

UNRWA Condemns the Killing of 10 Civilians in the Palestine Refugee Camp of Neirab in Aleppo

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Statement by Director of UNRWA Affairs in Syria Amany Michael Ebye

On Tuesday night, as families gathered to break their fasts for the Ramadan Iftar meal, several rockets hit the densely populated Neirab camp for Palestine refugees in Aleppo, killing at least ten civilians and wounding more than thirty. Among those killed were four children, the youngest just six years old. A number of the injured remain in critical condition.

The ongoing hostilities around the Neirab camp and the ensuing deteriorating security situation have forced the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) to suspend the six schools that it runs within the camp – impacting more than 3,000 children. Funerals took place throughout the night of Tuesday, and shops and services were closed on Wednesday in mourning. While UNRWA has opened its schools in Neirab camp today, it does so with the sad knowledge that three of its students will not be joining the final preparations for the end-of-year exams.

UNRWA condemns the killing and wounding of all civilians, including Palestine refugees and calls on all parties to the conflict to abide by their obligations under international humanitarian law, namely in taking all precautionary measures to ensure the protection of civilians during hostilities.

The dramatic escalation in hostilities in northwestern Syria leaves UNRWA concerned for an estimated 10–20,000 Palestine refugees who are displaced in that area. We join calls by other humanitarian actors in Syria for an end to the terrible suffering of civilians.

Neirab camp lies 13 kilometers east of Aleppo and is one of the most densely populated camps for Palestine refugees in Syria. It is home to some 18,000 residents and has been affected by varying levels of hostilities throughout this eight-year long conflict. Over the past few years, a significant number of displaced people have sought safety within the camp, many of whom fled from nearby decimated Ein el Tal camp in 2013.

Background Information:

UNRWA is confronted with an increased demand for services resulting from a growth in the number of registered Palestine refugees, the extent of their vulnerability and their deepening poverty. UNRWA is funded almost entirely by voluntary contributions and financial support has been outpaced by the growth in needs. As a result, the UNRWA programme budget, which supports the delivery of core essential services, operates with a large shortfall. UNRWA encourages all Member States to work collectively to exert all

possible efforts to fully fund the Agency's programme budget. UNRWA emergency programmes and key projects, also operating with large shortfalls, are funded through separate funding portals. UNRWA is a United Nations agency established by the General Assembly in 1949 and mandated to provide assistance and protection to some 5.4 million Palestine refugees registered with UNRWA across its five fields of operation. Its mission is to help Palestine refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, West Bank, including East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip achieve their full human development potential, pending a just and lasting solution to their plight. UNRWA services encompass education, health care, relief and social services, camp infrastructure and improvement, protection and microfinance.