



**Statement by  
H.E. Ambassador Maged Abdelaziz  
Permanent Representative of the Arab Republic of Egypt  
Chair of the Coordinating Bureau  
of the Non-Aligned Movement**

**Before  
The Special Political and Decolonization Committee  
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**Agenda Item (32)**

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

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Mr. Chairman,

I have the pleasure to address the Special Political and Decolonization Committee on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement on this important Agenda Item. I would like to thank Ms. Karen Koning AbuZayd, the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), for her statement and to pay tribute to her and to all the staff of the Agency for operating under extremely restrictive and dangerous circumstances imposed by the Occupying Power. The Non-Aligned Movement commend the extraordinary efforts by the Agency to provide emergency relief, medical, food, shelter and other humanitarian assistance to needy and displaced Palestinian families, including refugees, during the Israeli aggression on Gaza.

Despite the many challenges and pressures, UNRWA continues its essential role in serving more than 4.6 million Palestinian refugees and ameliorating their plight through the provision of education, health, relief and social services, in addition to its work in the areas of camp infrastructure, micro-finance, and emergency assistance. This role is pending to the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestine refugees, including their right to return and fair compensation, according to General Assembly resolution 194 of 1948.

The Non-Aligned Movement supports the Agency's continuing efforts to fulfill its mandate and to provide basic and social services to the Palestinian refugees in the Occupied Palestinian Territories and the host countries. The Movement believes that a peaceful settlement of the Question of Palestine and the achievement of lasting peace in the Middle East depend on a resolution of the problem of Palestine refugee, as one of the main core issues of the final status negotiations on the Palestinian track.

In order to achieve this goal, we are concerned about Israel continuing denial of the rights of the Palestine refugees and its responsibility for their suffering for more than sixty years, as well as its illegal occupation and systematic violations to the International Humanitarian Law, the Law of Human Rights and United Nations resolutions in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. Israel's illegal practices extend to include targeting UNRWA's personnel and obstructing their activities and mandate given by the General Assembly.

The Non-Aligned Movement is gravely concerned about the extremely difficult living conditions being faced by the Palestine refugees in the occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, particularly in the refugee camps in the Gaza Strip, as a result of the continuing punitive measures and blockade imposed by Israel and its military aggression, which caused the death and injury to thousands of Palestinians and widespread damage and destruction to Palestinian civilian infrastructure and United Nations facilities.

Accordingly, The Non-Aligned Movement stresses the urgent need for reconstruction to begin immediately in the Gaza Strip, including through the implementation of the Secretary General's proposal for the commencement of United Nations-led civilian reconstruction activities and the completion of numerous suspended projects managed by UNRWA. The Non-Aligned Movement regrets the continued suspensions of UNRWA's efforts to repair and rebuild thousands of damaged and destroyed refugee shelters due to the continued obstruction of the import of essential construction materials into Gaza as a result of the ongoing Israeli blockade. The continuing negative consequences of the Israeli aggression on Gaza has exacerbated the dire humanitarian situation on the ground and continue to fuel instability and the cycle of violence and to threaten international peace and security as well as hampering the efforts to resume the peace process between the two sides.

Mr. Chairman,

The Non-Aligned Movement is alarmed regarding the conclusions of the United Nations Secretary-General's Board of Inquiry and the United Nations Fact Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict, including the extensive damage and destruction of UNRWA's facilities caused during the military operations launched by Israel. In this regard, the Movement condemns Israel's breach of the inviolability of United Nations premises and its failure to accord the assets of the Organization immune from any form of interference. Israel has to compensate the United Nations for damage and destruction to UNRWA's properties and facilities in Gaza resulting from actions by the Israeli side.

The Non-Aligned Movement urges that due priority should continue to be given to promoting respect for and observance by all Member States of their obligations assumed under international law. The Movement takes into account the magnitude and persistence of the violations and breaches of international law, including international humanitarian law, committed by Israel, the occupying power, in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem.

The Non-Aligned Movement reiterates its call on Israel to end its collective punitive measures imposed on the civilian population in the Gaza Strip, including by the sustained and permanent opening of Gaza's border crossings in full compliance with the terms and provisions of Security Council resolution 1860. The Movement calls also upon Israel to cease its obstruction of the necessary construction materials and supplies for the reconstruction and repair of damaged and destroyed Agency facilities and for the implementation of suspended civilian infrastructure projects in refugee camps in Gaza, which are essential for alleviating the severe humanitarian hardships being endured by the refugees.

In addition to the ongoing Israeli occupation and the denial of refugees' rights, the policies and contributions of UNRWA's donor countries and changes taking place within the refugee population itself affect UNRWA's ability to realize its objectives. The financial situation of the Agency requires increased attention from the international community to contribute to the chronically under-funded budget and to respond to the emergency appeals. Serious consideration should be given to continue and to increase contributions to the Agency to ease the ongoing financial shortfalls exacerbated by the situation on the ground.

Mr. Chairman,

In concluding, I would like to reiterate the Non-Aligned Movement support for the extraordinary efforts by UNRWA to provide services and assistance to the Palestine refugees for more than sixty years and for its role as a stabilizing factor in the Middle East. I would like also to express deep appreciation for the tireless and persistent efforts of Ms. Karen Koning AbuZayd at the end of her term as Commissioner-General of the Agency.

Thank You Mr. Chairman,

