

**Question for written answer E-000368/2014
to the Commission (Vice-President / High Representative)**
Rule 117
Saïd El Khadraoui (S&D)

Subject: VP/HR - General strike at UN refugee camps in the West Bank

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) provides schooling and healthcare to Palestinian refugees in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, Syria, Lebanon and Jordan. Unfortunately, operations in the West Bank have been suspended since 2 December 2013 owing to a general strike by UNRWA employees. The UN agency is embroiled in a dispute on work and pay policy with the trade union. The Palestinian children are the victims of this strike, as they have not been able to attend school since 2 December 2013.

Other NGOs such as Karama are attempting to give lessons to these children in their community centres. These centres have neither the correct materials nor enough materials to be able to teach all of these children. More than 52 200 children in the 19 refugee camps in the West Bank are without a school, and other UN services such as the health centres and distribution centres have also closed. These children are therefore at a huge learning disadvantage and also run a greater risk of experiencing social behavioural problems due to the lack of structure which school provides.

I therefore have the following questions for High Representative Catherine Ashton:

1. Are you aware of this ongoing strike at the UNRWA? Does this strike only affect the 19 refugee camps in the West Bank or are there also tensions and/or strikes in the other refugee camps in the Gaza Strip, Syria, Lebanon and Jordan? Has any form of crisis relief been provided for these 52 200 Palestinian children in the West Bank?
2. What action are you taking to promote education in these refugee camps? What action are you taking to end the strike quickly?