

23 August 2024

195 Lambton Quay
Private Bag 18–901
Wellington 6160
New Zealand

Andrew Riddell
fyi-request-27611-f060aa6a@requests.fyi.org.nz

T +64 4 439 8000
F +64 4 472 9596

OIA 29529

Tēnā koe Andrew Riddell

Thank you for your email of 12 July 2024 in which you request the following under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA):

'Has any payment been made this year by the New Zealand government to the UNRWA? If so, when was the decision to fund made, when was the payment made and how much was paid.'

On 9 August 2024, the timeframes for responding to your request were extended by an additional 10 working days due to the consultations necessary to make a decision on your request (section 15A(1)(b) of the OIA refers).

In the 2023-2024 financial year, 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024, New Zealand provided the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) with NZ\$1 million in core funding.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs issued an X (formerly Twitter) post on this disbursement on 7 June 2024, available here: twitter.com/NewZealandMFA/status/1798830839616434205. The decision to disburse this planned funding was taken on 4 June 2024.

New Zealand has supported UNRWA since its establishment in 1949, including through engagement on its mandate and financial contributions. Under our current three-year arrangement (2021/22-2023/24), New Zealand provided UNRWA with NZ\$1 million in core funding annually. The decision to provide UNRWA with NZ\$1 million in funding annually over 2021/22-2023/24 was taken on 16 December 2021.

In the absence of a two-state solution, it is New Zealand's longstanding view that UNRWA plays a unique and essential role in ensuring the humanitarian and development needs of Palestinian refugees are met in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Gaza and the West Bank.

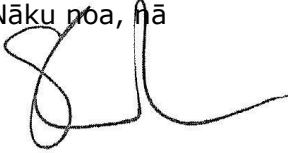
New Zealand takes the January 2024 allegations that certain UNRWA employees participated in the 7 October 2023 Hamas terror attacks on Israel very seriously. In response to the allegations New Zealand did not pause funding. However, disbursing our NZ\$1 million core funding in June 2024 followed careful consideration of the UN's response, including external and internal investigations. It also reflected assurances received from the UN Secretary-General about remedial work underway to enhance UNRWA's neutrality.

Please note that it is our policy to proactively release our responses to official information requests where possible. Therefore, our response to your request (with your personal information

removed) may be published on the Ministry website: www.mfat.govt.nz/en/about-us/contact-us/official-information-act-responses/

If you have any questions about this decision, you can contact us by email at: DM-ESD@mfat.govt.nz. You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision by contacting www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

Nāku noa, hā

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'SC', written over the text 'Nāku noa, hā'.

Sarah Corbett
for Secretary of Foreign Affairs and Trade