

UNRWA SCHOOL IN DERA'A CAMP DAMAGED DURING ARMED CLASHES

 [unrwa.org/newsroom/official-statements/unrwa-school-dera'-camp-damaged-during-armed-clashes](https://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/official-statements/unrwa-school-dera'-camp-damaged-during-armed-clashes)

30 August 2021

Statement by Amany Michael-Ebye, Director of UNRWA Affairs, Syrian Arab Republic

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Damascus

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees In the Near East (UNRWA) is deeply concerned by the damage sustained to its installations as a result of the ongoing armed conflict in southern Syria.

On the night of 27 August 2021, an explosion took place in the Tariq al-Sad neighbourhood of Dera'a city, close to Dera'a refugee camp and the UNRWA schools therein. The resulting shockwave led to damages to two UNRWA schools (Al-Safsaf and Ein Karem Schools). The damages include broken windows, doors and structural damage to a perimeter wall. UNRWA had fully rehabilitated the school buildings in February 2020, after they were significantly damaged in the armed conflict in 2012 and, at the time of this explosion, had ongoing renovation works on the remaining school blocks in another section of the same compound. The children in the area had not had a properly functioning school for eight years prior to February 2020.

The Agency's installations, like all United Nations facilities, are marked as such and fly a United Nations flag on the roof. The Agency received no warning that there would be hostilities in an area so close to the UNRWA schools.

The Agency is extremely concerned by incidents of this nature, which threaten the Agency's ability to maintain the safety of its personnel, beneficiaries and property, as well as the inviolability of UN premises pursuant to international law. UNRWA reiterates its previous call that all parties must protect civilians and safeguard civilian infrastructure, including UNRWA installations in Dera'a Governorate.

Educational facilities should be protected and remain a safe haven for students to learn and build their future, where they should feel secure and free from the strain of the ongoing armed conflict. The right to education should be protected at all times.

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Background Information:

UNRWA is confronted with an increased demand for services resulting from a growth in the number of registered Palestine refugees, the extent of their vulnerability and their deepening poverty. UNRWA is funded almost entirely by voluntary contributions and

financial support has been outpaced by the growth in needs. As a result, the UNRWA programme budget, which supports the delivery of core essential services, operates with a large shortfall. UNRWA encourages all Member States to work collectively to exert all possible efforts to fully fund the Agency's programme budget. UNRWA emergency programmes and key projects, also operating with large shortfalls, are funded through separate funding portals. UNRWA is a United Nations agency established by the General Assembly in 1949 and mandated to provide assistance and protection to some 5.4 million Palestine refugees registered with UNRWA across its five fields of operation. Its mission is to help Palestine refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, West Bank, including East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip achieve their full human development potential, pending a just and lasting solution to their plight. UNRWA services encompass education, health care, relief and social services, camp infrastructure and improvement, protection and microfinance.