**UNRWA Strongly Condemns Placement Of Rockets In School**

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UNRWA

http://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/press-releases/unrwa-strongly-condemns-placement-rockets-school

**AGENCY DEMANDS FULL RESPECT FOR THE SANCTITY OF ITS PREMISES IN GAZA**

East Jerusalem

Yesterday, in the course of the regular inspection of its premises, UNRWA discovered approximately 20 rockets hidden in a vacant school in the Gaza Strip. UNRWA strongly condemns the group or groups responsible for placing the weapons in one of its installations. This is a flagrant violation of the inviolability of its premises under international law. This incident, which is the first of its kind in Gaza, endangered civilians including staff and put at risk UNRWA’s vital mission to assist and protect Palestine refugees in Gaza.

Immediately after discovery, the Agency informed the relevant parties and successfully took all necessary measures for the removal of the objects in order to preserve the safety and security of the school. UNRWA has launched a comprehensive investigation into the circumstances surrounding this incident.

UNRWA has strong, established procedures to maintain the neutrality of all its premises, including a strict no-weapons policy and routine inspections of its installations, to ensure they are only used for humanitarian purposes. UNRWA will uphold and further reinforce its procedures.

Palestinian civilians in Gaza rely on UNRWA to provide humanitarian assistance and shelter. At all times, and especially during escalations of violence, the sanctity and integrity of UN installations must be respected.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

UNRWA is a United Nations agency established by the General Assembly in 1949 and is mandated to provide assistance and protection to a population of some 5 million registered Palestine refugees. Its mission is to help Palestine refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, West Bank and the Gaza Strip to achieve their full potential in human development, pending a just solution to their plight. UNRWA’s services encompass education, health care, relief and social services, camp infrastructure and improvement, and microfinance.

Financial support to UNRWA has not kept pace with an increased demand for services caused by growing numbers of registered refugees, expanding need, and deepening poverty. As a result, the Agency's General Fund (GF), supporting UNRWA’s core activities and 97 per cent reliant on voluntary contributions, has begun each year with a large projected deficit. Currently the deficit stands at US$ 81 million.