September 23, 2024

President Joseph R. Biden The White House 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We, the undersigned 105 civil society organizations, write to respectfully request your administration's support for the restoration of United States funding to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) consistent with the recently introduced H.R. 9649: "UNRWA Funding Emergency Restoration Act of 2024".

UNRWA remains the backbone of the humanitarian response in the Gaza Strip, as recently evidenced in the UN response plan to address the outbreak of polio. As U.S. Ambassador Wood rightly stated before the UN Security Council, "other United Nations agencies and humanitarian organizations have reiterated they are not equipped to replace UNRWA, as UNRWA performs essential government-like functions their organizations do not have the capacity or structure to deliver."

Following UNRWA's and the UN's swift and decisive response to the concerns raised by the Administration when it paused funding in January, we believe it is now time for the Administration to actively reengage with Congress with the goal of resuming US funding for UNRWA.

Fifteen other governments joined the United States in pausing funding to UNRWA; however, after having performed their own due diligence and rigorous oversight, all 15 have since resumed support to the Agency -- leaving the United States the only holdout. In fact, several donor nations have even increased their contributions. While this is welcome news, it does not make up for the funding lost from UNRWA's largest contributor -- the United States. With the situation nearing its one-year mark, the needs are even greater as the risk of famine and disease mount. UNRWA's role in responding to the acute humanitarian crisis is paramount to prevent widespread famine and disease outbreak.

Securing an immediate ceasefire, unconditional release of all remaining hostages, and unfettered humanitarian access are only a starting point for a long and difficult rebuilding process. Safeguarding the role of UNRWA, particularly as a provider of primary healthcare and education, is critical for the future of Gaza. Strong congressional support for H.R. 9649 will reflect the growing support of the American people for immediate and effective responses to the unimaginable humanitarian suffering in the Gaza Strip.

We appreciate your consideration of our request and hope we can continue to rely on your support for the humanitarian needs and human rights of displaced Palestinians.

## Respectfully,

**UNRWA USA National Committee** 

ACCESS of WNY

**Action Corps** 

Al Otro Lado

Alliance of Baptists

American Baptist Churches USA

American Friends Service Committee

American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC)

Americans for Peace Now

Amnesty International USA

ANAR

Arab American Institute (AAI)

Avaaz

Carolina Peace Center

Center for Civilians in Conflict (CIVIC)

Center for Economic and Policy Research

Center for Gender & Refugee Studies

Center for International Policy

Center for Security, Race and Rights

Center for Victims of Torture

Charity & Security Network

Church World Service

Civic Ark

Climate Refugees

Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights (CHIRLA)

Common Defense

Communities United for Status & Protection (CUSP)

Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, U.S. Provinces

**DAWN** 

**Demand Progress** 

**Detention Watch Network** 

Disciples Center for Public Witness

Disciples Peace Fellowship

Dorothy Day Catholic Worker, Washington DC

**Emgage Action** 

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Every Campus A Refuge

Faith In Texas

Families For Freedom

First Friends of New Jersey & New York

Florence Immigrant & Refugee Rights Project

Foreign Policy for America

Free Migration Project

Freedom Forward

Friends Committee on National Legislation

Hindus for Human Rights

**Human Rights First** 

**IfNotNow** 

Immigrant Legal Resource Center

International Refugee Assistance Project (IRAP)

Israel/Palestine Mission Network of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

J Street

Jewish Activists for Immigration Justice

Jewish Voice for Peace Action

Just Foreign Policy

**MADRE** 

Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns

Mennonite Central Committee U.S.

Middle East Democracy Center (MEDC)

Migrant Roots Media

Minnesota Peace Project

MoveOn

MPower Change Action Fund

Muslim Advocates

Muslim Justice League

National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd

**National Council of Churches** 

National Partnership for New Americans

NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice

**Never Again Action** 

Nonviolent Peaceforce

Norwegian Refugee Council USA

Oasis Legal Services

Oil Change International

Oxfam America

Pax Christi USA

Pax Christi Young Adult Caucus

Peace Action

Pennsylvania Immigration Coalition

People's Action

Pittsburgh Area Pax Christi

Presbyterian Church (USA), Office of Public Witness

**Project South** 

Reformed Church in America

Refugee Congress

Refugees International

ReThinking Foreign Policy

RootsAction.org

Society of the flora, fauna & friend

The American Task Force on Lebanon

The Episcopal Church

The Tahrir Institute for Middle East Policy (TIMEP)

The United Church of Christ

THRIVE Center for Survivors of Torture

Transformations CDC

US Campaign for Palestinian Rights Action (USCPR Action)

U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI)

Virginia Coalition for Human Rights

We Are All America (WAAA)

Welcoming America

Win Without War

Wind of the Spirit Immigrant Resource Center

Witness at the Border

Women's Refugee Commission

Young Center for Immigrant Children's Rights