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UNRWA Europe Director, Marta Lorenzo

“Nurturing hope, securing peace and ensuring justice for future generations”

(3 min)

Honourable MPs, IPU Friends,

We meet at a moment of profound uncertainty across the Middle East—and for the system meant to uphold peace, rights, and human dignity.

Support is growing for renewed efforts to end the crisis in Gaza and advance a negotiated two-State solution.

For children, “peace” and “justice” are not slogans—they mean school, health care, dignity, and safety.

Allow me to quote Sarah, a 15-year-old UNRWA school parliamentarian in the West Bank.

“When we protect education, we protect the future. And when we invest in children, we are planting the seeds of peace for generations to come.”

For over 75 years, UNRWA has helped Palestine refugees build better lives, guided by UN values.

UNRWA is on the ground to provide a minimum standard of dignified living stability for Palestine refugees including health care, education, water, sanitation and other critical services.

During the conflict, UNRWA restarted online education: nearly 290,000 children sat exams and moved to the next grade.

Nearly 70,000 children are receiving non-formal learning and psychosocial support.

Yet today, this work—and decades of progress—is at risk.

In **Gaza**, people go hungry, lives are being lost, and recovery remains out of reach.

Beyond Gaza, in the occupied **West Bank**—where Sarah lives—annexation and violence are accelerating.

In **Lebanon**, over one million people have been displaced, with lives hanging in the balance.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

UNRWA faces unprecedented pressure.

Operational constraints and funding gaps are making it harder for UNRWA to reach people in need across the region.

UNRWA's services are not simply humanitarian assistance—they are **foundational to recovery and to protecting Palestinians' human development**.

As legislators, you can turn commitments into action—and action into real change for people.

Today, I urge you:

- Use oversight to keep aid flowing and protect humanitarian access.
- Ensure predictable, adequate funding—this is not the time to cut budgets.
- Protect UNRWA's core services so they continue without disruption.

Sarah's message is simple—and it is urgent: “Give every child the chance to learn, and you give them a chance for peace.”

Honorable Members,

Only courage, justice, and decisive action can build a peace that lasts.

Thank you.