

## UNRRA

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Mindful of the economic and social difficulties with which they would be confronted on all five continents at the end of the Second World War, and even before the cessation of military operations, the Allies envisaged the creation of an international organisation to be responsible for aid, mutual help and supplies. After various negotiations between the United States, Great Britain, the Soviet Union and China, the agreement to establish UNRRA (United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration) was signed on 9 November 1943 in Washington by 44 allied or associated countries.

The UNRRA Council, which held its first session in Atlantic City, New Jersey, in November 1943, consisted of representatives of each member state who were to meet at least twice a year. With its seat in Washington, the Council included a Supply Committee, a Financial Control Committee and various technical committees relating to public health, agriculture, social aid, the repatriation of displaced persons and industrial recovery. The European Committee of UNRRA, based in London, had 15 members, 11 of whom represented countries formerly occupied by Germany or by Italy.

UNRRA, the first post-war international organisation, was an inter-Allied and civilian mutual-aid organisation of an essentially technical nature. It supervised imports into the liberated countries and built up reserve stocks of industrial and consumer products, which were subsequently transported to the regions undergoing reconstruction. In agreement with the Allied military authorities, UNRRA also took responsibility for providing supplies and for the repatriation to their home countries of prisoners and persons deported during the war. The UNRRA Regional Committee for Europe organised the dispatch of clothing and food and provided financial assistance to countries where it was required. Following the severe winter of 1944–1945, the Committee adopted a resolution on 13 February 1945 which provided for the sending of emergency aid not only to countries which could pay for it in transferable currencies but also to those countries which were already receiving financial assistance. UNRRA, established to resolve economic and humanitarian crises in the aftermath of the war, closed down on 31 March 1949.