

Al-Ittihad Drug Store plans continual shipments to Gaza

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Al-Ittihad Drug Store (IDS), one of the UAE's distributors for pharmaceutical, hygiene and consumer products, is taking steps to address the ongoing humanitarian crisis of child malnutrition in Gaza, by shipping a 20-foot container holding 10,000 tins of fortified powdered milk - Complete Plus - to Gaza from Dubai, which has been paid for by generous donations from businesses and individuals in the UAE.

IDS are making the shipment following recent media reports that cases of child malnutrition in Gaza have doubled in just one year, with other reports stating that even before the recent offensive, 50,000 children in Gaza were suffering from malnutrition; an avoidable condition that kills more than 3 million children around the world each year.

The first relief-aid shipment, which will leave Dubai in the next 48 hours, will begin what is planned to be a continual flow of containers with the Complete Plus infant milk formula to Gaza. For the ongoing project, IDS has partnered with the Palestine Children's Relief Fund (PCRF), which will cover shipping costs for the containers and will be responsible for the milk's distribution on its arrival into Gaza.

The PCRF, a non-political, non-profit charity, has identified a number of recipients for the first batches of the milk formula, which include families that have lost their homes in the Al Jouher Al Deek and Al Moghraka areas of Gaza. These include more than 675 people currently sheltering in the Al Bureij UN School, and 800 people sheltering in the Al Nuseirat UN School.

Talking about the initiative, Dalya Hisham Tabari, Director of IDS, commented:

'As a Palestinian, as a mother, and most of all as a human, the idea of child malnutrition in 2009 is unthinkable. Children the world over, of all nationalities, should be entitled to the best start in life, and by organising this initiative, we are enabling the children of Gaza to be properly nourished in the earliest phases of their lives - phases which are so intrinsic to ensuring their future healthy growth.'

Tabari went on to say; 'Each shipment costs around 250,000 dirhams and after this one, we have four more ready to be despatched but ideally, we would like to be able to keep sending shipments for as long as the children of Gaza need them. It is from the generosity of people that we can make this happen and, at this point, we would welcome any and all participation in our initiative, to enable us to give a proper and healthy start in life to as many Gazan children as possible.'

The Complete Plus milk formula range, which is manufactured in France, has been specially designed to provide babies, infants and children with nutrition that is relevant to their age phase. Tins of Complete Plus: Nature (0-6 months), Balance (6-12 months) and Immunity (1 year and over) will make up the shipment, ensuring that Gaza's children, of all ages, will benefit

IDS has arranged for the subsequent shipments to be despatched straight from the Complete Plus manufacturing facility in France, to expedite delivery to Gaza.

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