

In support of UNRWA's survival: averting further loss of life, dignity and hope

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) provides life-saving humanitarian aid for 5.4 million Palestine refugees is now entering their eighth decade of statelessness and conflict. Facing little political immediate hope to return home. Approximately one third of Palestinian refugees still live in 58 recognized camps. UNRWA operates 702 schools and 144 health centres, including in the humanitarian disasters of today's Syria and Gaza. It has dramatically reduced infectious diseases, death including maternal mortality, and illiteracy. Its social services include rebuilding infrastructure and homes destroyed by conflict, and providing cash assistance and micro-finance loans for Palestinians whose rights are curtailed and who -- alone among the more recent refugees of the Middle East -- are denied the right of return to their homeland.

Yet UNRWA itself is fighting for survival. On the 31st of August, 2018 the Trump administration confirmed that the United States, previously UNRWA's largest donor, will no longer fund UNRWA.. Funding crises are not new to UNRWA. This crisis, however, is unprecedented.

An abrupt cessation of UNRWA services will create humanitarian emergencies that will increase the load in an already overburdened surrounding host countries. It will exacerbate existing conflicts, disrupt fragile peace, create new displacement, and generate disaffection and anger.

If no action is taken, governments are giving the green light to a ruinous, multi-faceted emergency that the region simply cannot bear. We, scientists and scholars, urge our governments to support UNRWA now. Sustain UNRWA services and avert further loss of life, dignity and hope.

Full list of 139 signatories:

Australia

Abbas El-Zein, Professor, The University of Sydney

Lana Logam, Program Officer, Nossal Institute for Global Health

Barbara McPake, Professor, Director, Nossal Institute for Global Health, University of Melbourne

Rob Moodie, Professor, University of Melbourne, University of Malawi

Kim Mulholland, Professor, Pediatrician, Murdoch Children's Research Institute

Tilman A. Ruff, Professor, University of Melbourne

Christina Savic, Senior Program Officer, Nossal Institute for Global Health

Peter Shannon, Coordinator, MAPW Western Australia

Sue Wareham, President, Medical Association for Prevention of War

Peter Wigg, MD, Medical Association for Prevention of War

Carol Wigg, MD, Medical Association for Prevention of War

Japan

Hidechika Akashi, Director, National Center of Global Health and Medicine

Nassim Assefi, MD, Nagasaki University's School of Tropical Medicine and Global Health

Akane Futami, Assistant Professor, Tokyo Medical and Dental University Hospital

Rika Fujiya, Assistant Professor, Keio University

Ryunosuke Goto, Researcher, The University of Tokyo

Ayako Hatano, PhD Candidate, The University of Tokyo

Sayaka Horiuchi, Assistant Professor, Teikyo University

Aya Ishizuka, Assistant Professor, Aoyama Gakuin University

Taizo Imano, Associate Professor, Chukyo University
Yosuke Inoue, Postdoctoral Scholar, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Rumi Iwata, Development Consultant
Kenichi Kashiwagi, Associate Professor, University of Tsukuba
Akiko Kitamura, Visiting Scientist, The University of Tokyo
Junko Kiriya, Assistant Professor, The University of Tokyo
Shota Furukawa, Researcher, The University of Tokyo
Kiyoko Furusawa, Professor, Tokyo Woman's Christian University
Masamine Jimba, Professor, The University of Tokyo
Yasuhiko Kamiya, Professor, Nagasaki University
Yasushi Katsuma, Professor and Board of Trustees Member, Waseda University
Miyuki Kinjo, Visiting Researcher, Ritsumeikan University
Kazumi Kubota, Assistant Professor, Yokohama City University
Mariko Morioka, Researcher, Keio University
Akihisa Matsuno, Professor, Osaka University
Yoshimi Matsuo, Director, NPO Treasures of The Planet
Chiaki Mishima, Family Physician, Platanus Medical Cooperation, Aoba Urban Clinic, JMA JDN
Takashi Miyachi, Researcher, Akita University
Hiroaki Miyata, Professor, Keio University
Kenichiro Nagata, Researcher, The University of Tokyo
Haruyo Nakamura, Senior Researcher, Global Link Management, Inc.
Makiko Nambu, PhD Student, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies
Eiji Nagasawa, Professor, The University of Tokyo
Aiko Nishikida, Associate Professor, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies
Shuhei Nomura, Assistant Professor, University of Tokyo
Sayumi Nozaki, Researcher, Tokyo Women's Medical University
Masaaki Ohashi, Professor and Director, University of the Sacred Heart
Haruka Sakamoto, Researcher, University of Tokyo
Miho Sato, Assistant Professor, Nagasaki University
Motoya Sato, Researcher, The University of Tokyo
Kiho Shin, Associate, NPO Treasures of The Planet
Takao Takahara, Professor, Meiji Gakuin University
Tomoyuki Tanigawa, Physician, Graduate School of Public Health
Hiroko Taniguchi, Masters Candidate, The University of Tokyo
Atsuro Tsutsumi, Associate Professor, Kanazawa University
Manami Uechi, MMSc-GHD Candidate, Harvard Medical School
Akira Usuki, Professor, Japan Women's University
Yasue Yoshino, Nurse

United Kingdom

Éimhín Ansbro, Research Fellow, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine
Vera Araújo-Soares, Senior Lecturer, Newcastle University
Karl Blanchet, Professor, Director of the Health in Humanitarian Crises Centre, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine
Josephine Borghi, Associate Professor, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine
Joanna Busza, Associate Professor, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine
Oona Campbell, Professor, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine

Sir Iain Chalmers, Coordinator, James Lind Initiative, Oxford University
Francesco Checchi, Professor, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine
Karin Diaconu, Research Fellow, Queen Margaret University
Paula Dominguez- Salas, Postdoctoral Researcher, Royal Veterinary College, University of London
Elizabeth Dubois, Researcher Associate, Imperial College London
Gene Feder, Professor, University of Bristol
Liz Grant, Professor, University of Edinburgh
Shakoor Hajat, Associate Professor, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine
Alastair Hay, Professor (Emeritus), University of Leeds
Darryl Humble, Programme Leader, Senior Lecturer, Northumbria University
David McCoy, Professor, Queen Mary University of London
Martin McKee, Professor, Research Director European Observatory on Health Systems & Policies, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine
Susan Michie, Professor, Director of UCL Centre for Behaviour Change, University College London
Christopher Millett, Professor, Imperial College London
Adrianna Murphy, Assistant Professor, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine
Mica Nava, Emeritus Professor, University of East London
Kate O'Donnell, Professor, University of Glasgow
Jennifer Palmer, Assistant Professor, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine
Preeti Patel, Co-Director, Conflict and Health Research Group, King's College London
Salman Rawaf, Professor, Imperial College London, Director, WHO Collaborating Centre
Bayard Roberts, Professor, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine
Suhail Shiekh, Research Assistant, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine
Tim Shallice, Professor Emeritus, University College London
Neha Singh, Research Fellow, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine
Matt Baillie Smith, Professor, Northumbria University
Richard Sennett, Professor, London School of Economics
Richard Sullivan, Professor, Director, Institute of Cancer Policy, King's College London
Adrienne Testa, Assistant Professor, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine
Graham Watt, Professor, Glasgow University
Sophie Witter, Professor, Queen Margaret University
John S Yudkin, Emeritus Professor, University College London

United States

Jacqueline Bhabha, Professor, Director of Research, Harvard University
Melani Cammett, Professor, Harvard University
Goodarz Danaei, Associate Professor, Harvard University
Ishac Diwan, Visiting Professor, Columbia University
Nir Eyal, Associate Professor, Harvard University
Wafaie Fawzi, Professor, Harvard University
Paul Gregg Greenough, Assistant Professor, Harvard University
Amy Hagopian, Associate Professor, University of London
William Hsiao, Professor, Harvard University
Margaret E. Kruk, Associate Professor, Harvard University
Ana Langer, Professor, Harvard University
Jennifer Leaning, Professor, Harvard University
Terry McGovern, Chair, Heilbrunn Department of Population and Family Health, Columbia University

Erica L. Nelson, Research Faculty, Co-Director, Humanitarian Geoanalytics Program, Harvard University
Kelli O'Laughlin, Assistant Professor, Harvard University
Ronak Patel, MD MPH, Harvard University
Phuong Pham, Assistant Professor, Harvard University
Leslie Roberts, Professor, Acting Director, Program on Forced Migration and Health, Columbia University
Daniel Wikler, Professor, Harvard University
Youseph Yazdi, Professor, Executive Director, Johns Hopkins Center for Bioengineering Innovation & Design (CBID)
Aisha Yousafzai, Associate Professor, Harvard University
Mohammad H. Zaman, Professor, Boston University

Other countries

Sawsan Abdulrahim, Associate Professor, American University of Beirut, Beirut, Lebanon
Kim Abouchacra, Professor of Clinical Specialty, American University of Beirut, Beirut, Lebanon
Mohamad Alameddine, Associate Professor, American University of Beirut, Beirut, Lebanon
Sara Valente de Almeida, PhD Student, Nova School of Business and Economics, Lisbon, Portugal
Vittorio Agnoletto, Adjunct Professor, University of Milan, Milan, Italy
Espen Bjertness, Professor, University of Oslo, Oslo, Norway
Jad Chaaban, Associate Professor, American University of Beirut, Beirut, Lebanon
Hala Ghattas, Associate Research Professor, American University of Beirut, Beirut, Lebanon
Rita Giacaman, Professor, Director, Institute of Community and Public Health, Birzeit University, Occupied Palestinian Territory
Fabienne Hariga, International Consultant
Gerd Holmboe-Ottesen, Professor Emeritus, University of Oslo, Oslo, Norway
Daniela Huber, Senior Researcher, Istituto Affari Internazionali, Rome, Italy
Ruba Ismail, Instructor, American University of Beirut, Beirut, Lebanon
Zeina Jamaluddine, Instructor of Public Health Practice, American University of Beirut, Beirut, Lebanon
Diana Jamal, Instructor of Public Health Practice, American University of Beirut, Beirut, Lebanon
Evangelos Karademas, Professor, University of Crete, Crete, Greece
Nada Melhem, Associate Professor, American University of Beirut, Beirut, Lebanon
Ghina Mumtaz, Assistant Research Professor, American University of Beirut, Beirut, Lebanon
Mhoira Leng, MD, Head of Palliative Care, Makerere University, Kampala, Uganda
Jihad Makhoul, Professor, American University of Beirut, Beirut, Lebanon
Anne Merriman, MBE, FRCP, FRCPI, Director of Policy and International Programs, Hospice Africa, Uganda
Martine Najem Kteily, Instructor of Public Health Practice, American University of Beirut, Beirut, Lebanon
Nisreen Salti, Associate Professor, American University of Beirut, Beirut, Lebanon
Maia Sieverding, Assistant Professor, American University of Beirut, Beirut, Lebanon
Alban Thomas, Director of Research, Head of the Social Science Division, Institut National de la Recherche Agronomique, Toulouse, France
Harumi Quezada-Yamamoto Public Health Physician (Mexico),