

Relief, development and peace in the name of Christ

134 Plaza Drive
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3T 5K9 Canada
T 204.261.6381
888.622.6337 (toll-free)
F 204.269.9875
W mcccanada.ca

29 November, 2016

The Honourable Marie-Claude Bibeau, P.C., M.P.
Minister for International Development and La Francophonie
200 Promenade du Portage Building, Place du Centre
Gatineau, Québec K1A 0G4

Dear Minister Bibeau,

I am writing to you on behalf of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Canada to express our deep appreciation for your decision to restore annual funding to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA). Given our more than sixty-five years of experience working with Palestinian refugees, MCC believes that ongoing investment in education, health care, relief, and social services is vital for protecting the lives and dignity of millions of vulnerable people.

MCC began working with Palestinians in 1949 in response to the refugee crisis created during the Arab-Israeli war. Today, the local partners with whom we work across Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Gaza, and West Bank—where social and economic realities are particularly dire—tell us that Palestinian refugees are among the poorest and most vulnerable in the Middle East.

To this end, MCC is greatly encouraged by the Canadian government's generous \$25 million financial contribution to UNRWA. Providing steady access to safe education, health care, and emergency services for children, women, and men devastated by violence, displacement, and social upheaval builds resilience. It also helps ensure that those dealing with trauma—particularly youth—are not at risk of being drawn into further cycles of violence.

As an organization dedicated to realizing peace and justice around the world, MCC will continue to support our local partners who work tirelessly to address the humanitarian needs of vulnerable Palestinian refugees across the region. In order for this work to build a truly sustainable future, we believe that robust international efforts towards a just and peaceful resolution of existing conflicts throughout the Middle East are also urgently needed.

On behalf of MCC, I thank you once again and assure you of our prayers as you continue to provide leadership for this important dimension of the Government of Canada's work.

Sincerely,



Donald Peters
Executive Director
MCC Canada

CC: Karina Gould, Parliamentary Secretary, Liberal Party of Canada
Hon. Dean Allison, Official Opposition Critic, Conservative Party of Canada
Robert Aubin, Opposition Critic, New Democratic Party of Canada
Luc Thériault, Opposition Critic, Bloc Québécois
Elizabeth May, Leader, Green Party of Canada