

November 17, 2016

The Honourable Marie-Claude Bibeau  
Minister of International Development  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6  
Email: [Marie-Claude.Bibeau@international.gc.ca](mailto:Marie-Claude.Bibeau@international.gc.ca)

Dear Minister Bibeau,

The United Network for Justice and Peace in Palestine and Israel (UNJPPI) wishes to commend the Canadian government for the decision to restore funding to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA).

As you are aware, the Nakba created 750,000 Palestinian refugees in 1948. Their ancestors lived in the region for thousands of years prior to the war that created the state of Israel. Since the Nakba, individuals and families have been denied the right to return to their homes as guaranteed under the 4<sup>th</sup> Geneva Convention. Their suffering and that of their descendants has escalated over time.

Many UNJPPI members have visited Palestinian refugee camps. Because of this experience, we recognize the urgent need that exists to provide humanitarian support to Palestinian refugees who are among the poorest and most vulnerable in the Middle East and who are in desperate need of the assistance.

On a personal note, as a human rights observer who served in Bethlehem in 2013, I grew weary of apologizing to many informed Palestinians for the policies of the previous Canadian government with respect to Palestine and Israel.

Your government has taken a positive step to help improve stability and offer a ray of hope in a situation that continues to deteriorate for more than five million Palestinian refugees.

Rev. Steve Berube,

Co-chair: United Network for Justice and Peace in Palestine and Israel

Cc: Justin Trudeau  
Stephane Dion  
Rona Ambrose  
Thomas Mulcair  
Rheal Fortin  
Elizabeth May