25
		Actual (2018/19)	0.78
	(ii) Cumulative drop-out rate (preparatory)	Baseline (2018/19)	2.87
		Target (2018/19)	2.84
		Actual (2018/19)	2.34
(b) Improved educational quality and outcomes	(i) Number of textbooks reviewed using UNRWA framework for the analysis and quality implementation of the curriculum ^a	Baseline (2018)	354
		Target (2018)	N/A ^b
		Actual (2018)	465
	(ii) Proportion of classes exceeding thresholds (less/or equal 25; more than 40) students	Baseline (2018/19)	43.66 (>40)
			5.37 (≤25)
		Target (2018/19)	38.88 (>40)
	5.97 (≤25)		
	Actual (2018/19)	48.20 (>40)	
		5.54 (≤25)	

^a When new textbooks are issued, their “rapid review” is prioritized by the Agency, focusing on neutrality and bias and gender- and age-appropriateness. Full textbook reviews under the framework for the analysis and quality implementation of the curriculum continue to be undertaken, including of those for which a rapid review has already been completed. The actual number of reviews reported includes both rapid reviews and full reviews under the framework.

^b The target is influenced by the number of new textbooks, including new editions, issued by host countries during the year. As a result, a target cannot be set for this indicator.

Outputs

Through embedding, sustaining and building upon its education reform in 2018, UNRWA:

- Continued to provide quality, inclusive and equitable education to Palestine refugee children
- Has been able to address student dropout rates, including through identifying students at risk of dropping out and working to prevent them from doing so. These efforts are reflected very positively through a marked improvement in the Agency-wide cumulative elementary and preparatory drop-out rate

Through the class formation process:

- The Agency successfully enrolled 532,857 Palestine refugee children across all five fields of UNRWA operation
- In comparison with the 2016/17 school year, the percentage of sections with more than 40 students increased from 43.66 per cent to 48.20 per cent in the 2017/18 school year. This increase in large class sections is the result of the class

formation planning ceiling of 50 students per class (for purpose-built schools), adopted because of UNRWA austerity measures

Through the infrastructure and camp improvement programme:

- The Agency constructed, reconstructed or upgraded 16 schools in 2018 to meet UNRWA education reform, protection and safety requirements.

D. Subprogramme 4 Refugee capabilities are strengthened for increased livelihood opportunities

72. UNRWA aims to ensure that Palestine refugees have a decent standard of living through interventions under its education, relief and social services programme, its microfinance programme and its infrastructure and camp improvement programme.

73. UNRWA technical and vocational education and training programming has helped mitigate economic challenges presented across Agency fields of operation through a continuous focus on the relevance of training courses to labour market needs.²⁶ In order to further support and institutionalize the relationship between vocational training centres and the labour market, new guidelines were developed for establishing and activating programme advisory committees that include specialists from the labour market and other technical and vocational education and training provider bodies. In coordination with the strategic direction provided by vocational training centre management, programme advisory committees ensure that training courses are in line with labour market needs. In addition, on-the-job training guidelines were updated during the reporting period.

74. Through its microfinance programme, UNRWA disbursed \$35,599,738 to 38,183 clients across Gaza, the West Bank, Jordan and the Syrian Arab Republic in 2018. Of that amount, \$15,040,142 was provided to Palestine refugees through 13,052 loans.

75. The infrastructure and camp improvement programme is designed to have a positive impact on local economies by driving community demand for construction materials while generating employment opportunities for camp residents.

<i>Expected accomplishment</i>	<i>Indicator of achievement</i>	<i>Measurement</i>		
		<i>Unit of measure</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	
Palestine refugees' capabilities are strengthened	Percentage of vocational training centre graduates employed	(a) Female	Baseline (2017/18)	72.78
			Target (2017/18)	75.28
			Actual (2017/18)	74.00
	(b) Male	Baseline (2017/18)	85.60	
		Target (2017/18)	85.64	
		Actual (2017/18)	83.17	

²⁶ This is accomplished through the competency-based training approach that: (a) identifies and builds on the occupational standards for each profession, which are then reflected as course competencies in which students build their abilities; and (b) makes courses more relevant and responsive to labour market needs and thus increases the likelihood of graduate employability. In 2018, 5 vocational courses at Wadi Sir Training Centre in Jordan were restructured using this approach, with 12 more to be restructured in 2019. As part of this approach, partnerships with businesses and industry have also been forged in order to harness their expertise.

Outputs

- Technical and vocational education skill development was provided to 7,564 students in UNRWA vocational training centres.
- The 2018 vocational training centre graduate employment rate (for 2017 graduates) remained healthy, at 79.77 per cent, with 2,724 graduates employed or in further study. In addition, 86.90 per cent of Faculty of Educational Sciences and Arts (Jordan) and Education Science Faculty (West Bank) graduates were employed.
- The proportion of vulnerable students (social safety net programme beneficiaries) enrolled in the first year at vocational training centres increased from 29.43 per cent in 2017 to 32.92 per cent in 2018. In the Faculty of Educational Sciences and Arts and the Education Science Faculty, the proportion of social safety net programme beneficiaries increased from 23.81 per cent to 41.43 per cent.
- Eighteen partnership agreements were concluded in 2018 in support of poverty alleviation and enhanced livelihood opportunities that benefited 6,184 Palestine refugees across the West Bank, Gaza and Lebanon. Partnerships that extended assistance and empowered persons with disabilities, youth and women were prioritized.

<i>Expected accomplishment</i>	<i>Indicator of achievement</i>	<i>Measurement</i>	
		<i>Unit of measure</i>	<i>Number</i>
Refugees have improved access to livelihood opportunities	Total number of microfinance loans to refugees	Baseline (2018)	13 756
		Target (2018)	16 326
		Actual (2018)	13 052
	Number of full-time equivalents created from infrastructure and camp improvement programme interventions ^a	Baseline (2018)	2 430
		Target (2018)	2 315
		Actual (2018)	2 411

^a Excluding the Syrian Arab Republic.

Outputs

- In 2018, 13,052 loans, valued at \$15,040,142, were extended to Palestine refugees. This corresponds to 34 per cent of the total number of clients with loans (38,183) and 42 per cent of the total disbursed value (\$35,599,738).
- Women continued to be prioritized as loan recipients, with 16,061 loans (valued at \$12,658,105), representing 42 per cent of all loans, disbursed to women during the reporting period, of which 5,896 loans (valued at \$6,399,019) were extended to female refugees.
- Loans disbursed to youth numbered 10,702 and were valued at \$10,220,460, of which 4,033 loans, or 38 per cent, (valued at \$5,379,679) were extended to Palestine refugee youth.
- In 2018, UNRWA camp improvement works were valued at \$53,000,000 and included a range of interventions, from the planning, design and construction of Agency facilities, shelters, schools and health centres to solid waste management and the repair and reconstruction of camp sewerage and drainage works, water wells and wastewater treatment systems.

E. Subprogramme 5

Refugees are able to meet their basic human needs of food, shelter and environmental health

76. The UNRWA social safety net programme is aimed at mitigating poverty and food insecurity among poor Palestine refugees, with priority focus on the abject poor.²⁷ To this end, the social safety net programme provides a range of social transfers, including cash transfers and/or the provision of electronic cash vouchers and, in Gaza only, a basic food basket. In 2016, the Agency transitioned from the provision of in-kind food assistance to a cash-based transfer approach in Jordan, Lebanon and the West Bank. Regarded as a more effective way of extending basic assistance, since its introduction, this new distribution modality has reduced the administrative and distribution costs associated with the delivery of in-kind assistance while providing recipients with greater freedom of choice and access to a wider range of healthy food options. Currently, e-card assistance serves 156,331 social safety net programme beneficiaries across Lebanon (61,708), Jordan (58,498) and the West Bank (36,125).

77. In the Syrian Arab Republic, under emergency appeal funding, UNRWA provides cash and food assistance to over 405,000 Palestine refugees, of whom two thirds have experienced at least one displacement since 2011. The Agency is currently in the process of establishing the basis for a cash-based transfer programme that targets the most vulnerable of those affected by the conflict, considering that 25 per cent of all households are headed by women, every fifth household is headed by a person over 60 and pre-conflict social support networks have disintegrated owing to displacement and migration.

78. Overcrowded conditions and makeshift shelters are just some of the challenges facing the 58 official Palestine refugee camps across the UNRWA fields of operation. Evolving from temporary “tent cities”, these camps are now congested conglomerates of narrow alleyways and improvised multilevel houses that accommodate growing families. Unregulated construction often means that buildings encroach on walkways, blocking passage. Continued years of underfunding, coupled with the poor economic condition of Palestine refugees, have translated into the rapid degradation of the overall environment in which they live. UNRWA estimates that there are currently around 42,000 substandard shelters (excluding the Syrian Arab Republic) in need of rehabilitation, at an approximate cost of \$550 million.

<i>Expected accomplishment</i>	<i>Indicator of achievement</i>	<i>Measurement</i>	
		<i>Unit of measure</i>	<i>Percentage^a</i>
Abject poor refugees are better able to meet their food needs	Percentage of social safety net programme beneficiaries who are abject poor	Baseline (2018)	64.5
		Estimate (2018)	76.5
		Actual (2018)	64.5
	Percentage of abject poor individuals who receive social transfers through the social safety net programme	Baseline (2018)	14.6
		Estimate (2018)	14.2
		Actual (2018)	14.0
Improved living conditions for abject poor refugees	Percentage of substandard shelters repaired or reconstructed	Baseline (2018)	6.9
		Target (2018)	9.6
		Actual (2018)	9.4

^a Excluding the Syrian Arab Republic.

²⁷ UNRWA defines the abject poor as those who cannot meet their basic food needs.

Outputs

- In addition to the 255,266 Palestine refugees who received social safety net programme support in 2018, emergency programming supported food and/or multipurpose cash assistance for 933,979 persons in Gaza, 82,886 persons in the West Bank, 395,499 persons in the Syrian Arab Republic, 28,885 persons in Lebanon and 16,602 persons in Jordan.
- Temporary, emergency-related job opportunities were provided to 43,115 refugee households across the occupied Palestinian territory.
- Shelters were rehabilitated for 1,138 families. Years of underfunding (shelter rehabilitation is entirely dependent on project funding) have severely limited this assistance measure. These constraints accounted for achievements that fell below target.

Endnote

79. UNRWA was established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 302 (IV) of December 1949. The Agency is a subsidiary body of the Assembly and became operational on 1 May 1950, responding to the needs of about 750,000 Palestine refugees. It is one of the largest United Nations programmes, with a population of some 5.4 million registered Palestine refugees under its mandate, and about 30,000 staff. Palestine refugees are defined as “persons whose normal place of residence was Palestine during the period of 1 June 1946 to 15 May 1948, and who lost both home and means of livelihood as a result of the 1948 conflict” and include descendants through the male line.²⁸

80. The mission of the Agency is to assist Palestine refugees in achieving their full potential in human development until a durable and just solution is found to the refugee issue. The Agency fulfils its humanitarian and human development mandate by providing protection and essential services to Palestine refugees in Gaza, the West Bank, Jordan, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic. Its services include basic (and in Lebanon, secondary) education, comprehensive primary health care, emergency relief, social interventions, microfinance, shelter and infrastructural support.

²⁸ UNRWA does not formally register persons displaced and in need of continued assistance as a result of the June 1967 and subsequent hostilities (in the aftermath of the Six-Day War). Accordingly, the Agency does not have an official record of the number of those persons. Those eligible to receive UNRWA services in accordance with the Agency’s mandate, including the former, may benefit from the full range of humanitarian and human development assistance provided, including education, health care, relief and social services, camp infrastructure and improvement, protection and microfinance, as well as emergency assistance in times of crisis.

