



united nations relief and works agency
for palestine refugees in the near east

وكالة الأمم المتحدة لإغاثة وتشغيل
اللاجئين الفلسطينيين في الشرق الأدنى

pierre krähenbühl

unrwa commissioner-general



Appointed by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Pierre Krähenbühl became Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) on 30 March 2014. As Commissioner-General, he serves at the level of Under-Secretary-General, based in East-Jerusalem. He was confirmed for a second three year-term, from April 2017.

A Swiss national born in 1966, Mr. Krähenbühl has 27 years of experience in humanitarian, human rights and development work. He has led UNRWA and its 30,000 staff, at a time of great pressure on the Palestine refugee community resulting from unresolved conflicts and acute needs, particularly in the West Bank, Gaza and Syria: "I have discovered in UNRWA one of the most outstanding and innovative humanitarian organizations, able to deliver education, health-care, emergency and other services to millions of people in some of the most polarized environments of the Middle East," said Mr. Krähenbühl.

Prior to joining UNRWA, he served as Director of Operations at the International Committee of the Red Cross from July 2002 to January 2014, responsible for the conduct, management and supervision of 12,000 ICRC staff working in 80 countries.

In this position, he directly oversaw that organization's response to conflicts in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Colombia and Libya, among others. He led senior-level negotiations with a range of governments, armed forces and other groups to secure access to conflict-affected populations. Mr. Krähenbühl's experience also includes diverse and demanding field assignments in places experiencing profound social change and armed conflict, including El Salvador, Peru, Afghanistan and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The father of three boys, he holds an MA in Political Sciences and International Relations from the University of Geneva. On assuming the post of UNRWA Commissioner-General, Mr. Krähenbühl said, "The momentous events across the region are having a profound impact on the lives of UNRWA beneficiaries who are facing one of the most serious protection crises in their history. This presents a challenge which I shall embrace with determination, passion and humility".

About UNRWA

UNRWA is a United Nations agency established by the General Assembly in 1949 and is mandated to provide assistance and protection to a population of some 5 million registered Palestine refugees. Its mission is to help Palestine refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, West Bank and the Gaza Strip to achieve their full potential in human development, pending a just solution to their plight. UNRWA's services encompass education, health care, relief and social services, camp infrastructure and improvement, and microfinance.