



INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL SUPPORTING FAIR TRIAL & HUMAN RIGHTS

Registration No. 2795/2012

OFFICIAL LETTER HEAD OF THE ORGANIZATION

ICSFT DENOUNCES WFP'S CUT IN FOOD AID FOR PALESTINIANS



ICSFT denounces the recent announcement by the World Food Programme (WFP) stating cuts in food aid affecting about 190,000 impoverished Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank - half of all its recipients there, citing a severe funding shortfall.

The UN agency said it will suspend food assistance to 27,000 people in the West Bank as of January 1. In addition, food aid to 165,000 people in the Israeli-occupied territory and in the Gaza Strip would be reduced by 20 percent.

Stephen Kearney, WFP country director in the Palestinian Territories, said "WFP has been forced, unfortunately, to make drastic cuts to the number of people that we support across

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Palestine, both in Gaza and the West Bank, It's not just WFP, it's across the whole humanitarian community as donor contributions significantly fall"

He further stated that he blames this cut in food aid on the USA, WFP's biggest contributor. USA also cut funding to UNRWA¹ in September as a sign of showing unwavering support to the occupying power, Israel. A blunt move by the US to unilaterally sweep aside one of the main sticking points in peace negotiations – the right of return of Palestinians. By slashing its budget, the USA attempting to delegitimise the refugee status of them and their descendants. UNRWA provides aid, mostly in the form of education, health care, food security and other essentials, to some 800,000 Palestinians registered as refugees in the West Bank and 1.3 million people in the Gaza Strip, as well as 534,000 in Syria, 464,000 in Lebanon and 2 million in Jordan. In addition the Trump administration has also cut \$200 million in bilateral aid to the Palestinians for projects in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

Kearney stated that while food aid was crucial in Gaza, the territory's underlying problems would remain as long as Israel maintained its blockade, preventing any long-term political solution.

Maher al-Tabbaa, a Gaza-based economist, said "the territory's poor would be especially hard-hit. The poverty rate in Gaza is over 53 percent and the WFP decision will get that higher, it will also affect the number of people suffering from food insecurity, whose percentage stands today at 70 percent,"

More than 750,000 Palestinians fled or were expelled during the 1948 war surrounding Israel's creation and during the Six Day War in 1967. They and all their descendants are deemed by the UN agency to be refugees who fall under its remit.

¹ UNRWA was founded in 1949 after the first Arab-Israel war and the exodus of around 700,000 refugees who fled or were driven out of Israel on its founding as a state



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ICSFT urges the UN organ and donor countries to continue to provide the needs of the Palestinian people until they regain their freedom and not take decisions that worsen their suffering.

ICSFT urges the international community to take concrete measures to reverse the current course of aggression by Israel and its allies and advance the goal of a just and sustainable peace based on the two-State solution. The international community must protect the people of Gaza and West Bank who are under constant attack by the occupying power, Israel.