

Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Statement at the Special Political  
and Decolonization Committee (4<sup>th</sup> Committee)

Agenda item 54: The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine  
Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA)

Statement delivered by: H.E. Mr. Masud Bin Momen,  
Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Bangladesh  
and Chair of OIC Group in New York

Date and venue: 9 November 2018, Conference Room 4

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Mr. Chair,

I am honored to address the General Assembly on behalf of the Member States of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC).

At the outset, I would like to avail myself of this opportunity to express deep appreciation and gratitude to the Commissioner-General of UNRWA and the entire staff of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) for dutifully upholding the Agency's General Assembly mandate, which continues to deservedly garner the overwhelming support of the international community. The OIC reaffirms the necessity of upholding the moral, political, and legal commitment towards the rights of the Palestine refugees and the alleviation of their suffering, pending a just solution to their plight, as reaffirmed in the annual General Assembly resolutions in this regard.

Mr. Chair,

Millions of Palestine refugees continue to endure decades of forced displacement and exile and denial of their legitimate rights as a result of the ongoing Israeli colonial occupation and the failure to achieve a just and lasting solution to this grave injustice. Their plight risks worsening as UNRWA experiences an unprecedented funding crisis, which has been so severely exacerbated following the regrettable US decision to cut its contributions to this Agency, jeopardizing the Agency's essential education, health, relief, social and emergency programmes of assistance to Palestine

refugees in all the fields of operation in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and the Occupied Palestinian Territory, where the situation in the Gaza Strip is especially dire and UNRWA support remains a lifeline for refugee families.

That's why I believe that today's meeting is timely and must send a message of hope and collective political commitment to the rights and aspirations of Palestine refugees, so as to ensure that their concerns and growing needs are receiving adequate attention in this difficult time of humanitarian crises, instability and conflict in the region.

We are confident that cooperation among, and joint action by, all international actors, to share burden and contain the growth of UNRWA's core cost, will have a positive impact in mitigating the suffering of the Palestine refugees. In this spirit, the OIC in cooperation with the Islamic Development Bank (IDB), continues with the process of implementing the resolution adopted by the OIC Islamic Summit regarding the establishment of Waqf Fund in support for Palestine refugees, which will hopefully contribute, once established, to mobilizing further needed resources to the UNRWA.

The OIC reaffirms, on this occasion, its unwavering support for the Palestinian people in exercising their right to return, in line with relevant international legitimacy resolutions, particularly UNGA Resolution 194. We, once again, call on the international community to assume their historical, political, legal and humanitarian responsibilities towards finding a just and durable solution to the question of Palestine refugees, to which we all aspire.

In closing, let me thank again all Member States of the United Nations for their principled commitment and generous contributions to UNRWA, which have been essential for helping the Agency to overcome the many financial and operational challenges it faces and enhancing its ability to meet the needs of the Palestine refugees, pending a just solution.

Thank you for your attention.