



UNRWA statement on hospitalisation policy in Lebanon

21 March 2016
Beirut

Following adjustments to its hospitalisation policy in Lebanon as of January 2016, UNRWA maintained a close and careful monitoring of its impact and reactions. The adjustments have not denied any Palestine Refugee hospitalisation assistance. They are leading to a more careful referral to hospitals and a more effective use of allocated funds.

We have seen and heard concern and protests around the adjustments and we remain concerned that the most vulnerable refugees are able to afford the cost share of hospitalisation bills. To address this concern in Lebanon, we have established a Medical Hardship Fund to support in particular the abject poor, which has received its first contribution from donors.

UNRWA invites the leadership of Palestine refugees to work with us in establishing a technical working group of experts to review implementation of the policy to date, to identify and recommend further adjustments to the policy. To ensure space for this dialogue we are suspending the implementation of the policy until 21 April 2016. This action is fully endorsed by UNRWA's headquarters.

Based on a consultative process, UNRWA will announce possible further adjustments to the hospitalisation policy by April 21. We are confident that concrete and meaningful solutions will emerge from this process.

It is important to create conditions conducive to such a dialogue. UNRWA calls for and trusts that access for Palestine refugees to all of UNRWA's services and installations should be unhindered, that the safety and security of UNRWA staff will be preserved and that they will not be prevented from delivering services to Palestine refugees.

We aim to achieve more for the realization of rights and benefit of marginalized Palestine refugees by having all involved speak with one voice and work together.

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