

## **Summary**

This historical analytical study aims at shedding light on the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), one of the most important UN agencies. Ever since its establishment on May 1<sup>st</sup>, 1950, this agency found itself facing a major human tragedy resulting from the Zionist attack on Palestine, and the expulsion of nearly one million Palestinian refugees in 1948 through military force, occupation of their land and confiscation of their properties.

The study lays out the most important factors which led to the establishment of UNRWA, among which is the refugee problem, Israel's categorical rejection to UN Resolution 194 adopted on December 11, 1948, and the recommendations made by the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine (UNCCP) which explicitly demanded the return of the refugees to their land and properties.

The Study also explores the nature, role, tasks and policies of this international agency, and analyzes the substance of UNRWA policies. It investigates the agency's various functional aspects, its main departments, organizational structure, and administrative systems, and the policy related to its finance and the impact of donor countries on its policies. The Study covers various stages of UNRWA's history, since its inception, wherein are discussed both the nature and policy of each of the five stages, and the nature of the relation between the refugees and UNRWA.

The Study analyzes the basic services and programs provided by UNRWA to the refugee community, including relief, health, education and emergency programs. The author of this Study is critical of these programs and services, which, based on studies and research, rank at low levels, and which have consequently become a source of the refugees' resentment.

Relations between UNRWA and Palestinian organizations, both official and popular, through the various historical phases, are also explored. This Study highlights these complicated relations characterized by both acceptance and rejection that in fact govern the relation between UNRWA and the refugees. This kind of relation is manifested in the refugees' rejection, on the one hand, of UNRWA's policies, of its reduction of services, and of its permanent budget deficit, and on the other hand, in their acceptance of UNRWA as an agency which recognizes and serves as reminder to the international community of its own responsibility in creating this tragedy inflicted on the

refugees. And refugees refuse to abandon UNRWA so long as the proposed political solutions ignore their right of return to their homes and land, and bypass the need for implementing internationally recognized and adopted resolutions related to their case.

The study analyses the future of this international agency, as expressed in the positions of various parties concerned with UNRWA, mainly the refugees themselves. A legitimate and serious concern for refugees is the apparent attempts made by certain donor states, specifically the United States, to dissolve UNRWA and to hand over its services to the various host countries, ultimately closing the refugees' file without finding a real solution to their problem.

The research reviews political changes and developments, especially during the last ten years, which unified the refugees' position on UNRWA, despite the many different Palestinian points of view regarding this agency over the years. This unified position was never as clear in any previous phase as it is today. There is a consensus among refugees now on the need to maintain the presence of this international agency, to prolong its term, provide it with the necessary funding, develop its services, and expand its mandate to include providing refugees with political and legal protection. This is necessary until such time when a just solution is found for the problem of the Palestinian refugees, in accordance with international law and resolutions, chief of which is Resolution 194, which explicitly calls for the return of refugees to their homes of origin.

**End**