

The logo for the Australian Labor Party, featuring the word "Labor" in white on a red background, with a blue square containing four white stars to the right.

Labor

MEDIA RELEASE | WE'LL PUT
PEOPLE FIRST

**SENATOR CLAIRE MOORE
SHADOW MINISTER FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND THE PACIFIC
SENATOR FOR QUEENSLAND**

CUTS TO US FUNDING FOR PALESTINIAN AID AGENCY

Labor is concerned that a halt in US funding to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) will have a severe impact on essential services.

Over the past 70 years the UNRWA has assisted the more than 5 million Palestinian refugees in the West Bank, Gaza, and elsewhere in Jordan, Lebanon and Syria.

The Agency provides schooling to 500,000 impoverished children in the refugee camps, supplies healthcare to millions who could not otherwise afford treatment, and food aid to almost a million living in poverty in Gaza.

The US, the largest donor to UNRWA, has frozen payments worth more than \$US100 million. This represents a cut of around one third of its contributions for this year.

In response to an unprecedented reduction in US funding, the UNRWA is calling on the international community to increase contributions.

Australia has a long standing history of funding UNRWA programs. In 2016 we ranked 16th in size of pledges made to UNRWA, totalling US\$15 million. Belgium and Netherlands, who made similar pledges to us, have already agreed to increase their contributions.

UNRWA is concerned that without guarantees of global support, it won't be possible to keep children at school, clinics open and have vital food distribution happen.

Labor believes it is important that we work to maintain essential services for Palestinian refugees, and continue to actively engage in discussions around real peace in the region.

THURSDAY, 1 FEBRUARY 2018

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