

## UNITED NATIONS

RELIEF AND WORKS AGENCY FOR  
PALESTINE REFUGEES IN THE NEAR EAST

## NATIONS UNIES

OFFICE DE SECOURS ET DE TRAVAUX POUR LES  
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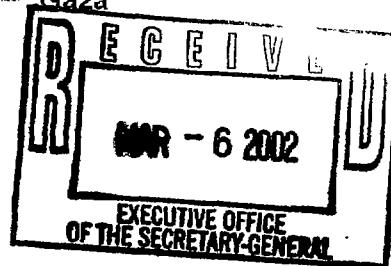
وكالة الأمم المتحدة

لإغاثة وتشغيل اللاجئين الفلسطينيين في الشرق الأوسط

UNRWA Headquarters  
Gaza

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5 March 2002

Copy #22-54583

Dear Mr. Riza,

I am attaching a letter I addressed to Foreign Minister Shimon Peres regarding damage done to UNRWA facilities in Balata and Jenin refugee camps in the West Bank.

You may wish to bring it to the attention of the Secretary-General.

Best regards.

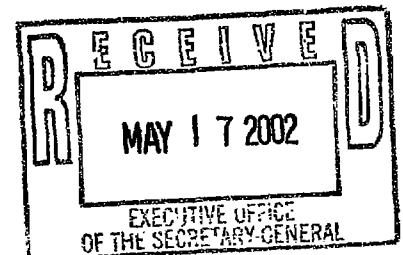
Yours sincerely,

Peter Hansen  
Commissioner-General

Mr. Iqbal Riza  
Under-Secretary-General  
Chef de Cabinet

cc: Mr. Kieran Prendergast  
Under-Secretary-General  
Department of Political Affairs  
United Nations  
New York

Mr. Terje Roed-Larsen  
UN Special Coordinator  
for the Occupied Territories  
UNSCO  
Gaza



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**URGENT/BY FACSIMILE**

4 March 2002

Excellency,

Following the IDF incursions last week into several Palestine refugee camps in the occupied Palestinian territory, the Secretary General of the United Nations called for an immediate IDF withdrawal from the camps and for both sides to refrain from further actions which might endanger more civilian lives and humanitarian facilities. According to media reports this morning, however, the Israeli security cabinet has taken a contrary decision to continue the strategy of re-entering the refugee camps. Pursuant to that policy, the IDF has been conducting extensive operations in the Jenin refugee camp yesterday and today that have created a humanitarian crisis for the refugees there who, as you know, are covered by UNRWA's humanitarian mandate.

Upon hearing of the serious situation on the ground resulting from the IDF operations this morning, I tried to get into the Jenin refugee camp, together with some of my UNRWA colleagues, including the Director of UNRWA Operations for the West Bank. We wanted to judge for ourselves the severity of the crisis and the need for relief assistance that I had been told was urgently required. My colleagues and I were unable in fact to enter the refugee camp. Members of the refugee community who had come out of the camp, however, met with us and informed us of the dire situation inside.

Many people were reported killed or injured. Houses had been destroyed and several were still ablaze. The people who met with me were pleading for help to get the injured to hospitals or to get medical care to them on the ground, as well as to allow the fire brigades to put out the fires before they spread further. There was urgent need for UNRWA and ICRC medical teams, and the fire brigades to gain access to the area. At my urging my staff in our Headquarters in Gaza and in the West Bank Field Office, contacted the Foreign Ministry and the Ministry of Defence, as well as those on the Palestinian side, to bring about a temporary ceasefire. While this did not allow them to address all the urgent needs, we nevertheless acknowledge and appreciate the efforts of the Israeli authorities to respond to this humanitarian request.

H.E. Mr. Shimon Peres  
Minister of Foreign Affairs  
State of Israel

However, I must protest in the strongest manner the fact that the IDF, both in its incursion into the Balata refugee camp on 28 February and in its operations in the camp in Jenin this morning, has commandeered UNRWA school premises from which to conduct its military operations. I must recall in this context the obligation of the Israeli authorities to ensure the security of UNRWA facilities and staff.

Please accept, your Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.



Peter Hansen  
Commissioner-General

cc: H.E. Mr. Benjamin Ben-Eliezer  
Minister of Defense  
State of Israel

Mr. Mordechai Yedid  
Deputy Director General United Nations and International Organizations  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
State of Israel