

UNRWA mourns the death of staff member in Syria

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Statement by Michael Kingsley-Nyinah, Director of UNRWA Syria Field Office

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The United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) expresses its deep sorrow at the death, on 24 November, of Mohammad Suheil Yousef Awwad, the ninth staff member to be killed as a result of the Syria conflict. Mr. Awwad died when a mortar shell struck his vehicle in Ghouta, a suburb south-east of Damascus City. He and three other passengers in the vehicle were killed instantly.

With the tragic death of yet another dear colleague, we are reminded of the extraordinary threats to humanitarian workers and the senseless waste of human life in Syria. No political or military goal can excuse the death of Mohammad Awwad or the killing of many thousands of Palestinians and Syrians in the Syria conflict. The thoughts and condolences of UNRWA staff are with Mr. Awwad's family in this time of profound grief.

Born in 1973, Mr. Awwad had served with UNRWA since July 2013 as a Maintenance Technician at the Damascus Training Centre. He is survived by his widow, 18-year-old daughter and 15-year-old son.

UNRWA deplores the mounting toll of civilian deaths and casualties in Syria, including among Palestinians and humanitarian workers. In line with the UN Security Council Presidential Statement of 2 October 2013, the Agency reiterates its fervent appeal to all parties to comply with their obligations under international law, particularly in relation to the protection of civilians. The Agency urges all parties to abide by the prohibition against indiscriminate attacks and attacks against civilians and civilian objects. Safe access for humanitarian workers, including to conflict-affected areas, must be granted.

Once again, UNRWA calls on all concerned actors to redouble their efforts to achieve a peaceful solution to the armed conflict in Syria.

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.