



## ***The UNRWA Funding Emergency Restoration Act of 2025***

**Introduced By:** Senators Peter Welch (D-Vt.); Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.); Chris Van Hollen (D-Md.); Amy Klobuchar (D-Minn.); Jeff Merkley (D-Ore.); Tina Smith (D-Minn.); Mazie Hirono (D-Hawaii)

### **Background:**

Founded after the 1948 War, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) has long been recognized as an important source of stability in one of the world's most volatile regions. As the only organization currently capable of comprehensively addressing the humanitarian crisis and recovery efforts in Gaza and providing essential services in both Gaza and the West Bank, UNRWA plays an invaluable role in the humanitarian response to the Israel-Hamas conflict.

In early 2024, the Israeli government made a series of allegations against UNRWA, including that [approximately 19](#) of 13,000 UNRWA employees in Gaza may have participated in the October 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023, attacks on Israel. In response, UNRWA fired the employees in question, engaged an independent UN review and developed a high-level action plan to implement [reform recommendations](#). Following the completion of the United Nations review, which assessed that UNRWA, "possesses a more developed approach to neutrality than other similar UN or NGO entities," nearly every country that had paused funding to UNRWA resumed funding.

With the Israeli Government's recent implementation of [legislation](#) to terminate UNRWA operations in East Jerusalem and President Trump's Executive Order that prohibits the United States from providing any assistance to UNRWA, Congress must urgently restore funding to UNRWA to ensure the Agency can continue its essential role in providing humanitarian assistance to starving civilians, medical assistance for the injured and sick, and shelter to the displaced.

### **Legislation:**

The *UNRWA Funding Emergency Restoration Act* will end the congressionally and administratively mandated pause on funding for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). The legislation repeals funding prohibitions on UNRWA included in the *FY24 Appropriations Bill* and the *Israel Security Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2024*, and directs the Secretary of State to provide funding to UNRWA consistent with the Secretary's waiver for lifesaving humanitarian aid.

Additionally, the bill directs the President to rescind the Executive Order of February 4, 2024, relating to withdrawing the U.S. from and ending funding to certain UN organizations, and outlines congressional support for appropriating critical funds to UNRWA for FY25 and beyond. The bill also requires the Secretary of State to report to Congress on a quarterly basis on the steps UNRWA is taking to implement recommendations from the UN Office of Internal Oversight Services and the Independent Review Group to further ensure the neutrality of its workforce.

**Endorsing Organizations:** The *UNRWA Funding Emergency Restoration Act* is endorsed by over 90 human rights and global aid organizations. Read the full list of endorsers [here](#).