

OXFAM REACTION TO ISRAEL'S BAN OF UNRWA

EMERGENCIES

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Press Releases

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In reaction to the Knesset passing bills banning UNRWA from operating in areas under Israel's control, Sally Abi Khalil, Oxfam Regional Director in the Middle East and North Africa said: "Israel has bombed Palestinians to death, maimed them, starved them, and is now ridding them of their biggest lifeline of aid. Piece by piece, Israel is systemically dismantling Gaza as a land that is autonomous and liveable for Palestinians. Its banning of UNRWA today is condemnable and another step in this crime.

"The decision will further undermine the ability of the international community to provide sufficient humanitarian aid and to save lives in any safe, independent and impartial way.

“UNRWA is not only the biggest and most established agency that has been delivering aid and sustenance to the people of Gaza for years, it is also a thread that connected them in some hope of solidarity and security to the United Nations.

“We are in no doubt that Israel and its allies are fully aware of the terrible consequences that this decision will have on Palestinians living in Gaza, many of whom are already starving. We join others in warning again that this will result in more death, more suffering, and more forced displacement of people from their besieged homeland. It is impossible not to believe that this is their aim.”

Notes to the Editor

Read the Bill for the Cessation of UNRWA Activities in the Territory of the State of Israel, 5784–2024; and Bill for the Cessation of UNRWA Activities, 5784–2024

Read Oxfam and over 50 humanitarian and human rights agencies' global appeal to defend UNRWA from Israeli ban

The rights of Palestine Refugees exist separate to UNRWA, including the right of return, which was set out in resolution 194, adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1948, and predates the creation of UNRWA in 1949. Besides the right to return, the right to family unity and the right to reparations would also remain in UNRWA's absence, as would the refugee camps of Gaza and the West Bank.