

December 16, 2025

Dear Secretary Rubio:

We, the undersigned 104 civil society organizations, write to respectfully request the inclusion of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) in the President's implementation of Gaza's recovery.

We are grateful for the President's leadership and efforts in securing a ceasefire agreement and advancing peace in the region. As the plan moves into implementation, our organizations are deeply concerned that continued reluctance to utilize UNRWA's established and proven humanitarian and human development network may hinder hard-earned progress. For more than 75 years, UNRWA has worked in the Gaza Strip, developing a capacity and expertise that cannot be replicated or replaced. Excluding UNRWA from Gaza's rehabilitation risks slowing recovery, increasing instability, and undermining the very goals of the President's plan.

Global disinformation campaigns have eroded trust in the UN, including UNRWA. Such efforts serve to undermine the mandate established by the UN General Assembly and Security Council for the provision of life-saving services and support, pending a just resolution to the seven decades long plight of Palestine refugees. We urge the Administration to make decisions based on verified facts.

Over the past two years, four independent investigations into UNRWA's neutrality, launched at different times and taking different investigative perspectives, including one performed by the U.S. National Intelligence Council, all reached the same conclusion: UNRWA is, and remains, a neutral and impartial organization.¹ Importantly, the Council also noted that Israeli bias has led to mischaracterizations and distortions in assessments of UNRWA.²

Recent press accounts add further weight to the importance of grounding policy in fact. The State Department Inspector General is investigating potential Israeli violations of the Leahy Law³, and Israeli military lawyers have notified the United States of evidence that could support war-crime charges related to Israel's latest military campaign in Gaza. According to these reports, the intelligence "pointed to doubts within the Israeli military about the legality of its tactics that contrasted sharply with Israel's public stance defending its actions".⁴

¹ The four investigations include: U.S. National Intelligence Council (Feb 2024), Independent Review of UNRWA Adherence to Neutrality (Colonna Report, August 2024), UN Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) investigation into 19 UNRWA staff (August 2024), ICJ Advisory Opinion on Israel's Obligations (October 2025)

² Wall Street Journal, 2/21/2024, "Intelligence report says Washington can't verify Israeli assertions about widespread links to militant groups"

³ Washington Post, 10/30/2025, "Classified U.S. report finds backlog of hundreds of possible Israeli human rights violations"

⁴ IBID

UNRWA is still in Gaza and remains the backbone of the humanitarian response.

Despite claims to the contrary, UNRWA's local workforce in Gaza continues delivering essential services despite their own displacement, exhaustion, and profound personal losses.

Today, UNRWA's 12,000 Gaza staff provide 40% of all primary healthcare, delivering 14,000 medical consultations every day. They bolster public health through immunizations, nutrition screenings, water-quality testing, and pest-control campaigns. Its wells, desalination systems, and waste-management services supply clean water and preserve dignity for hundreds of thousands of people. UNRWA also keeps education functioning, teaching more than 62,000 children in person, despite destroyed buildings, and supporting nearly 300,000 children through online learning.

No other organization has the decades of expertise, infrastructure, community trust, or cost-effectiveness to take on UNRWA's role as safely, efficiently, or at scale in Gaza. For Gaza's rehabilitation to succeed, UNRWA must be included as a core humanitarian partner.

President Trump's efforts to restore peace are historic. In that spirit, we respectfully urge the Administration to re-open lines of communication with UNRWA and allow the Agency to continue fulfilling its mandate in accordance with international humanitarian principles, until a just and lasting solution to the plight of Palestine refugees is secured.

We appreciate your consideration. Our organizations are prepared to work with the Administration to support Gaza's humanitarian needs, advance reconstruction efforts, and contribute to lasting peace in the region.

Signed,

UNRWA USA National Committee

US & International Organizations

A New Policy

Action Corps

ActionAid

AJP Action

Alliance of Baptists

American Friends Service Committee (AFSC)

American Muslims for Palestine

Arab American Institute

Campaign for Peace, Disarmament & Common Security

Center for International Policy Advocacy
Charity & Security Network
Church World Service
Churches for Middle East Peace
Climate Refugees
CODEPINK
Community Alliance for Peace and Justice
Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, U.S. Provinces
DAWN
Demand Progress Education Fund
Disciples Palestine Solidarity Movement
Doctors Against Genocide
Episcopal Peace Fellowship Palestine Israel Network
For All
Free Gaza Movement
Friends Committee on National Legislation
Global Ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and United Church of Christ
Historians for Peace and Democracy
If Americans Knew
International Refugee Assistance Project (IRAP)
J Street
Just Foreign Policy
Justice For All
Legacies of War
Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns
Methodist Federation for Social Action
Migrant Roots Media
MoveOn
MPower Change Action Fund
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd
National Council of Churches
New Jewish Narrative
Nonviolence International
Palestine Justice Network of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
Palestinian Christian Alliance for Peace
Partners for Progressive Israel
Pax Christi USA
Peace Action
Quincy Institute for Responsible Statecraft
Refugees International

ReThinking Foreign Policy
Sisters of Mercy of The Americas
Solidarity 2020 and Beyond
The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
The Tahrir Institute for Middle East Policy (TIMEP)
The United Methodist Church - General Board of Church and Society
Unitarian Universalists for Justice in the Middle East
United Church of Christ
US Council of Muslim Organizations (USCMO)
US Lutheran Palestine Israel Justice Network
USA-Palestine Mental Health Network
Veterans for Peace
Welcoming America

State & Local Organizations

14 Friends of Palestine, Marin
500+
Al Otro Lado
AlDameer Association for Human Rights – Gaza/Palestine
All Saints Middle East Ministry
Brooklyn for Peace
Christian-Jewish Allies for a Just Peace for Israel/Palestine
Civilized Humanity
Delaware Churches for Middle East Peace
Delawareans for Palestinian Human Rights
Friends of Sabeel/Los Angeles
KARAMA
MARUF CT
Maui for Palestine
Middle East Justice and Peace Group, South Central Pennsylvania
Minnesota Peace Project
New Hampshire Veterans For Peace
New Mexico Alliance for Justice in Palestine
NH Council of Churches
NH Peace Action
Not In My Name, NH
Oasis Legal Services
Palestinian Christians for Justice
Pax Christi Metro DC-Baltimore
Pax Christi New York State

Peace Action New York State
Peace Action of San Mateo County
Peace Action of Wisconsin
Peace, Justice, Sustainability NOW!
PeaceHost.net
Prince Georges County Peace and Justice Coalition Maryland
River Road Unitarian Universalist Congregation Middle East Task Force
San Diego Faith Leaders for Palestine
Southern New Hampshire Indivisible
Taxpayers Against Genocide
The Peace & Justice Center of Sonoma County
The Riverside Church in the City of New York
Voices for Justice in Palestine
Western New York Peace Center
Westminster Presbyterian Church Middle East Task Force
Women Against War