

118TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 9649

To restore funding for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for
Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SEPTEMBER 18, 2024

Mr. CARSON (for himself, Ms. JAYAPAL, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Ms. ADAMS, Ms. BALINT, Ms. BARRAGÁN, Mr. BEYER, Ms. BONAMICI, Mr. BOWMAN, Ms. BUSH, Mr. CÁRDENAS, Mr. CASAR, Mr. CASTRO of Texas, Ms. CHU, Mr. CLEAVER, Mr. COURTNEY, Mr. DAVIS of Illinois, Ms. DEAN of Pennsylvania, Ms. DEGETTE, Ms. DELAURO, Mr. DESAULNIER, Mrs. DINGELL, Mr. DOGGETT, Ms. ESCOBAR, Mr. EVANS, Mrs. FOUSHEE, Mr. FROST, Mr. GARAMENDI, Mr. GARCÍA of Illinois, Mr. GREEN of Texas, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mrs. HAYES, Mr. HUFFMAN, Mr. JACKSON of Illinois, Ms. JACOBS, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mr. KHANNA, Mr. KILDEE, Ms. LEE of California, Ms. LEE of Pennsylvania, Ms. LEGER FERNANDEZ, Ms. LOFGREN, Mr. LYNCH, Ms. MCCOLLUM, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. MFUME, Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin, Ms. NORTON, Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ, Ms. OMAR, Ms. PINGREE, Mr. POCAN, Ms. PRESSLEY, Mrs. RAMIREZ, Mr. RASKIN, Ms. SÁNCHEZ, Ms. STANSBURY, Ms. TLAIB, Ms. TOKUDA, Mr. TONKO, Ms. VELÁZQUEZ, Ms. WATERS, and Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

A BILL

To restore funding for the United Nations Relief and Works
Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

2 This Act may be cited as the “UNRWA Funding
3 Emergency Restoration Act of 2024”.

4 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

5 Congress finds the following:

6 (1) The humanitarian crisis in Gaza has
7 reached a catastrophic emergency level, with two
8 million Palestinian civilians suffering daily due to es-
9 calating conflict and deprivation.

10 (2) The Integrated Food Security Phase Classi-
11 fication (IPC) has warned of imminent famine in
12 northern Gaza if humanitarian assistance, including
13 food, water, and medicine, are not immediately pro-
14 vided to Palestinian civilians. Hostilities hindering
15 the delivery of aid in southern Gaza threaten to cre-
16 ate a similar situation. United States Agency for
17 International Development Director Samantha
18 Power testified that famine is currently underway in
19 parts of Gaza.

20 (3) The United Nations Relief and Works
21 Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
22 (UNRWA) has since 1949 played a vital and central
23 role in providing shelter, education, healthcare, and
24 financial assistance to millions of Palestinians living
25 in vulnerable refugee communities across Gaza, the
26 West Bank, Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan.

1 (4) UNRWA’s aid operations are essential to
2 meeting the humanitarian needs of Palestinian civil-
3 ians in Gaza and beyond. U.S. United Nations Al-
4 ternative Representative for Special Political Affairs
5 Robert Wood expressed to the United Nations Secu-
6 rity Council that UNRWA is critical to averting a
7 famine in Gaza, stating “Other United Nations
8 agencies and humanitarian organizations have reiter-
9 ated they are not equipped to replace UNRWA, as
10 UNRWA performs essential government-like func-
11 tions their organizations do not have the capacity or
12 structure to deliver.”.

13 (5) UNRWA remains the primary distributor of
14 aid in Gaza and is essential to accommodating any
15 humanitarian aid surge to the besieged population.

16 (6) Following allegations of direct involvement
17 by individual UNRWA employees in the devastating
18 terrorist attacks of October 7, 2023, UNRWA Com-
19 missioner-General Lazzarini acted swiftly and deci-
20 sively, fully cooperating with Israeli authorities, pub-
21 licly disclosing the allegations, and immediately ter-
22 minating all the employees involved.

23 (7) United Nations Secretary-General Guterres
24 has taken additional corrective steps, including by
25 completing an investigation into the allegations by

1 the United Nation’s highest oversight body, the Of-
2 fice of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS).

3 (8) In April 2024, an independent, outside re-
4 view concluded that UNRWA has established a sig-
5 nificant number of mechanisms and procedures to
6 ensure compliance with humanitarian principles with
7 an emphasis on the principle of neutrality. This re-
8 view included recommendations for steps to
9 strengthen neutrality policies, all of which UNRWA
10 immediately agreed to implement.

11 (9) Almost all parties, including the European
12 Union, United Kingdom, Germany, Sweden, Japan,
13 France, Switzerland, Canada, The Netherlands,
14 Australia, Italy, Austria, Finland, Iceland, Romania,
15 and Estonia have already restored funding to
16 UNRWA following these strong actions taken by the
17 United Nations and the commitments made by
18 UNRWA toward complete accountability and reform.

19 (10) Ireland, Portugal, Spain, Belgium have
20 since provided resources to UNRWA above their
21 original commitments.

22 (11) The United States has historically been
23 the largest funder of UNRWA, and plays a pivotal
24 role in supporting the agency’s critical mission.

1 (12) Properly vetted funding for UNRWA re-
2 mains in the comprehensive strategic interests of the
3 United States, and its allies.

4 **SEC. 3. STATEMENT OF POLICY.**

5 Congress—

6 (1) recognizes that preventing further erosion
7 of civilian conditions in Gaza remains in the stra-
8 tegic and moral interests of the United States;

9 (2) supports UNRWA's unique and indispen-
10 sable contribution to immediately addressing urgent
11 humanitarian needs in Gaza, especially in mitigating
12 and stopping the spread of famine;

13 (3) urges the Government of Israel to assist the
14 United Nations Office of Internal Oversight Services
15 (OIOS) investigation team in its critical work;

16 (4) urges the Administration—

17 (A) to join United States allies in restoring
18 funding to UNRWA given the responsible ac-
19 tions taken by the United Nations and
20 UNRWA as well as the commitments made by
21 UNRWA toward additional accountability,
22 transparency, and reform; and

23 (B) to ensure continued funding to
24 UNRWA is assessed based on UNRWA's ongo-
25 ing execution of the recommendations of the

1 independent outside review led by former
2 French Foreign Minister Catherine Colonna;

3 (5) recognizes implementation of some of the
4 independent outside review recommendations will re-
5 quire United Nations member state cooperation, in-
6 cluding additional funding, and urges the United
7 States and Israel to assist UNRWA in its implemen-
8 tation efforts; and

9 (6) supports appropriating critical funds to
10 UNRWA for fiscal year 2025.

11 **SEC. 4. RESTORATION OF FUNDING FOR UNRWA.**

12 (a) IN GENERAL.—Effective on the date of the enact-
13 ment of this Act—

14 (1) title III of division G of the Further Con-
15 solidated Appropriations Act, 2024 (Public Law
16 118–47) is hereby repealed;

17 (2) section 308 of the Israel Security Supple-
18 mental Appropriations Act, 2024 (division A of Pub-
19 lic Law 118–50) is hereby repealed; and

20 (3) the Secretary of State shall, notwith-
21 standing any other provision of law and as soon as
22 practicable—

23 (A) rescind the temporary pause in fund-
24 ing for UNRWA as described in the press state-

1 ment entitled “Statement on UNRWA Allega-
2 tions” issued on January 26, 2024; and

3 (B) resume the provision of funding to
4 UNRWA under current authorities of the De-
5 partment of State.

6 (b) REPORTS.—Not later than 90 days after the date
7 of the enactment of this Act, and quarterly thereafter
8 through December 31, 2027, the Secretary of State shall
9 submit to the appropriate congressional committees of ju-
10 risdiction a report on the steps UNRWA is taking to im-
11 plement any recommendations made by the independent
12 outside review led by former French Foreign Minister
13 Catherine Colonna.

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