

Russia Sends 70 Tons of Aid to Palestinian Refugees in Syria

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Two Russian heavy-lift transport planes Thursday delivered a total of 70 metric tons of humanitarian aid to Palestinian refugees in Syria, Russia's Emergency Situations Ministry said.

"This morning, two Il-76 planes landed in Syria, and onboard each plane was 70 metric tons of humanitarian aid meant for Palestinian refugees located in Syria," ministry spokesman Oleg Voronov said.

"The aid was provided by the Russian government as part of humanitarian support for the Palestinian refugees living on the territory of Syria."

According to Voronov, there were also food products among the aid delivered. The issue of Palestinian refugees and their descendants, whose number is estimated at 5 million, and their right to return to their homes from which they have fled as a result of the 1948

Arab-Israeli conflict, has been a major sticking point in Israeli-Palestinian peace talks.

One-third of the registered Palestinian refugees, more than 1.4 million, live in 58 recognized refugee camps in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, according to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).

The Russian Foreign Ministry said last year that it would allocate \$2 million to the UNRWA in 2013 as the problems of Palestinian refugees "had been aggravated due to complicated transformation processes in the Middle East," largely referring to the ongoing civil war in Syria.

According to estimates by the United Nations, about 100,000 people have died in the conflict so far.

Russia and the United States said in early May that they would try to bring Syrian government and opposition representatives together to engage in dialogue, though no date has been set so far. Russia's Foreign Ministry earlier said it was ready to enter into talks with the Syrian National Coalition's new leadership as part of a "broad inter-Syrian dialogue with full respect to national sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity."

At the same time, however, Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said the coalition's new leader was undermining chances for peace talks.

Material from The Moscow Times is included in this report.

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