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Plea for continued support for Palestinian refugees

EFA MEP Jordi Solé defends importance of UNRWA

Greens/EFA MEP Jordi Solé has praised the work done by UNRWA (UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine) in support of Palestinian refugees.

Solé was speaking in a European Parliament debate in response to the Trump administration's decision to end funding for UNRWA.

Together with other EFA MEPs, Jordi Solé visited Lebanon in recent weeks where they had the opportunity to visit the Shatila refugee camp in Beirut and hear first-hand of the vital work undertaken by UNRWA.

Jordi Solé said: *"Two weeks ago together with other MEPs I was in Lebanon, and we had the opportunity to visit one of the Palestinian refugee camps – Shatila in Beirut.*

"I can assure you it's a terrible sight. Thousands of people living in very poor conditions but in just 0.4 square kilometres. "

"We had the opportunity to talk to mothers and fathers of schoolchildren in the only school to be found in the neighbourhood. We also talked to doctors running the health care centre."

The MEP said that without UNRWA support, many vulnerable Palestinian refugees could be left to fend for themselves, risking a humanitarian crisis.

Solé continued: *"They all implored us to keep UNRWA alive. Without UNRWA support, these people, who are the last of the last in Lebanon would be totally abandoned and left to fend for themselves."*

It is estimated that some 5 million Palestinian refugees rely on UNRWA which supports health care, schools, infrastructure and other social projects. The EU and its Member States are UNRWA's biggest donor, having contributed more than four hundred and forty million euros in 2017.

Solé: *"Let's not follow the argument of Trump's administration – UNRWA has no ideology other than human dignity and human rights, and takes no sides in the conflict between Israel and Palestine.*

"UNRWA just honours international commitments taken seventy years ago and the European Union and its Member States cannot let UNRWA fall."

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Jordi Solé i Ferrando

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