

Norway in Palestine



THE REPRESENTATIVE OFFICE OF NORWAY TO THE PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY

The Norwegian Representative Office in Palestine was established after the Oslo Accords in 1993, first in Gaza and then later moved to the West Bank. From the beginning, Palestine has been a main partner for Norway's development cooperation worldwide, consistently being one of the top three cooperation partners in terms of development aid. The goal for Norway's cooperation with Palestine has remained the same throughout these years: To contribute to peace and development in Palestine by helping to build the Palestinian state, particularly by ensuring that public institutions are both effective and accountable. The overarching vision is an independent Palestinian state in peaceful coexistence with all its neighbors.

Since the Oslo Accords, Norway's main role in Palestine has been as chair of the international donor group for Palestine, the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee (AHLIC). This group consists of the largest donors to Palestine, and serves as the principal policy-level coordination mechanism for development assistance. The AHLIC meets twice each year, in Brussels and New York, respectively. The next meeting will be hosted by EU High Representative Federica Mogherini in Brussels and chaired by Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Børge Brende, on April 19. The most important topics will be improving the Palestinian economy and closing the public fiscal deficit.

Norway is among the largest donors to Palestine and has over the last years been giving US\$ 100–150 million annually to Palestine. The main priority areas are institution-building, education, culture, human rights, especially women's rights, health, and infrastructure. In partnership with the Palestinian Authority and other donors, Norway's support to the education sector has led to improved high school attendance, an increase in qualified teachers, improved oversight, and an improvement in the proportion of students who complete national examinations.

Norway values its partnership with Palestinian civil-society organizations that fulfill such important functions as acting as watchdogs for human rights and building a Palestinian identity, which contribute to the overarching goal of state building. Humanitarian aid is also central in Norway's support to Palestine, particularly through alleviating basic needs in Gaza. Norwegian civil-society organizations are traditionally heavily represented in Palestine. For example, the

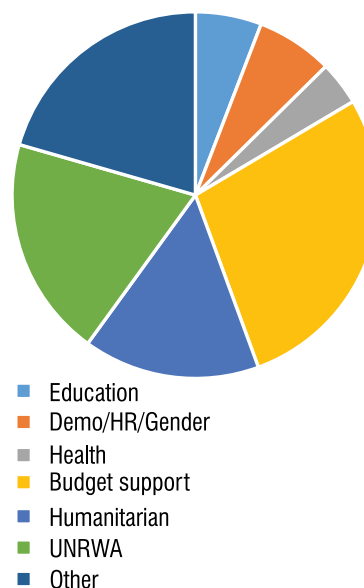
Norwegian Aid Committee (NORWAC) arranged for the provision of much-needed drugs and medical equipment for Shifa Hospital in Gaza during the war and the treatment of injuries after the war in collaboration with Shifa Hospital and Makassed Hospital in Jerusalem.

Norway's relationship with Palestine is strong. Even at times when the political situation has been at its most dire, this commitment has endured. Norway will remain committed until the goal of an independent Palestinian state, in peace with its neighbors and accountable to its citizens, is achieved.

The Oslo Accords

The Oslo Accords are a set of agreements between the government of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO): the Oslo I Accord, signed in Washington, D.C., in 1993 and the Oslo II Accord, signed in Taba in 1995. The Oslo Accords marked the start of the Oslo process, a peace process that aims to achieve a peace treaty based on United Nations Security Council resolutions 242 and 338, and to fulfill the "right of the Palestinian people to self-determination." The Oslo process started after secret negotiations in Oslo, resulting in the recognition by the PLO of the State of Israel and the recognition by Israel of the PLO as the representative of the Palestinian people and as a partner in negotiations.

Bilateral assistance from Norway to Palestine by sector 2015



Norwegian Constitution Day, May 17.

The International Donor Group for Palestine

The Ad Hoc Liaison Committee (AHLIC) was established on October 1, 1993, by the Multilateral Steering Group of the multilateral talks on Middle East peace in the context of the Washington Conference. The first meeting was held in Paris on November 5, 1993, and chaired by Norwegian Foreign Minister Johan Jorgen Holst.

The AHLIC was established in order to:

- coordinate and promote assistance efforts of individual donors to the Palestinian people
- promote transparency in the activities of donors, Secretariat, and recipient
- take particular responsibility for fostering private-sector trade and investment
- provide a forum for dialogue regarding assistance activities in order to promote cooperation among donors
- regularly inform the relevant groups in the multilateral forum of its activities
- monitor developments in the Palestinian economy as a whole
- review reports by the Secretariat and pledges made by the donors
- respond to the needs for assistance to the Palestinian people in the context of the Declaration of Principles