



***United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)***

**Topic A: Provision of Aid to Palestinian Refugees**

In 1949, the UN General Assembly created two separate but complementary refugee agencies – UNHCR and the UN Relief and Works Agency in the Near East (UNRWA).<sup>1</sup> While both agencies abide by the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol, they carry out their respective mandates in specific areas of the world.<sup>2</sup> UNRWA is mandated to protect and provide humanitarian and developmental assistance to Palestinian refugees within its five fields of operation: Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Gaza, and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.<sup>3</sup> UNHCR also provides services to Palestinian refugees, but only outside these five fields of operation.<sup>4</sup> With nearly 7 million Palestinian refugees worldwide, directly related to the current conflict between actors in Gaza and Israel, there has been increased pressure on both UNHCR and UNRWA to work in tandem to provide emergency aid, including food, clean water, shelters, as well as policy coordination for resettlement options and eventual safe repatriation.<sup>5</sup> To assist with this goal, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs called for \$2.822 billion from UN agencies and relevant partners in their Occupied Palestinian Territory Flash Appeal to address the most urgent needs.<sup>6</sup>

**Topic B: Protecting the Rights of Refugees Residing in Host Countries**

A key aspect of the 1951 Refugee Convention outlines the rights and obligations of refugees residing in host countries.<sup>7</sup> Some of these rights include non-refoulement, allowance of entry, non-discrimination, decent work, housing, education, access to justice, movement, and legal and social protections.<sup>8</sup> The UNHCR has created many programmes, initiatives, and partnerships to ensure the protection of these rights and the building of a better future.<sup>9</sup> For example, the UNHCR's Educate a Child programme has enrolled many out of school children, provided support to promote retention, and opened opportunities for secondary and accelerated schooling in host countries.<sup>10</sup> Additionally, the UN Development Programme recently pledged to increase support to over 30 host countries to help “unlock long-term financing, invest in access to services, livelihoods, decent jobs and justice, while strengthening peacebuilding, climate action and national and local coordination and management.”<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.unrwa.org/who-we-are/frequently-asked-questions>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-relating-status-refugees>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.unrwa.org/what-mandate-unrwa-0>

<sup>4</sup> <https://emergency.unhcr.org/protection/legal-framework/unhcr>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.refugeesinternational.org/palestine-israel/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/flash-appeal-occupied-palestinian-territory-2024>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.unhcr.org/us/about-unhcr/who-we-are/1951-refugee-convention>

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.unhcr.org/us/what-we-do>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.unhcr.org/what-we-do/build-better-futures/education/primary-and-youth-education>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.undp.org/geneva/press-releases>