

UNRWA EXPOSED: EXAMINING THE AGENCY'S MISSION AND FAILURES

JOINT HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND
ACCOUNTABILITY

AND

SUBCOMMITTEE ON GLOBAL HEALTH, GLOBAL
HUMAN RIGHTS, AND INTERNATIONAL
ORGANIZATIONS

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UNRWA EXPOSED: EXAMINING THE AGENCY'S MISSION AND FAILURES

Tuesday, January 30, 2024

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND
ACCOUNTABILITY,
JOINT WITH THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON GLOBAL HEALTH,
GLOBAL HUMAN RIGHTS, AND INTERNATIONAL
ORGANIZATIONS,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC.

The subcommittees met, pursuant to notice, at 2:20 p.m., in room 210, House Visitor Center, Hon. Brian Mast [chairman of the Subcommittee on Oversight and Accountability] presiding.

Mr. MAST. The Subcommittee on Oversight and Accountability and Subcommittee on Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations will come to order.

The purpose of this hearing is to examine the United Nations Relief and Works Agency's priorities and operations as it pertains to the United States foreign assistance standards, and I now recognize myself for an opening statement.

This hearing is entitled "UNRWA Exposed: Examining the Agency's Mission and Failures." This hearing will take a closer look into the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine refugees—or UNRWA—and address serious concerns raised regarding the U.N. agency and its policies funded by the American taxpayer.

The world was horrified when the Hamas terrorists with the support of other Palestinian men, women, and children raided houses, kibbutz, schools, concerts and kindergartens to kill, capture, rape, or torture any Jew that they could find on October 7th.

As the dust settles and as we put together the pieces of what enabled such barbaric atrocities, we are getting a picture of failed U.N. policies that have been accumulating for the last seven decades in the Gaza Strip.

I want to pause for a moment and say that, thankfully, at least in part it appears that the Biden Administration has realized the folly of funding UNRWA. I'm concerned the Administration is playing a shell game with us, however.

While the Biden Administration announced on January 26th that it would return to President Trump's policy of not funding UNRWA for a period of time, it does appear as though they may have waited to make this announcement until after they allowed for a disbursement of tens of millions of dollars to go out to UNRWA, on or before January 24th, and if that's the case it should be considered outrageous.

Let me be clear that we are examining UNRWA because the agency directly and indirectly supported Hamas and other terrorist organizations in multiple, different ways.

First of all, UNRWA takes the talking points from Hamas and broadcasts them to the world. When all of the so-called journalists took the lie that Israel bombed the Al-Ahli Hospital, UNRWA, an official U.N. agency, pulled the casualty number from the Hamas-run Gaza health ministry.

In fact, to this day UNRWA continues to parrot the numbers put out by the Hamas affiliates without taking a single grain of salt on who puts them out in the first place.

Second, wherever you see UNRWA facilities including schools in Gaza you are almost guaranteed to find tunnels, rocket launchers, and weapons storages. During Israel's incursion into Gaza Israel Defense Forces uncovered a variety of rifles and ammunition hidden underneath UNRWA institutions.

If you think those are just a coincidence this brings me to another point. UNRWA employees are actively involved in calling to wipe out the only Jewish homeland on Earth.

We have seen footage and evidence of UNRWA teachers and staff praising and celebrating the October 7th attack on social media, referring to the attack as an unforgettable glorious morning and a splendid sight.

We read reports that at least 12 UNRWA employees directly participated in the attack. Let me say that one more time. We read reports that at least 12 UNRWA employees directly participated in the attack.

In fact, intelligence reports indicate that as many as 10 percent of UNRWA workers have direct links to Hamas and Palestinian Islamic jihadists. While all of these are taking place what does UNRWA not do?

You can go to UNRWA's very active X, formerly known as Twitter, and find little to no mention of Hamas. Not a single word of Hamas stealing U.S. taxpayer-funded food, medicine, or fuel. Not a single statement to condemn Hamas for the hostages it continues to hold. Not a single mention of how Hamas has created the devastating situation for the people of Gaza.

It is clear that UNRWA would never use its platform to speak out against Hamas because it is in cahoots with Hamas. At this point, you could say that when UNRWA schools are not teaching the Palestinian children to hate Jews these schools are used to hide and fire rockets at Israeli civilians, all using our tax dollars.

Make no mistake, the attacks on October 7th did not happen in a vacuum. The sickness on display from UNRWA is rooted in something deeper within its structure and mission. It's rooted in the double standard the world applies for them, from their definition of refugee to the hatred they teach the Palestinian children from UNRWA schools.

The barbaric hatred that we see from Hamas as they butchered, raped Jews on October 7th is in part the result of a Frankensteinian monster of the United Nations' agency that the United Nations created and the United States remains the top donor of that agency.

The American people deserve to know why their tax money enabled the deadliest attack on the Jewish people since the Holocaust. Again, most of this is not new information. Many watchdog organizations have been warning us about UNRWA for years and some of them are represented by our witnesses.

I am grateful for their attendance and for their bringing us their essential insight so that we could try to change the field, the paradigm on the ground, that has been taking place with the American taxpayers' dime.

With that, I'd now like to recognize Ranking Member Susan Wild for as much time as you may need.

Ms. WILD. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

The developments that we have learned about in the past few days are horrific. The fact that 12 UNRWA employees out of 13,000 staff members in Gaza were implicated in the October 7th massacres is deeply disturbing and it only underscores the already clear need for reform.

But the question we face right now is how do we ensure that the innocent civilian population of Gaza, that is facing famine, does not pay an even steeper price in human life because of the actions of 12 horrific individuals and their actions.

We know that for the civilian population in Gaza UNRWA services have been a lifeline. Regardless of what one thinks about UNRWA, its mission, or the many well documented examples of its dysfunction, the facts on the ground right now are indisputable.

It is the only entity on the ground with the systems and the personnel and the capacity to deliver what little relief there is for the people of Gaza. We're talking about shelters for more than a million people, emergency food delivery, and urgently needed health services.

We know that 87 percent of the Gaza population is now estimated to rely on UNRWA services. But having said that, we also know that the events of the past days have created an unprecedented crisis of credibility for UNRWA and we have to recognize that.

It serves as a potent reminder of the entrenched and long-standing flaws of both the organization's functioning and its mandate and I do believe that the Administration was absolutely correct in pausing the funding and keep in mind, please, that it's not just the United States that has done this but a number of other countries as well.

But we have to have oversight and we have to be vigilant. In short, what I believe is that we have to see a change in UNRWA that reflects the gravity of what took place. Over the medium term the need for major organizational reform is clear.

We have to prioritize reorganizing and restructuring aid for Palestinians in a way that better serves the needs of the innocent civilian people but that also makes sure that the safety and security of the citizens of Israel is not affected, is not jeopardized by the fact that we are funding this humanitarian aid.

And so I do not have a perfect answer. I am hoping that as I sit here listening to the testimony, and listening to the members, that we will hear some constructive solutions free of politics that really will address this very important need for reform that we have, but

that at the same time is cognizant of the fact that there are innocent civilians that are suffering, that are facing famine, and that who unfortunately have Hamas as their government.

And with that, I will yield back and just say that I hope we can all come together and find some sort of meaningful and constructive solutions for this.

Thank you.

Mr. MAST. Thank you, Ranking Member Wild.

The chair now recognizes the chairman of the Subcommittee on Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations, the chair—the Congressman from New Jersey Mr. Smith for his opening statement.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you very much, Chairman Mast.

First of all, let me thank you that we are doing this joint hearing, bringing further focus and hopefully resolution—some resolution—the beginning resolutions to this horrific problem.

Public pressure motivated by explosive new evidence that UNRWA employees were directly involved in the October 7th Hamas terrorist attack on Israel, the Biden Administration last Friday, as we know, announced that it was, quote, “temporarily paused additional funding for UNRWA while it reviews the evidence.”

With all due respect to the President, this was a long overdue response. Going far beyond the revelations of last week, however, there has been a long—massive and irrefutable evidence of UNRWA’s extensive complicity and cooperation in Hamas’ anti-Semitic genocidal hate campaign. Like the Nazis before them, Hamas and their chief terrorism sponsor Iran they are committing genocide against the Jews.

As many of you know and many of my colleagues have read and maybe some recently, the 1988 Hamas charter demands the absolute destruction of the State of Israel and proclaims, quote, “Israel will exist and will continue to exist until Islam obliterates it.”

Article 7 of the Hamas charter demands the slaughter of all Jews. Quote, “The day of judgment will not come until Muslims fight Jews and kill them. Then the Jews will hide behind rocks and trees and the rocks and trees will cry out, ‘Oh Muslim, there is a Jew hiding behind me. Come and kill him,’” close quote.

Article 13 of the 1988 charter of Hamas explicitly rejects initiatives for peace and reconciliation and states, quote, “Initiatives in so-called peaceful solutions and international conferences are in contradiction to the principle of the Islamic resistance movement.”

In its 2017 charter, building on the first one, Hamas reiterates its goal of wiping Israel off the face of the earth. It says, quote, “There is no alternative to a fully sovereign Palestinian State on the entire national Palestinian soil with Jerusalem as its capital,” close quote.

In 2018 President Trump suspended all U.S. funding to UNRWA and they survived without the 30 percent of their budget the U.S. typically provides.

But tragically in 2021 the Biden Administration resumed lavish support from UNRWA without reform. The U.S. Government has donated more than \$1 billion to UNRWA since 2021.

In Fiscal Year 2022 U.S. taxpayers gave UNRWA \$364 million, in 1923 \$344 million, and in Fiscal Year 1924 the U.S. is on track to provide \$371 million.

But the Administration has failed to provide clarity about how much of this funding is affected by the pause announced on January 26th.

Yesterday, joined by Chairman Mast and Chairman Wilson, we introduced H.R. 7122, legislation to prohibit—to prohibit our government from making any voluntary or involuntary contributions to UNRWA.

A good deal of the evidence of UNRWA's involvement with Hamas and other terrorist groups as well as educating children toward terrorism—that is, poisoning their minds—has been presented publicly at hearings including two that I had chaired during the last 8 months.

Those two hearings, one was on June 22d and a second on November 8th, and we heard from some of the witnesses including Hillel Neuer who's here today, and the information is absolutely devastating how these children—how these children—how these children from the earliest days of their lives are trained in hate for Jews and for Americans.

Now we have heard how UNRWA's textbooks, curricula, summer camps, and official media are all infamous incubators of hate and we have seen the evidence of its teachers Administrations' involvement in—with Hamas.

They do not make their case. As you can see, the hatred coming out of that particular man is so sad.

UNRWA, the U.N. Relief and Works Agency, was set up as we know in 1949 to provide aid relief to refugees. Seventy-five years later it's still going which is absurd, in a way, since nearby Arab nations will not permit the former to integrate into their societies.

UNRWA provides education in hatred of Jews for the vastly expanded number of children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren of the original refugees. UNRWA's textbooks—and I've had meeting after meeting on this including hearings where we have actually read through the textbooks filled to overflowing with anti-Semitic hatred.

This is all—you know, this is serious. Aspects of its anti-Semitism is so twisted I won't describe all of them here. But they talk about martyrdom, suicide bombers, to children.

A new report by the U.N. Watch carefully documents, quote, "how UNRWA teachers in a 300-member UNRWA staff Telegram group cheered and celebrated Hamas' October 7th massacre" while at the same time they were asking about their salaries—when are they going to get paid.

The UNRWA staff in the group shared photos and video footage of those events and prayed for the terrorists' success and for Israel's destruction, in clear violation of U.N. rules. Thank you, Hillel, for being here today, for testifying about this.

Similarly, IMPACT-se has recently published three reports analyzing, quote, "hundreds of pages"—hundreds of pages of teaching materials revealing that content glorifying terrorism, inciting violence, and promoting anti-Semitism is actually included in UNRWA's own materials created by UNRWA staff for UNRWA stu-

dents. Thank you, Mr. Sheff, for joining us to bear witness to that ugly, ugly truth.

And Mr. Goldberg has pointed out UNRWA does not recognize Hamas, Islamic Jihad, Hezbollah, or the PFLP as terrorist groups.

Does not submit staff, contractors, or beneficiaries for U.S. counterterrorism vetting. It indoctrinates generation after generation to hate Jews, to hate Israel, and prepare for genocide. For UNRWA terror finance is a feature, he points out, “not a bug,” close quote.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. MAST. Thank you, Mr. Smith. The chair now recognizes Mr. Crow for 5 minutes.

Mr. CROW. Thank you, Chairman Mast, and thank you to our witnesses for being here today.

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, or UNRWA, was established in 1949 with a mandate to provide humanitarian assistance and protection to registered Palestinian refugees.

In carrying out this mandate UNRWA has provided humanitarian assistance including food, shelter, and medical care in five areas including the West Bank, Gaza Strip, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria.

Thousands of UNRWA staff continue to go to work today amid very dangerous conditions to provide medical care, drive trucks, distribute aid and play an essential coordinating role with aid organizations like the World Food Programme and Israeli security authorities.

Now, I am also deeply troubled by the allegations made last week about the 12 UNRWA employees that may have been involved in the horrific October 7th terrorist attack and I echo the concerns of many, and I echo Secretary Blinken’s concerns and sharing my support for a swift and thorough investigation and the need for absolute accountability for any participants in that attack.

But we also have to understand that humanitarian aid in conflict zones must continue and it’s difficult under the best of circumstances, and we know that conditions in Gaza are far from that.

Over 150 UNRWA staff members are among the over 25,000 Palestinians killed in Gaza in recent months. They are among those wake each day with famine on the horizon and impossible conditions around every corner.

UNRWA’s humanitarian assistance is a lifeline to over 2 million Palestinians in Gaza who are sorely in need of that aid and this is an organization largely reliant on voluntary contributions and financial peril from month to month, and one already facing a financial shortfall of hundreds of millions of dollars.

It is also a lifeline to 3 million Palestinians living in Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria. So if aid is cut or UNRWA is abandoned without a replacement or a different organization to fill that role, security in the region is further imperiled and the burdens are then shifted onto other regional actors including some of our allies.

The complexity of this situation cannot be overstated. But my experience in combat zones and my understanding of our Nation’s 20 years of war in the Middle East have made it clear to me that con-

ditions in which people are starving, fearful, or hopeless do not breed peace and they will not bring security to Israel or to the broader region. People's basic needs must be met.

So I have very deep concerns about the shift in funding and the halting of funding. I have very real concerns about the security impact and the moral implications if we do not find quickly a way to resume some funding and allow that aid to move forward expeditiously.

The horrifying and inexcusable actions of, roughly, a dozen people should not speak for the over 13,000 UNRWA employees in Gaza alone.

It is possible to acknowledge the lifesaving nature of assistance that UNRWA provides and the importance of ensuring that humanitarian assistance reaches the people of Gaza without diversion or use/misuse by Hamas or other nefarious actors.

Now, this is not to understate the very real challenges and concerns about the integrity of UNRWA that have been raised by my colleagues and others and the need for substantial reform or to find a follow-on successor organization to fulfill the functions.

What I'm trying to say here is that these needs and these functions must continue whether it's under UNRWA or some other organization and that all of our collective interests in security are undermined if we do not do that, and that has both short-term and long-term implications.

So let's have a discussion today about how we achieve that, what the very real concerns that we all have, how they should be met, and how we can get that done in everyone's interests because—let me finish with this—we cannot stop the delivery of aid and the support of an organization that is essential to the livelihood of about 2 million Palestinian people and I will continue to be a vocal advocate to make sure that we figure out a way forward here.

Thank you, and I yield back.

Mr. MAST. Thank you, Ranking Member Crow.

I now ask unanimous consent that the following members be allowed to sit on the dais and participate in today's hearing: the gentleman from North Carolina, Mr. Murphy. Without objection, so ordered.

I'm now going to recognize Ranking Member Smith for the introduction of our panel today. Mr. Smith, you're recognized.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you very much.

And let me first begin with our first witness, Richard Goldberg, who is a senior advisor at the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies.

He previously served as deputy chief of staff and senior foreign policy advisor to former U.S. Senator Mark Kirk, who not only was our chief counsel once on this committee, went on to become a distinguished U.S. senator.

He was also chief of staff for the Illinois Governor Bruce Rauner, and director for Countering Iranian Terrorism Weapons of Mass Destruction on the White House National Security Council. He was sanctioned personally by Iran in 2020.

Next we'll hear from Marcus Sheff who is the CEO of the Institute for Monitoring Peace and Cultural Tolerance in School Education, or IMPACT-se, a research and policy nonprofit that ana-

lyzes textbooks, employing standards on peace and tolerance as derived from UNESCO's declarations and resolutions and presents recommendations to governments, ministries of education, and to policymakers.

Then we'll hear from Hillel Neuer who is the executive director of U.N. Watch, a human rights NGO in Geneva, Switzerland.

He's an international lawyer, writer, acclaimed speaker, human rights activist, and matter of fact since 2009 Mr. Neuer has headed a coalition of 25 human rights groups as chair of the annual Geneva Summit for Human Rights and Democracy, a renowned international gathering that provides a global platform for courageous pro-democracy dissidents from around the world.

Last and—but certainly not least we welcome Ms. Laura Rudman, who is the James R. Schlesinger Distinguished Professor at the Miller Center at the University of Virginia, and welcome her and her testimony and expertise to the committee.

So if we could go to Mr. Goldberg as our first witness.

Mr. MAST. Thank you, Ranking Member Smith. I think you meant Mara. We all make—I think I had the wrong one on my paper as well.

But we now recognize Mr. Goldberg for his opening statement.

**STATEMENT OF RICHARD GOLDBERG, SENIOR ADVISOR,
FOUNDATION FOR DEFENSE OF DEMOCRACIES**

Mr. GOLDBERG. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Members, all members of the committees, thank you so much for holding this very important hearing at this time.

I have worked on oversight of our foreign assistance including to UNRWA for about 20 years now and let me just tell you something.

UNRWA is a horror show that is decades in the making, co-produced by the United States taxpayer. A lot of people woke up and read the Wall Street Journal and other reports and were shocked to hear that 12 employees of UNRWA participated in the October 7th massacre, that 10 percent or more of its staff in Gaza may be affiliated with terrorist organizations and even more of them have some family members that are affiliates as well.

I wasn't shocked. Many members of this committee who have worked on UNRWA reform for years weren't shocked. Terrorism support and subsidy for UNRWA is a feature, not a bug.

The organization is built from its core mission, its mandate, to indoctrinate generation after generation to hate Jews, to destroy Israel, to be ready to manifest themselves as those that will come to wipe the Jews into the Mediterranean Sea, to fulfill the mission that was outlined in 1948 by Arab armies, never fulfilled.

But UNRWA established back then with a mandate to have the political manifestation—the political warfare arm—to get ready to fulfill that military mission, and decade after decade pumping kids to hate through their schools, never recognizing U.S. designated foreign terrorist organizations as terrorist organizations.

When you have a conversation with an UNRWA official and you say, is it possible your aid is going to Hamas—is it possible families that are receiving cash assistance in your program are affiliated with designated foreign terrorist organizations—is it possible

your staff are affiliated with these groups the answer is, of course, these are political labels to UNRWA.

These aren't terrorist groups. These are political movements so why would they want to discriminate based on political persuasion?

And to a United States citizen and I would say to our allies around the world that is, in fact, horrific, disgusting, and part of the reason we sit here today.

Now, when you look at the incitement to violence that has gone on for decades, the internalization in generation after generation to rise up and believe they are refugees waiting to come back to what is today Israel, to drive the Jews into the sea, October 7th is the logical conclusion of UNRWA.

It is, of course, what they have been training generations to do with the resources we have provided going to these terrorist organizations to help carry out that mission.

We're focused on UNRWA in Gaza today because that's where the news is. Follow the news elsewhere where UNRWA operates. In the West Bank, the IDF is conducting daily operations today against terror cells in UNRWA facilities and UNRWA areas.

In Lebanon in the largest refugee camp in Lebanon there have been months of terrorist battles. There's no Israeli presence there. Anywhere UNRWA goes terrorism follows. We have documented this for years.

Now, you hear a lot of people saying, well, we cannot cutoff food—we cannot cutoff aid—we cannot leave people starving. That's true. That's correct. Nobody is calling for that.

If only we had another organization that was built to help refugees around the world and internally displaced persons around the world. We should think of such an organization. Oh, that's right. It exists, the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees.

If only we had an organization built to distribute food aid. That's right, we give them billions of dollars. It's called the World Food Programme.

If only there was an organization for children and for schools and education and for health care. They're all available. It's an alphabet soup.

The only reason to remain dedicated to supporting the terror, financing, incitement promoting, genocide promoting UNRWA is to help UNRWA keep Hamas in power in Gaza, promote terrorism incitement against Israel, and maintain a mandate that the region has moved on from and that is to hate Israel, destroy Israel.

The Arab armies that failed in 1948, that set up UNRWA as a political weapon, have moved on. They've made peace with Israel. UNRWA hasn't.

UNRWA is the problem. UNRWA is a part of what happened on October 7th and it will keep happening again and again if we keep funding it.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Goldberg follows:]

CONGRESSIONAL TESTIMONY: FOUNDATION FOR DEFENSE OF DEMOCRACIES

House Foreign Affairs Committee
Subcommittee on Oversight and Accountability
Subcommittee on Global Health, Global Human Rights and International Organizations

UNRWA Exposed:

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Washington, DC
January 30, 2024



www.fdd.org

Chairman Mast, Chairman Smith, Ranking Member Crow, Ranking Member Wild, and distinguished members of both subcommittees, thank you for the opportunity to address you today on this important issue.

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) is not a refugee agency. It's not even an international organization in the truest sense of the term.

What began as a political weapon in the Arab world's campaign to destroy the State of Israel after its founding has evolved into an internationally funded, locally staffed foreign aid entitlement program that incites violence against Israel, subsidizes U.S.-designated foreign terrorist organizations, denies Palestinians their basic human rights, and blocks the pathways to a sustainable peace between Israel and the Palestinians.

Unlike the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), which has less than 19,000 international employees to manage 29.4 million refugees — not to mention tens of millions more internally displaced persons (IDPs), asylum-seekers, and stateless people — across 135 countries, UNRWA employs more than 30,000 Palestinians to service a claimed figure of 5.9 million Palestinian refugees.¹

Who are the people UNRWA purports to serve? We are told they are refugees dating back to a population of 700,000 that left their homes during Israel's 1948 Independence War. But as former Secretary of State Mike Pompeo revealed in early 2021, fewer than "200,000 Arabs displaced in 1948 are still alive and most others are not refugees by any rational criteria."² Somehow, a similar number of Jewish refugees expelled by Arab states in 1948 were absorbed into Israel, the United States, Europe, and countries around the world. But Arab refugees of the conflict were kept as refugees living under Egyptian, Jordanian, Lebanese, and Syrian rule — with their children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren inheriting this refugee status as well.

That preposterous definition for guaranteed refugee status in perpetuity also has fiscal consequences. A population of 700,000 that has almost entirely died out is now, generations later, calculated as reaching 6 million. Between 1950 and 2018, U.S. taxpayers contributed more than \$6 billion to UNRWA.³ President Biden has contributed \$1 billion since just 2021 alone.⁴ Putting the policy debate aside, the cost curve alone is unsustainable as a backdoor mandatory spending provision of the U.S. budget.

¹ "Meet our people," *The UN Refugee Agency*, accessed January 25, 2024. (<https://www.unhcr.org/get-involved/work-us/careers-unhcr/meet-our-people>); "Where we work," *UNRWA*, accessed January 25, 2024. (<https://www.unhcr.org/about-unhcr/where-we-work>); "Figures at a Glance," *The UN Refugee Agency*, accessed January 25, 2024. (<https://www.unhcr.org/about-unhcr/who-we-are/figures-glance>); "10 Things to Know About the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA)," *Foundation for Defense of Democracies*, January 11, 2024. (<https://www.fdd.org/analysis/2024/01/11/10-things-to-know-about-the-un-relief-and-works-agency-unrwa>)

² @SecPompeo, X, January 14, 2021. (<https://twitter.com/SecPompeo/status/1349832113923780610>)

³ Jim Zanotti, "U.S. Foreign Aid to the Palestinians," *Congressional Research Service*, December 12, 2018. (<https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/RS/RS22967>)

⁴ Edward Lawrence, Andrew Miller, and Lauren Shank, "Palestinian group accused of harboring terrorists received \$1B from Biden admin: report," *Fox Business*, October 18, 2023. (<https://www.foxbusiness.com/politics/palestinian-group-accused-harboring-terrorists-received-1b-biden-admin>)

But the policy implications of this cannot be ignored — because they present a grave danger to our national security and the security of Israel. Today, UNRWA's clients are Palestinians trapped in the label of refugee — Palestinians who are forced to internalize that label and get brought up with the hatred and resentment that comes with that label's political and economic limitations. With that label comes a vision — a manifest destiny — that one day the Jews will be driven into the Mediterranean Sea — and all these so-called “refugees” will return to their land. Put simply, UNRWA raises children to internalize the genocidal campus slogans you see on college campuses today — only they will be perpetrators of the genocide, not the college kids cheering it on. In that respect, October 7 was the logical conclusion of UNRWA's indoctrination.

And as my friend Mr. Sheff has exposed and describes in his testimony, the education materials UNRWA provides Palestinian children is a crucial element of that genocidal indoctrination.⁵

But even though UNRWA calls them refugees and teaches them how to internalize that label, they are not refugees. Gaza has a population of 2.1 million. UNRWA lists 1.7 million of them as refugees — people who have lived in Gaza for generations, under Egyptian, Israeli, and then Hamas control.⁶ What an absurd statistic intended to advance a political agenda, not reflect reality. Turn on the news and look at the photos in Gaza where media reports Israeli military operations in so-called “urban refugee camps.”⁷ What is an urban refugee camp? That is a made-up term. These are cities.

To be sure, there are Palestinian communities under UNRWA's jurisdiction where people live in abject poverty. Their lives are tragic, denied an economic future because of a UN mandate that forces them to live in such squalor. But squalor does not make someone a refugee.

Addressing the myriad challenges we face because of UNRWA starts by recognizing what UNRWA is and what it isn't — and restructuring the U.S. government's approach to UNRWA accordingly. UNRWA is not a refugee agency. Period. What should we call it? A welfare entitlement agency? A make-work project for Palestinians? A substitute for genuine Palestinian institution-building, self-responsibility, and self-sufficiency? Take your pick. But it's not a refugee agency.

Why then does the State Department's Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (PRM) have responsibility for this organization? It should not. PRM protects UNRWA inside the U.S. Government — the bureau suffers from acute clientitis. Wrestling oversight of UNRWA away from PRM is an overlooked but long-overdue bureaucratic priority. This could be handled by the International Organizations bureau on an interim basis as we press for a change in mandate and transition of UNRWA's responsibilities.

⁵ Ash Obel, “Report finds incitement, antisemitism still prevalent in UNRWA classrooms,” *The Times of Israel* (Israel), March 15, 2023. (<https://www.timesofisrael.com/report-finds-incitement-antisemitism-still-prevalent-in-unrwa-classrooms>)

⁶ “Where We Work,” *UNRWA*, accessed January 25, 2024. (<https://www.unrwa.org/where-we-work/gaza-strip>)

⁷ Najib Jobain, Wafaa Shurafa, and Samy Magdy, “Israeli military says Gaza ground offensive has expanded into urban refugee camps,” *Associated Press*, December 26, 2023. (<https://apnews.com/article/israel-hamas-war-news-12-26-2023-698c895797ccb057d13fe4f68690c98b>)

UNRWA, of course, has no board of directors. Yet we have no say in who leads the agency, no governance pathway to change its policies, no access to an independent audit, and no ability to verify the basic information it reports.

In 2019, we saw reports of “credible and corroborated” corruption allegations against senior UNRWA personnel. In an internal review that leaked to the press, UNRWA detailed “sexual misconduct, nepotism, retaliation, discrimination, and other abuses of authority” among its top brass.⁸ UNRWA’s then Commissioner-General Pierre Krahenbuhl resigned in the aftermath of an internal investigation.⁹ You may recognize Krahenbuhl’s name. He was just appointed to lead the International Committee of the Red Cross.¹⁰ In other words, there is zero accountability for corruption.

UNRWA claims to serve 5.9 million people. Is that number accurate? Can you verify it? U.S. states that run big government programs regularly perform program integrity audits to root out fraud and abuse. The Government of Lebanon, for example, has previously accused UNRWA of inflating its numbers.¹¹ Past attempts I spearheaded as a congressional staffer to involve the Government Accountability Office, inspector generals and outside auditing firms all failed — either due to UNRWA asserting the UN’s single-audit principle or the lack of security cooperation by the Palestinian Authority, with PRM blocking and tackling for UNRWA along the way.

Did it strike anyone as odd that after years of non-stop emergency appeals, always claiming the budget sky was falling, when the United States — the largest historical annual contributor to UNRWA — halted all contributions from 2018-2020, the agency magically endured? Or that even after the Biden administration restored funding and poured \$1 billion into UNRWA in under three years, the agency returned to sky-is-falling emergency appeals — well before October 7 and the ensuing conflict? Does that sound like proper management or a proper fleeing?

From a simple taxpayer accountability and good government perspective, UNRWA is one of the most reckless discretionary spending programs in history. If this is where the criticisms ended, it would be enough to demand a comprehensive overhaul and rethinking of U.S. aid to areas where UNRWA operates.

But the problems only get worse from here.

⁸ “Report alleges ethical abuses at UN agency for Palestinian refugees,” *France 24* (France), July 30, 2019. (<https://www.france24.com/en/20190730-palestinian-territories-United-Nations-Relief-Works-Agency-UNRWA-refugees>); Oliver Holmes, “Officials at UN agency for Palestinians face ethical abuse claims,” *The Guardian* (UK), July 29, 2019. (<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/jul/29/officials-at-un-agency-for-palestinians-accused-of-ethical-abuses>)

⁹ Peter Beaumont, “Head of UN Palestinian refugee agency resigns amid misconduct inquiry,” *The Guardian* (UK), November 6, 2019. (<https://amp.theguardian.com/world/2019/nov/06/pierre-krahenbuhl-steps-down-head-un-agency-palestinian-refugees-investigation>)

¹⁰ Agence France-Presse and Times of Israel Staff, “Red Cross taps controversial former UNRWA commissioner as its new director-general,” *The Times of Israel* (Israel), December 22, 2023. (<https://www.timesofisrael.com/red-cross-taps-controversial-former-unrwa-commissioner-as-its-new-director-general>)

¹¹ “Lebanon census turns up two-thirds fewer Palestinians than expected,” *Associated Press*, December 22, 2017. (<https://www.timesofisrael.com/lebanon-census-turns-up-two-thirds-fewer-palestinians-than-expected>)

UNRWA has a terrorism problem, and the U.S. taxpayer has been underwriting it for decades. Americans are just waking up to this problem in the wake of October 7.

We've seen the reports of Hamas terror tunnels discovered next to or under UNRWA schools.¹² And not just since October 7. I'm including here footnotes for stories about these tunnels in 2017, 2021 and 2022.

We've seen the social media accounts of UNRWA employees supporting terrorism and antisemitism.¹³ My friend, Mr. Neuer, has exposed countless such employees and is presenting that evidence here today.

And we've even seen the report of a released hostage who was held in the attic of an UNRWA teacher's home.¹⁴

These aren't new phenomena. We've seen UNRWA schools used as rocket-launching platforms — and rockets even stored inside UNRWA schools.¹⁵ We've seen an UNRWA school headmaster moonlighting as an Islamic Jihad terrorist.¹⁶

And we've seen the hotbed of terrorism that grows inside UNRWA's communities — not just in Gaza but in the West Bank and Lebanon. Look at the Jenin Refugee Camp in the West Bank where Israel continues to operate to defend Israelis against Hamas and other terror cells.¹⁷ Look at Lebanon's Ain al-Hilweh refugee camp where terrorist groups continue to battle each other — with no Israeli presence or military activity whatsoever.¹⁸ At least 28 people dead in two rounds

¹² Ariane Mandell, "UNRWA discovers Hamas tunnel under Gaza schools," *The Jerusalem Post* (Israel), June 9, 2017. (<https://www.jpost.com/Arab-Israeli-Conflict/UNRWA-discovers-Hamas-tunnel-under-Gaza-schools-496394>); "Photos show Hamas tunnel dug underneath courtyard of UNRWA school in Gaza," *The Times of Israel* (Israel), June 11, 2021. (<https://www.timesofisrael.com/photos-show-hamas-tunnel-dug-underneath-courtyard-of-unrwa-school-in-gaza>); "UNRWA discovers terrorist tunnel under Gaza school," *The Jerusalem Post* (Israel), December 1, 2022. (<https://www.jpost.com/arab-israeli-conflict/gaza-news/article-723788>); "IDF claims to have destroyed Hamas tunnel near UNRWA school," *CNN*, November 8, 2023. (https://edition.cnn.com/middleeast/live-news/israel-hamas-war-gaza-news-11-08-23/h_68692cec4b7f1387e0cbe664c3f5dd0b)

¹³ "Telegram group with 3,000 UNRWA teachers praises October 7 attacks," *The Jerusalem Post* (Israel), January 10, 2024. (<https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/article-781531>)

¹⁴ @bokeralmog, X, November 29, 2023. (<https://twitter.com/bokeralmog/status/1729934849161494658>)

¹⁵ "IDF reveals new terrorist rocket launch sites near Gazan schools," *Jewish News Syndicate*, December 14, 2022. (<https://www.jns.org/idf-reveals-new-terrorist-rocket-launch-sites-near-gazan-schools>); Ilan Ben Zion, "Rockets found in UNRWA school, for third time," *The Times of Israel* (Israel), July 30, 2014. (<https://www.timesofisrael.com/rockets-found-in-unrwa-school-for-third-time>)

¹⁶ Adam Entous, "Gaza headmaster was Islamic Jihad 'rocket-maker,'" *Reuters*, May 5, 2008. (<https://www.reuters.com/article/middleeastCrisis/idUSL05686115>)

¹⁷ Emanuel Fabian, "Three Hamas members nabbed by IDF in first Jenin refugee camp raid in 2 months," *The Times of Israel* (Israel), September 4, 2023. (<https://www.timesofisrael.com/clashes-reported-as-idf-raids-jenin-refugee-camp-for-first-time-in-2-months>)

¹⁸ Nada Homs, "Heavy fighting continues in Lebanon's Ain Al Hilweh refugee camp despite ceasefire," *The National* (UAE), August 1, 2023. (<https://www.thenationalnews.com/mena/lebanon/2023/08/01/ain-al-hilweh-ceasefire-reduces-fighting-at-palestinian-refugee-camp>)

of fighting with so many families, including children, displaced ... an underreported story.¹⁹ Do we see the pattern here?

When you ask UNRWA, why do you allow terrorists to establish bases of operations in your communities, they tell you that host governments are responsible for security — not UNRWA. You get the same answer, by the way, when you ask why UNRWA schools use textbooks that teach Palestinians to grow up to massacre Jews like they did on October 7 — talk to the host government. How convenient. Every problem UNRWA creates is someone else's responsibility — and yet the requests for more money continue without any independent oversight.

Why does UNRWA have a terror problem? Because it's structured to have one.

The United Nations does not recognize Hamas, Islamic Jihad, Hezbollah, or the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) as terrorist groups — even though each one is designated by the United States as a foreign terrorist organization. UNRWA is a UN-mandated agency, so UNRWA does not recognize these groups as terrorist organizations, either.

To UNRWA, Hamas and Islamic Jihad are political identifiers. And UNRWA makes clear it doesn't discriminate based on politics. And since we've established UNRWA is not an international organization — it's a local welfare agency that employs 30,000 Palestinians to provide benefits to millions more — it is guaranteed that UNRWA employs, contracts with, and provides benefits to members of designated foreign terrorist organizations and their families.

We've seen how Hamas wields its influence over UNRWA. After the 2021 Israel-Hamas war, UNRWA recalled its Gaza director after a Hamas backlash against him. His crime? He gave a media interview in which he credited the Israeli military for its precision targeting.²⁰ You see, when it comes to the UN, telling the truth about what goes on in Gaza can get you fired.

That same official knew a thing or two about Hamas tunneling operations around UNRWA facilities, too. A few months after his removal, Matthias Schmale told NPR News, "Many people told me through my four years, there's tunnels everywhere and it's a safe assumption."²¹ Anyone who claims today that UNRWA was not aware of the Hamas terror infrastructure around its facilities is not telling the truth.

Nearly 17 years ago, I sat in a meeting with an UNRWA official as a congressional staffer and asked a simple question: Is it possible the families of Hamas terrorists are beneficiaries of UNRWA's cash assistance program. The answer was yes — since the program only looks at financial need, not "political affiliation." Nothing has changed.

¹⁹ "Ain Al Hilweh death toll rises as yet another ceasefire breaks down," *The National* (UAE), September 13, 2023. (<https://www.thenationalnews.com/mena/lebanon/2023/09/13/ain-al-hilweh-death-toll-rises-as-yet-another-ceasefire-breaks-down>)

²⁰ "UN agency withdraws director from Gaza after threats," *Associated Press*, June 4, 2021. (<https://apnews.com/article/united-nations-middle-east-b03eb29c5b9286ff1d6b80cf6539294>)

²¹ Daniel Estrin, "He was the top U.N. official in Gaza. An Israeli TV interview cost him his post," *NPR*, November 18, 2021. (<https://www.npr.org/2021/11/18/1056254276/gaza-united-nations-schmale-palestinians-israel>)

Around the same time, Congress had discovered that the US Agency for International Development had provided a grant to the Islamic University of Gaza, which was affiliated with Hamas.²² As a staffer, I helped lead the bipartisan investigation into the matter, which exposed a critical flaw in our assistance programs: The lack of counterterrorism vetting.

Over time, USAID developed a process to collect identifying information from grantees and contractors to ensure the U.S. intelligence community had no information tying them to terrorism. I have long advocated we demand the same for international organizations that operate in high-risk environments for terror finance. That ought to begin with UNRWA.

As it stands today, UNRWA is not required to submit its staff, contractors, or beneficiaries for counterterrorism vetting. UNRWA need only certify to the State Department that it takes steps to prevent U.S.-provided funding from directly going to individuals who engage in acts of terrorism, pursuant to Section 301(c) of the Foreign Assistance Act. And at the same time, in its formal agreement with UNRWA, the State Department acknowledges that UNRWA “cannot engage in controversies of a political...nature.”²³

Let’s be honest. We have talked about the inadequacy of 301(c) for 20 years. And despite many congressional initiatives at various times to amend it, here it stands as an arcane law that does nothing to stop UNRWA’s budget from subsidizing terrorism. The GAO told the House and Senate in November 2003 that we were not doing enough to prevent these funds from going to terrorism.²⁴ And now we sit here, pretending to be shocked to learn that UNRWA is fully complicit in the Hamas terror infrastructure in Gaza — its war crimes and crimes against humanity? Of course UNRWA’s complicit.

No, it’s not a shock. It’s a horror movie, decades in the making, co-produced by the U.S. taxpayer. The madness had finally stopped in 2018 when U.S. funding was halted — and UNRWA’s remaining donors were quietly talking about the need for reform. And then the spigot came back on in 2021 — and the U.S. resumed its policy of indirectly subsidizing Hamas in Gaza.

Put these numbers in perspective. According to the Associated Press, from 2014-2020, UN agencies spent nearly \$4.5 billion in Gaza, including \$600 million in 2020 alone. More than 80 percent of that funding was channeled through UNRWA.²⁵ With roughly 30 percent of UNRWA’s client population in Gaza, and \$1 billion provided to UNRWA by the United States alone since 2021, we’ve added another \$300 million to Hamas’s subsidized budget over the last three years.

²² “School linked to Hamas gets U.S. cash,” *The Washington Times*, March 4, 2007. (<https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2007/mar/4/20070304-114147-5932r>)

²³ Framework for Cooperation Between the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and the United States of America, 2021-2022, accessed on January 25, 2024. (<https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/2021-2022-US-UNRWA-Framework-Signed.pdf>)

²⁴ U.S. General Accounting Office, “Department of State (State) and United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) Actions to Implement Section 301(c) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961,” November 17, 2023. (<https://www.gao.gov/assets/gao-04-276r.pdf>)

²⁵ “A look at the billions of dollars in foreign aid to Gaza,” *Associated Press*, December 20, 2021. (<https://apnews.com/article/business-middle-east-israel-foreign-aid-gaza-strip-611b2b90c3a211f21185d59f4fac6a90>)

And what did we get? Miles of terror tunnels. Thousands of rockets. The October 7 massacre. Don't tell me UNRWA funding didn't subsidize every single aspect of the Hamas terror infrastructure in Gaza — since every dollar spent by UNRWA was a dollar Hamas could divert to terrorism.

Members of the committee, as Congress now debates a multi-billion dollar emergency supplemental aid package that is set to include money for Gaza, can you in good conscience support funding that you know will help subsidize those who perpetrated the worst massacre of Jews since the Holocaust?

I strongly urge you to demand strict conditions on any aid provided to UN organizations operating in Gaza. No taxpayer money should go to groups that refused to recognize Hamas, Islamic Jihad, and Hezbollah as terrorist organizations. No taxpayer money should go to any agency whose employees and contractors — at the very least — haven't undergone U.S. counterterrorism vetting. No taxpayer money should go to any organization that operates schools without the United States first approving the textbooks and curriculum used in those schools. And no money should be obligated until an agency like UNRWA submits to an independent beneficiary audit to root out waste, fraud, and abuse.

That's the here and now. But what about the future? Many today are asking the important question of what will come next in Gaza after Israel dismantles Hamas. One thing that should not come next is the continued presence of UNRWA — an agency whose mandate, teachings, and propaganda inherently incite hatred of Israel, antisemitism, and terrorism. This is a moment to push the reset button and try something new — a path for Palestinians to escape the shackles of UNRWA's phony refugee status and reach their maximum economic potential. They may finally have a chance for real peace.

Congress should block any attempt by the administration to include UNRWA in the future of Gaza after Hamas falls.

Many policymakers are looking for ways to distribute aid quickly, and UNRWA's existing infrastructure makes that the easy answer. But nothing stops us from removing UNRWA from the equation and turning over infrastructure to an organization like the UN High Commissioner for Refugees — which has a mandate to care for internally displaced persons. And while the people living in Gaza are not refugees, they are indisputably IDPs today — giving UNHCR rather obvious jurisdiction. Congress could force the issue by mandating a phase-out of assistance provided to UNRWA and making money available to UNHCR instead. This would be complementary to, not in substitute of, the counterterrorism and textbook vetting requirement previously discussed.

In summary, to prevent further U.S. taxpayer dollars from subsidizing terrorism, inciting antisemitism, and denying Palestinians their basic human rights, Congress should take the following actions:

- 1) Require the State Department to remove PRM's oversight of UNRWA and replace it with the IO bureau until such time as aid is transitioned away from UNRWA completely;
- 2) Modernize Section 301 (c) of the Foreign Assistance Act to prohibit assistance to a UN agency operating in the West Bank, Gaza, Lebanon, and Syria unless the secretary of state certifies to Congress that the United States has completed an annual counterterrorism vetting for all its employees, contractors, and beneficiaries;
- 3) Prohibit further funding for UN agencies operating in the West Bank, Gaza, Lebanon and Syria unless the secretary of state certifies to Congress that the United States has completed an annual beneficiary verification audit and provided the audit to the appropriate committees;
- 4) Prohibit UN agencies from using textbooks, curricula, and other education materials provided by the Palestinian Authority and instead require U.S.-approved or provided materials be used in their place;
- 5) Prohibit aid to any UN agency unless the secretary of state certifies that such agency recognizes Hamas, Islamic Jihad, Hezbollah, and the PFLP as terrorist organizations;
- 6) Prohibit assistance to UNRWA in the emergency supplemental — make funds available for UNHRC support to IDPs instead.

Mr. MAST. I want to thank you, Mr. Goldberg.
The chair now recognizes Mr. Sheff for his opening statement.

**STATEMENT OF MARCUS SHEFF, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER,
IMPACT-SE**

Mr. SHEFF. Chairman Smith, Chairman Mast, Ranking Member Wild, Ranking Member Crow, members of committee, thank you.

On October 7th terrorists breached Gaza's border with Israel. The result was catastrophic. They raped children, women, and men, burned families alive, beheaded and murdered. They abducted babies and the elderly. A hundred and thirty-two are still being held in dungeons in Gaza and we know UNRWA——

Mr. MAST. The gentleman will suspend for a moment.

[Pause.]

Mr. MAST. The gentleman will resume.

Mr. SHEFF. Thank you, sir.

We know that UNRWA employees took part in this massacre. But these were not a few bad apples. Rather, the institutional barrel is rotten.

How do we know? We know by researching UNRWA's educational infrastructure. In it textbooks teach that Jews are liars and fraudsters who spread corruption which will lead to their annihilation.

Students are taught about cutting the necks of the enemy, that a fiery massacre of Jews on a bus is celebrated as a barbecue party, that Dalal Mughrabi who murdered 38 people and 13 children is a role model.

UNRWA educates that dying is preferable to living, that becoming a martyr will be rewarded in heaven. First graders are taught the alphabet by learning the words for attack and martyr and fourth graders are taught addition by counting martyrs.

These are just a handful of examples of incitement which runs like a thread, a strategy, throughout the Palestinian curriculum which is taught in UNRWA schools and our research shows the same violent jihadi educational materials are created on a large institutional level by UNRWA staff.

One of our reports confirms that at least 100 Hamas members who carried out terror attacks in the past were educated, celebrated by being part of the UNRWA system and the stark truth given that over half the schools in Gaza are UNRWA run is that the majority of the October 7th terrorists are more likely than not to have been UNRWA school graduates.

And make no mistake, the terrorists' barbarity is cheered by UNRWA teachers. Another of our reports reveals dozens celebrated the massacre on social media.

These extremist views go way beyond a handful of individuals. Rather, they are endemic to the institution. UNRWA staff were previously found to be extremists from school principal Suhail al-Hindi of Hamas' politburo to convicted terrorist Said Seyam, 23 years an UNRWA teacher.

And IMPACT-se has warned for years about the consequences of this hate education and I ask you what can UNRWA possibly offer the next generation of Palestinians? Poisonous textbooks taught too

often by extremist teachers? Quite simply, UNRWA is not fit for purpose.

But there is an alternative. Elsewhere in the region the UAE has produced a curriculum that is centered around peace, tolerance, and acceptance of the other. Saudi Arabia has removed practically all the anti-Semitism and violent jihad from its textbooks.

Israeli textbooks center peacemaking and feature a Palestinian narrative. Moroccan textbooks embrace Jews, the Amazigh, and they empower girls. Egypt is reforming its textbook system comprehensively.

In other words, we look at the region and extremist UNRWA schools stand increasingly alone. It has chosen to teach conflict and violence over hope and over peace.

But it is a path we can no longer afford to walk down. One thing is clear. If we want to prevent the next massacre, if we want to dream of peace, then UNRWA can play no further part in Palestinian education. There are alternatives.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Sheff follows:]

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SHEFF



Written Testimony by Marcus Sheff

CEO of IMPACT-se

Submitted to the Hearing on: **UNRWA Exposed: Examining the Agency's Mission
and Failures**

House Committee on Foreign Affairs

January 30, 2024



Chairman Smith, Chairman Mast, Ranking Member Wild, Ranking Member Crow, Members of the Committee: thank you for the opportunity to submit evidence at this important hearing. My purpose is to demonstrate the central role played by UNRWA in the widespread indoctrination of antisemitism and incitement to violence throughout the Palestinian school system, including the Gaza Strip. This stands in violation of the values of the United Nations itself and many of its member states currently funding UNRWA, including the United States. I would like to ask that my full statement be ordered part of the record.

Introduction

The civilized world remains horrified and shocked at the unprecedented and barbaric assault on Israeli civilians on 7 October. It is a date which will be forever etched into the collective mind of the free world. Even the perpetrators of the most appalling crimes in modern history attempted to hide their crimes – The Nazis furiously burnt documents and tried to destroy the evidence of mass murder at concentration camps. Hamas did quite the opposite. They filmed and broadcast the horror of 7 October for all the world to see. They did so proudly.

Quite rightly, the world is asking how human beings reached such depths of depravity. I am here to provide a key answer. It is an answer which has also never been hidden from sight, but rather in full view of the world. Our institute, IMPACT-se has for many years [documented](#) the contents of textbooks in the Palestinian school system, including in the Gaza Strip. These textbooks profoundly influence millions of young, impressionable minds. Time and again, we have warned that today's Palestinian textbooks are producing the terrorists of tomorrow. Sadly and tragically, on 7 October, our worst fears came true.

Textbooks are unique documents. You will find no other document in which a government or ruling power encapsulates its ideas, values and hopes. For Hamas, the manual for the hatred and incitement which they crave, has been conveniently provided for many years by UNRWA schools and the textbooks that they use. UNRWA educates the majority of school children in the Gaza Strip, [operating](#) 183 Gazan schools, educating over 286,000 students.

UNRWA harnesses Palestinian Authority textbooks

UNRWA does [not produce](#) its own curricula. Instead, it has made the decision that its schools teach the curriculum and textbooks of the "host country." However, nowhere in the UN mandate given to UNWRA by the General Assembly does it state that UNWRA is forbidden to use non-host curricula. Nor does it state that UNRWA cannot alter problematic content in these curricula, as you would fully hope and



expect of a UN agency. UNRWA itself states that it is best practice to teach refugee populations with local curricula, but it is not required or codified as such.

Therefore, UNRWA has made the deliberate and conscious decision to teach the Palestinian National Authority (PA) curriculum in the UNRWA-run schools across the Gaza Strip, West Bank, and Jerusalem. IMPACT-se has been analyzing school curricula across the MENA region, including the PA school curriculum used by UNRWA for over two decades, assessing compliance with UN values, such as tolerance, non-violence, and peace-making. Our extensive research of [PA school textbooks](#) has consistently found a systematic promotion of violence, martyrdom, overt antisemitism, and jihad across all grades and subjects, with the proliferation of extreme nationalism and Islamist ideologies throughout the curriculum, including science and math textbooks.

For example, a grade twelve textbook warns students of “the danger” of the “People of the Book, especially the Jews,” who as a collective are described as treacherous, dangerous, hostile, and violent. A teacher’s guide on tenth grade geography and history instructs teachers to downgrade students who fail to connect the perpetration of massacres to Jewish religious thought. Beyond the naked antisemitism, these textbooks are rife with the glorification of terrorism. Even a fifth grade Arabic language reading comprehension lionizes Dalal Mughrabi, who murdered 13 Israeli children and 25 adults on a civilian bus. She is hailed as a hero whose footsteps should be followed as a national role model. A grade four math problem asks children to add the number of martyrs from the First and Second Intifadas, while grade seven physics is taught by asking students to calculate the velocity required to throw a rock at an Israeli soldier. Nowhere in this body of PA textbooks is peace mentioned as a possibility or a desirable outcome. Instead, the future envisaged for Palestinian children is tragically bleak – A grade five study card tells students that their duty towards the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem is “committing jihad and dying as a martyr for the sake of liberating it.”

What is just as troubling as this content itself, is the refusal of UNRWA to alter these materials. UNRWA’s current commissioner general testified before the European Parliament on 1 September 2021, [acknowledging](#) that antisemitism and the glorification of terrorism do indeed exist in Palestinian Authority textbooks used in UNRWA schools. UNRWA has claimed that it has internal mechanisms to ensure educational materials adhere to UN values. This includes UNRWA’s “rapid review process,” outlined in UNRWA’s [“Curriculum Framework,”](#) established in 2013 for the schools UNRWA operates. However, UNRWA has never published the complete content of the “Curriculum Framework,” nor how it is implemented practically.



UNRWA has also claimed that it now uses its “Teacher Centered Approach” tool, consisting of three documents to address all problematic material in the PA curriculum. However, these documents have never been made public, and there is no evidence of their use in UNRWA schools. No details of any review have been made public for external scrutiny.

The unavoidable impression is that UNRWA, as a UN organization, knowingly teaches highly inflammatory and inciteful material that is inconsistent with UN values in its Gaza Strip and West Bank schools. As a result, students in UNRWA-operated schools are exposed to extremist and violent indoctrination at any given moment.

UNRWA’s self-produced materials

As if exposing more than a quarter of a million children to the dangers of the PA curriculum were not alarming enough, UNRWA adds an additional layer of hate to its education via a plethora of supplementary study material produced by UNRWA staff.

In January 2021, IMPACT-se published a review of materials produced by UNRWA to facilitate at-home learning during the COVID-19 pandemic; it found that UNRWA staff drafted, approved, printed, and distributed content for well over 10 months that egregiously violated UN values, UNESCO standards, and UNRWA’s stated principles.

The report detailed numerous instances of content that contained antisemitism, calls for martyrdom, violence, and Jihad, and which are entirely devoid of any material that promotes peace and peace-making. It found materials branded with UNRWA’s logo that contained incitement to violence, demonization of Israel, endorsements of jihad and martyrdom, the promulgation of libels and antisemitic conspiracies, and failure to promote peace-making.

After publication of the report, UNRWA [acknowledged](#) it had “mistakenly” produced and distributed “inappropriate material” to Palestinian students. UNRWA stated that the issue had been rectified, and all instances of hate and incitement were removed and no longer being circulated. UNRWA also [promised](#) that any breach reported is dealt with firmly.

And yet, the proliferation of hate in these materials continues unabated. On four occasions since 2021, IMPACT-se has [reported](#) that such study content has been created by UNRWA staff. These teaching materials carry UNRWA’s logo, the names of its schools on cover pages, and list contributing UNRWA



staff, including school principals, vice principals and teachers, whose names are signed on the hateful content – in every respect, institutionally created, approved, and taught.

The latest such [report](#) in March 2023 found that 82 UNRWA teachers and other staff affiliated with over 30 UNRWA schools are involved in drafting, supervising, approving, printing, and distributing hateful content to students. One example is an Arabic reading comprehension exercise for 9th graders at UNRWA's AlMaghazi Middle School for Boys B (Gaza) which celebrates a Palestinian firebombing attack on a Jewish bus as a “barbecue party.” In another, fifth graders from UNRWA's Al-Zaytun Elementary School (Gaza) were taught to glorify Dalal Mughrabi as a role model (Mughrabi murdered 38 Israeli civilians, including 13 children).

UNRWA has denied that such material was produced by UNRWA, [claiming](#) that identified materials were from an unnamed, private commercial website, which illegally utilized the agency's logo and names of employees, and stated that the teaching materials in IMPACT-se's report were “not authorized for use in any UNRWA school”. Yet, the agency admitted in its statement that the names of those that signed off on the materials listed in IMPACT-se's report are indeed UNRWA staff.

UNRWA maintains that its online digital learning platform (DLP) launched in 2021 for remote learning is the only repository for UNRWA produced self-study materials. However, the DLP contains very limited material. Most sections contain no content whatsoever, and the minimal material within it does not include learning materials for Social Studies or Islamic Studies – subjects known to contain highly volatile content in the PA textbooks and UNRWA study cards. By any reasonable measure, the DLP is not an exhaustive collection of remote study materials.

UNRWA continues to be unable to adequately explain how and why hundreds of documented pages of harmful UNRWA branded material have been created and are taught in its schools.

Public endorsement of hate and terror by UNRWA staff

It should come as no surprise that so much hateful material has been produced and taught by UNRWA staff. A [report](#) in 2023 identified 133 UNRWA educators and staff who were found to promote hate and violence on social media. Furthermore, as a [report](#) published by IMPACT-se in November 2023 reveals, at least 14 teachers and staff at UNRWA schools have publicly celebrated the October 7 massacre and other Hamas attacks on their social media accounts.



They include an UNRWA teacher in the school system in Gaza, Sarah Alderawy, who posted a [video clip](#) on the day of the massacre showing Hamas terrorists roaming the Israeli streets with rifles while shooting at Israeli cars and rocket attacks in Israel. The video is accompanied by a Quranic verse stating: “we will surely come to them with soldiers that they will be powerless to encounter, and we will surely expel them in humiliation, and they will be debased.”

In another example, Mahmoud Abu Adhm, an UNRWA employee in Gaza, has posted multiple times since October 7 displaying wholehearted support for the Hamas atrocities. On 10 October, he encouraged Hamas to kill Israeli hostages [saying](#), “Do not walk past a captive who has not been given amnesty without striking off his neck so as to terrorize the enemy”, citing Islamic texts that advocate harshness towards the enemy.

In short, far too many UNRWA staff hold views that go against everything that this House and indeed the entire civilized world believes in. These views appear to go way beyond a handful of individuals. Rather, they appear endemic within the UNRWA school system.

Nor are these simply privately held views, deeply troubling as that itself clearly is. There is evidence that these views are also being expressed in UNRWA-operated schools. The same November 2023 [report](#) also documents an official Facebook page belonging to an UNRWA elementary school in Nablus in which a video is [posted](#). It shows a school rally held on 26 October, which features a young boy, accompanied by what appears to be an UNRWA administrator, pleading victory to Hamas’s “Jihad warriors” in Gaza, evoking the defeat of the Jews at Khaybar at the hands of Muhamed’s forces. The student body collectively responds “Amen” to each line. Tellingly, the video also shows students reading from a grade five Islamic Education textbook, which encourages death through Jihad against Israel.

The deadly results of textbook incitement

Inevitably, the sheer weight of hatred and incitement featuring in UNRWA classrooms and being openly expressed by UNRWA staff has a powerful effect. It is no longer a matter of mere speculation that what UNRWA students are learning and hearing in school and from their teachers is being translated into terror.

The findings of an IMPACT-se [report](#) last year are stark. It reveals that at least one hundred Hamas members who have carried out terror attacks against Israelis over a number of years are graduates of the UNRWA education system. In the report, material uploaded to the Hamas website is analyzed and shows that many Hamas terrorists have attended UNRWA schools. They include the perpetrators of the Dee



family murders on April 7 and many other terrorists including suicide bombers. Their education in UNRWA schools is specified on the Hamas website, as if it were valued by Hamas as a stage in the development of each terrorist.

Given that more than half of the students in Gaza study in UNRWA-operated schools, it is statistically probable that the majority of the estimated 3,000 terrorists who committed acts of murder, rape, beheading, and abduction of Israelis on October 7 graduated from UNRWA's education program and schools.

Even in the short time following the massacre, IMPACT-se has uncovered disturbing links between UNRWA education and the atrocities of October 7. A recent [report](#) details a handwritten note discovered on the body of one of the Hamas terrorists who participated in the massacre. It cites Khalid ibn al-Walid, an Arab military commander and companion of the Prophet Muhammed, who is widely associated with violent jihad. Al-Walid is glorified as a hero of jihad in a Grade Five Arabic reading comprehension exercise titled "Hooray for the Heroes." Another October 7 terrorist was [revealed](#) to have been an UNRWA graduate after his UNRWA diploma was found in his vehicle.

Meanwhile, in November a leading Israeli journalist [reported](#) the testimony of a released Israeli hostage, apparently held captive by an UNRWA teacher in his Gaza attic for 50 days. In recent years, a number of former UNRWA teachers have been identified as senior terror figures. UNRWA school principal and Chairman of the UNRWA Gaza workers' union Suhail al-Hindi was elected to the Hamas Politburo. Hamas's former Minister of Economy Jawad Abu Shamala, was a longtime former UNRWA teacher. Hamas's former Minister of Interior, Said Siam served for 23 years as a teacher in UNRWA schools, during which he was arrested 4 times. While working as a teacher and director of UNRWA schools in Rafah, Awad al-Qiq also served as head of the engineering and weapons manufacturing unit of the Palestinian Jihad Islamic terror group.

Such examples are merely a snapshot of individuals and content from open-source material. It is highly likely that many more who were educated or even teach in UNRWA schools have become Hamas terrorists or terrorists affiliated to alternative terror groups.

Regional textbook improvements show an alternative

While UNRWA continues to choose a hateful Palestinian curriculum for its schools, elsewhere in the region, countries are making meaningful and positive changes to their textbooks. In the [United Arab Emirates](#), textbooks have been revised to include the Abraham Accords, to emphasize tolerance,



coexistence, and friendly relations with non-Muslims. [Saudi Arabia](#) has eliminated practically all antisemitism from its national school curriculum over a four-year period. Meanwhile, the promotion of violent jihad and other extremist material has also been eliminated. In [Morocco](#), the curriculum now embraces minorities including Jews and Amazigh. Students learn that the Jewish community is an inseparable part of Morocco, and textbooks describe Jewish history, culture, and contributions to Moroccan society. Meanwhile, in [Egypt](#), a year-by-year reform of textbooks has seen major improvements in attitudes toward Jews and Judaism. In this regional context, it is apparent that the Palestinian curriculum as taught in UNRWA schools, is increasingly isolated in its promotion of hatred and violence.

United States support in the context of international aid

IMPACT-se has played a pivotal role in bringing the issue of Palestinian textbook incitement to the attention of decision-makers across the globe. The response of several governments has been instructive. The European Union froze all its funding to the Palestinian Authority of over 220 Million Euros in April 2021 for 13 months due to problematic content in textbooks following an EU funded report that found “antisemitic narratives and glorification of violence” in the curriculum. Furthermore, the European Parliament adopted four resolutions since 2020 which condemned the teaching of hate in Palestinian textbooks, expressed concerns of continued failure to remove content not in line with UNESCO standards, and called for conditioning funding on the basis of a curriculum reform.

The United Kingdom [announced](#) in October 2021 that it had ended all its direct funding of Palestinian education. Meanwhile, Norway [announced](#) in June 2020, that more than half of the year’s planned funding to the Palestinian ministry of education had been withheld until tangible “positive changes are seen in the Palestinian curriculum within a reasonable time,” while in 2018 Belgium cut all direct bilateral financial support to the PA Ministry of Education and ended ties with the Ministry over glorification of terrorists and terrorism through education.

In the wake of October 7, additional countries have followed suit. The European Union, [Sweden](#), [Denmark](#), [Finland](#) and [Austria](#) have all announced a suspension of aid to the Palestinian Authority, pending a comprehensive review of funding. In November, [Germany](#) announced that it is cutting funding to UNRWA in Gaza until further notice. In December, the [Swiss National Council](#) (lower parliamentary chamber) voted to cancel its entire UNRWA funding over hate education, although the Senate (upper parliamentary chamber) later overturned the decision.



[Canada](#), [UK](#), [European Union](#), [Australia](#), [Switzerland](#) and the [United Nations](#) itself have all publicly criticized or raised concerns over hate-teaching in UNRWA schools. Meanwhile, the director of Germany's Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research [testified](#) before the EU Parliament in 2021, stating that the PA curriculum (as taught in UNRWA schools) as a whole, does not meet UNESCO standards.

It is against the backdrop of this trend, coupled with Washington's cast-iron opposition to Palestinian terror, that a full re-examination of the United States' support for UNRWA's education program is urgently required.

The United States is UNRWA's largest donor, funding its education program to the tune of over one billion dollars in the last five years. These US taxpayer dollars pay for both the production of inciteful school materials and the salaries of teachers in UNRWA schools – the majority of schools in Gaza - who are responsible for teaching them to students. The net result is a corpus of poisonous textbooks taught too often by hate-filled teachers. Quite simply, UNRWA's educational program is not fit for purpose.

As such, Washington must now demand that UNRWA play no further part in Palestinian education. Swathes of the international community are already reconsidering their support for UNRWA education. Especially in the wake of October 7, simply demanding greater oversight and accountability of UNRWA schooling is no longer enough. The agency has proven time and again that it cannot be trusted with the key task of shaping the next generation of Palestinians. If we want to prevent the next massacre of Jews, if we ever want to dream of peace – Then Palestinian children must be educated free from the harmful influence of UNRWA.

Mr. MAST. Thank you, Mr. Sheff.
I now recognize Mr. Neuer for his opening statement.

**STATEMENT OF HILLEL NEUER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, U.N.
WATCH**

Mr. NEUER. Chairman, Ranking Members—Chairmen, Ranking Members, members of the committee, thank you for inviting me to testify today.

For years we have been told by UNRWA and its supporters that the agency performs lifesaving work and that its teachers offer Palestinian students an education that promotes human rights, tolerance, equality, and nondiscrimination.

Today more than ever before, and I mean literally today in light of the bombshell news reports in yesterday's Wall Street Journal, Reuters, and elsewhere, we now know this has been a lie.

From these and other revelations over the past few days we know that in Gaza at least 12 UNRWA employees personally participated in the massacre of October 7th which involved the murder of 1,200 Israelis, along with mass rape, torture, and mutilation.

Secretary of State Blinken said yesterday these intelligence reports are highly, highly credible. The world also learned yesterday that 1,200 UNRWA employees in Gaza are part of Hamas or Islamic Jihad, meaning actual operatives within the political and military organizations.

Finally, an estimated 6,000 UNRWA employees being half of the workforce in Gaza have close family members in these terrorist organizations. Now, UNRWA's top donors—the United States, Germany, Britain, Canada, and many others—have just announced they are freezing funds.

Accordingly, I've come here from Geneva to bring before the Congress our case against UNRWA. I've come here to ask the Congress of the United States, which is the largest donor to UNRWA at over \$300 million a year, to not just suspend but to end the funding for good, and to take the lead in dissolving an organization that is riddled with incitement to hate, involvement in terrorism, and the perpetuation of war.

Members of the committee will find all of the evidence that I present here on our website at UNWatch.org under "The Case Against UNRWA."

Now, on Friday Secretary General Guterres announced that he was, quote, "horrified" to learn that members of his UNRWA staff were implicated in terrorism.

Members of the committee, I'm here to bear witness and testify that Secretary General Guterres, the head of UNRWA Philippe Lazzarini, their predecessors, their senior colleagues could not possibly have been shocked that UNRWA employees are implicated in terrorism because for the past 9 years—and Chairman Smith knows this very well because he's been on this issue and he's invited me to testify—we have been uncovering, publishing, and submitting to the United Nations, to UNRWA, evidence of widespread and systematic incitement to jihadi terrorism, the praise of Nazi leader Adolf Hitler, calls to slaughter Jews on the part of UNRWA teachers, school principals, and other employees.

These reports range from 10 to 200 pages. For example, just in November we sent a report on 20 teachers who celebrated the October 7th massacre. In March together with IMPACT-se we identified 133 UNRWA teachers and staff who promoted hate and violence on social media.

In June 2022 we released a report called “UNRWA’s Teachers of Hate” and included the following Facebook posts by Elham Mansour. Quote—an UNRWA teacher—quote, “By Allah anyone who can kill and slaughter any Zionist and Israeli criminal and does not do so does not deserve to live. Kill them and pursue them everywhere. They are the greatest enemy. All Israel deserves is death.”

This is an UNRWA teacher’s statement on Facebook. We sent it to the U.N. They did nothing. We sent them reports in 2021, 2019, 2017, 2015—numerous reports. They never contacted us for information.

They refused our repeated written requests to meet to discuss the problem. They cannot say they did not know. Mr. Guterres knew. The head of the UNRWA knew. The United Nations knew. They simply chose not to act.

But it’s much worse than that. From the beginning their response to our reports was to attack us for doing the work they failed to do. If we look at Christopher Gunness, the longtime UNRWA spokesman—he’s now come back as a surrogate giving interviews on Al Jazeera—he said on Twitter the following in response to our reports.

Quote, “Appeal to journalists. Please do not turn U.N. Watch baseless allegations about anti-Semitism into a he said/she said story. It’s a nonstory.”

Quote, “U.N. Watch makes a fool of itself again, credibility dead in the water. Will anyone believe them again?”

Quote, “Interested”—he’s interested—“to find out more about U.N. Watch’s political and financial affiliations since its establishment. Can anyone advise?”

This was their response, to smear the messenger. They are not interested in finding out the root problem of incitement to terrorism.

In June 2022 when they had to suspend six out of 10 of their employees under pressure from the U.S., UNRWA Deputy Commissioner General Leni Stenseth, who’s now the director general of the Norwegian Foreign Ministry, she informed donor states and put it on her website that, quote, “The real intent of U.N. Watch—my organization—is quote, “to destroy and not build and to invite conflict, not build a lasting peace.”

Now, the U.S. and other donors have asked UNRWA to investigate and to ensure accountability. I can tell you for a decade UNRWA has shown itself to be unwilling, unable, and unfit.

Today, I wish to present our new report called “UNRWA’s Terrorgram,” which I’ve handed to each of the members and it’s on our website UNWatch.org.

In this report we document a Telegram chat group of over 3,000 UNRWA teachers in Gaza that is replete with messages, photos, and videos cheering and celebrating the massacre of October 7th.

It includes, for example, Safaa Mohammad Al Najjar on the morning of October 7th—she’s an UNRWA teacher of computers in Gaza, an administrator of this Telegram group—she celebrated the massacre, posting videos. She praised the Hamas mujahideen, the holy warriors, as they massacred, mutilated, and raped Israelis.

UNRWA English teacher Abdallah Mehjez shared a message from Hamas urging Gazans to stay put, to ignore Israeli messages asking them to evacuate for their safety, effectively doing the work of Hamas to ask Gazans to be human shields. This is an UNRWA teacher.

Abdul Kareem Mezher in our report, an elementary school teacher, celebrated the Hamas terrorists saying, quote, “May Allah keep their feet steady and guide their aim.”

When a group member wondered what these heroes, the terrorists, as they are perpetrating the massacre what they were brought up on Mezher replied, “They imbibed jihad and resistance with their mother’s milk,” and a few days later this UNRWA teacher asked to execute—asked Hamas to execute their Israeli hostages.

When Stephane Dujarric, the U.N. spokesman, was asked about our information he replied on January 11th, quote, “I mean, U.N. Watch, they have a track record and I think from our end it speaks for itself.” He tried to disparage us.

You know, just to conclude, we have massive incitement to terrorism. You know, prominent people have said bad apples—it’s a few bad apples.

We’re talking about 1,200 who belong to the organization, 3,000 in this group, 6,000 whose family members belong to it. This is not a problem of bad apples. It’s rotten to the core.

We have talked about incitement, we have talked about acts of actual violence and, finally, let’s get to the core problem and with that I conclude.

The core problem of UNRWA, the very purpose of the agency, is to perpetuate the war of 1948, to send the message to Palestinians that the war of 1948 is not over.

Don’t use cement to build homes, hospitals, and schools here in Gaza. Use it to build hundreds of miles of terror tunnels to tunnel into Israel, to invade Israel, to go back to what your homes are.

That is the message of UNRWA. We should not be surprised what happened on October 7th because that is the message that these Palestinians got for more than 70 years in UNRWA schools.

UNRWA is a failure. We have to recognize what the Swiss Foreign Minister Ignazio Cassis said. This is a country historically that’s supported—that supports the U.N. He said the following:

I quote, “UNRWA has become part of the problem. It supplies the ammunition to continue the conflict. By supporting UNRWA we keep the conflict alive. It’s a perverse logic.”

And I’m here to say if the United States and other governments that fund UNRWA truly care about helping Palestinians and Israelis it’s time to put an end to this perverse logic. We’re asking the Congress to take the lead in dissolving this agency.

Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Neuer follows:]



The Case Against UNRWA

**Written Testimony by Hillel C. Neuer
Executive Director of United Nations Watch**

Submitted to the Hearing on:
"UNRWA Exposed: Examining the Agency's Mission and Failures"

**The House Committee on Foreign Affairs
Subcommittee on Oversight and Accountability
&
Subcommittee on Global Health, Global Human Rights,
and International Organizations**

January 30, 2024



Chairman Mast, Chairman Smith, Ranking Member Crow, Ranking Member Wild, and distinguished members of both subcommittees, thank you for the opportunity to testify at this important hearing.

I come here today to present a new report by my organization, United Nations Watch, which exposes the Telegram chat group of 3,000 UNRWA teachers that celebrated and encouraged the Hamas massacre of October 7th, and other acts of Jihadi terrorism.

My purpose is to make the case that UNRWA is not, at it claims to be, a humanitarian agency that helps Palestinians, but rather, on the contrary, in the words of Swiss Foreign Minister Ignazio Cassis: "UNRWA has become part of the problem. It supplies the ammunition to continue the conflict. By supporting UNRWA, we keep the conflict alive. It's a perverse logic."

I would like to ask that my full statement be ordered part of the record.

Hamas Attacks Did Not Happen in A Vacuum: They Had UNRWA Teachers

On October 24th, United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres stated that the Hamas massacre of October 7th "did not happen in a vacuum." He was right. The attacks were perpetrated by Palestinians who for generations were indoctrinated with hatred.

As we have shown in numerous reports over the past decade, teachers and schools at the United Nations Relief and Works Agency, which runs education and social services for Palestinians, regularly call to murder Jews, and create teaching materials that glorify terrorism, encourage martyrdom, demonize Israelis and incite antisemitism.¹

For example, we reported how in May 2022, UNRWA teacher Elham Mansour, posted this on Facebook: *"By Allah, anyone who can kill and slaughter any Zionist and Israeli criminal, and doesn't do so, doesn't deserve to live. Kill them and pursue them everywhere, they are the greatest enemy. All Israel deserves is death."*²

This is how Palestinians in Gaza and elsewhere were educated in UNRWA schools, and that is exactly what the Hamas murderers and rapists did on October 7th.

In 2022 alone, UNRWA received \$344 million in U.S. funding. Yet a March 2023 report by UN Watch and Impact-SE identified 133 UNRWA educators and staff who were found to promote hate and violence on social media, and an additional 82 teachers and other staff affiliated with 30 UNRWA schools who were involved in drafting and distributing hateful content to students. The hatred is systemic at UNRWA, and its internal self-auditing mechanisms are not fit for purpose.³

¹ <https://unwatch.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/2023-Report-UNRWA.pdf>

² See UN Watch, *UNRWA's Teachers of Hate*, June 2022, at 17 <https://unwatch.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/2022-Report-UNRWAs-Teachers-of-Hate.pdf>.

³ <https://unwatch.org/un-teachers-call-to-murder-jews-reveals-new-report/>



UNRWA Refused to Take Action, Embarked on Campaign to Smear UN Watch

We repeatedly urged UNRWA to take action, but they refused. I wrote letters to UNRWA Commissioner General Philippe Lazzarini, and to his predecessor Pierre Krahenbuhl, and requested to meet in order to share information about UNRWA teachers and other staff who support terrorism, but they refused to meet. Worse, UNRWA embarked on a strategy is to smear our organization for daring to hold them to account.

For example, In June 2022, even as UNRWA announced its suspension of six out of 10 UNRWA employees only days after they were exposed by UN Watch for promoting violence and hatred, Deputy Commissioner General Leni Stenseth, a former Norwegian diplomat, [informed](#) donor states that that “the real intent” of UN Watch is “to destroy, not build,” and “to invite conflict, not build a lasting peace.” She also falsely accused us of “coordinating comments” with “satellite organizations.” We didn’t coordinate the report with anyone, and we have no satellites. Sadly, the U.S. and other Western donor states, who are the stakeholders overseeing UNRWA, apparently made no objections to UNRWA’s repeated attacks on our organization.

New Report: UNRWA’s Telegram Group of 3,000 Teachers Celebrating Hamas Massacre of October 7th

On Friday, the U.S. announced that it was suspending funding to UNRWA over the news that at least a dozen of its employees were implicated in the massacre of October 7th.

Just the day before, however, the State Department had doubled down on its support for UNRWA, [saying](#) it would be allocated a “central” role in post-war Gaza.

Let us be clear: This is a mistake. We call on President Biden to recognize the truth about UNRWA: that it is inimical to the welfare of Palestinians, as well as to the very existence of the State of Israel.

I provided a glimpse into the nature of this organization, which employs 13,000 Palestinians in Gaza alone, in a January 10th [thread on X](#) that exposed a Telegram chat group of 3,000 UNRWA teachers that is replete with messages, photos and videos celebrating the Hamas massacre of October 7th, mixed with discussions by the educators about when to expect their next UNRWA salaries.

Since then, my colleagues at UN Watch have been diligently working with professional Arabic translators in sifting through more than 249,000 user posts in the chat group.

Today I have come to present our findings, contained in our new report, [UNRWA’s Terrorogram](#). It documents how UNRWA teachers celebrated the massacre of October 7th, and how they encourage and promote Hamas terrorism.

Although the position of UNRWA, in the [words](#) of spokesman Adnan Abu Hasna, is that “we don’t know who’s in this Telegram group” nor “whether these people work, or don’t work for UNRWA,” a quick review of the group, users and messages shows the opposite.

The title of the chat group offers the first hint: it’s called the “UNRWA-Gaza Daily Vacancies Telegram Group.” It was created by [Hani Iouda](#), who advocates for the rights of UNRWA staff. He is affiliated with the Palestine Refugee Advocacy Network, apparently connected to the PLO’s refugee affairs department.



In August 2022, Jouda was [photographed](#) with UNRWA Gaza Director Thomas White at a meeting about UNRWA services. On his blog, Jouda [quotes](#) antisemitic texts that portray Jews as having a superiority complex that “fills the being of every Jewish individual,” and as being “cunning” and “clever in evil.”

The purpose of [the Telegram group](#) is to coordinate negotiations for improved working conditions for UNRWA teachers on non-permanent contracts, though many of the group members have actually been working at the agency for years.

Many of the group discussions concern UNRWA salaries, schedules, and teaching materials. Users posted internal UNRWA documents, including confidential UNRWA employee lists with ID numbers, letters and memos on UNRWA letterhead, including from Mr. White, UNRWA’s Gaza Director. Teachers in the group shared photos and videos of activities in UNRWA schools, and posted answers to exam questions for UNRWA employee training, including for the exams on “ethics and integrity” and “social media neutrality.” (I shared several of these items in a [subsequent thread](#), and more are displayed in our new report.) In sum, the group is filled with insider information for and from UNRWA teachers.

Aside from Hani Jouda, there are 18 other administrators of the group, all of whom are presumably UNRWA teachers. Seven of these we positively identified as UNRWA staff using the employee charts uploaded to the chat.

For example, there is Safaa Mohammad Al Najjar, a highly active administrator in the group. When she’s not sharing charts of 1,750 UNRWA teachers, she’s praising terrorism against Jews. On the morning of October 7th, at 7:33 AM, Al Najjar excitedly celebrated the Hamas massacre. [Sharing](#) video footage of the attacks, she exclaimed, “Resistance on the roof of settlers’ houses,” and she added a red heart emoji. She [praised](#) the Hamas “holy warriors” (Mujahideen) as they massacred, mutilated and raped Israelis.

Another of the group administrators is UNRWA English teacher Abdallah Mehjazi. According to his [LinkedIn profile](#), he previously worked for the BBC. Posting to the UNRWA teachers group on October 13th, Mehjazi shared a message from the Hamas Interior Ministry, [urging](#) Gazans to stay put and ignore Israeli messages calling on them to evacuate for their safety. In other words, an UNRWA teacher was doing Hamas’ work urging Gaza civilians not to leave harm’s way, and instead to effectively serve as human shields.

Notwithstanding all their required “Neutrality” training, other UNRWA teachers serving as administrators in the group likewise have no compunction about pronouncing their support for the murder of Jews.

On the morning of October 7th, administrator Israa Abdul Kareem Mezher, posting under the username “Sun of Sunshine”, ecstatically celebrated the Hamas terrorists: “May Allah keep their feet steady and guide their aim”; “pray for the Mujahidin”; “Allah protect them and bring them back safe.” At 7:38 AM, as news of the Hamas atrocities began to spread, Mezher cheered, “God is the greatest God.”

When a group member wondered what these “heroes” were “brought up on,” Mezher replied: “They imbibed Jihad and resistance with their mothers’ milk.” At 8:15 AM,



commenting on a photo of a dead Hamas terrorist, he wrote: "Our martyrs are in heaven, and their [Israeli] dead are in hell."

A few days later, on October 10th, this UNRWA teacher endorsed a call for Hamas to execute their Israeli hostages, sharing a statement by Hamas' Al-Qassam Brigades spokesman Abu Obaida.

Our new report identifies more than 25 other UNRWA teachers in the chat group who celebrated Jihadi terrorism and the murder of Jews.⁴ All of the evidence can be seen on our website.⁵

Astonishingly, however, the American people are regularly assured by UNRWA officials that the agency operates "on the principles of neutrality, impartiality, independence and humanity." So [wrote](#) Elizabeth Campbell in the *New York Times*, in April 2019, when she served as UNRWA's chief lobbyist in Washington. Today, she's the U.S. [Deputy Assistant Secretary of State](#) dealing with refugees.

The revolving door also goes the other way. I used to meet with [Ambassador Peter Mulrean](#) when he was United States Deputy Permanent Representative to the UN in Geneva. I shared with him our concerns about the UN's demonization of Israel. Two years later, I learned that he had joined UNRWA as their chief lobbyist in New York.

It may therefore come as little surprise that the State Department, which has doled out nearly \$1 billion to UNRWA since 2021, after Biden decided to restore funding to the agency, has never contacted UN Watch to request information about the 150 cases of incitement to terrorism that we have previously [exposed](#), perpetrated by the teachers and other UNRWA staffers who are funded by U.S. taxpayers.

In 2022, UNRWA received \$344 million from the United States. But other Western states are also major donors: \$202 million from Germany, \$114 million from the European Commission, \$61 million from Sweden, \$34 million from Norway, \$29 million from France, \$25 million from Switzerland, \$24 million from Canada, \$21 million from the UK, and \$21 million from the Netherlands. The sad reality is that our taxes are funding teachers of terrorism.

On January 10th, UN Watch's exposé of the pro-Hamas UNRWA Telegram group was [reported](#) worldwide. As a result, the office of UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres could not ignore it.

Yet rather than take responsibility for the fact that UNRWA systematically employs teachers who celebrate the murder of Jews, the first response of Mr. Guterres' spokesman was to smear my organization — for doing the monitoring that the UN itself fails to do.

Asked at the daily press briefing on January 11th whether the UN was concerned, UN Spokesman Stephane Dujarric [replied](#): "I mean, UN Watch has a track record, and I think from our end, it speaks for itself..."

⁴ UNRWA's Terrorgram, <https://unwatch.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/UN-Watch-UNRWA-Terrorgram-.pdf>

⁵ <https://unwatch.org/unrwa-terrorgram/>



This has been the modus operandi of the UN's top officials, and of UNRWA. When confronted by our meticulously supported evidence of their teachers promoting Jihadi terrorism and the murder of Jews, their immediate reaction was to kill the messenger and attack UN Watch.

UNRWA is Part of the Problem, Not the Solution

What happened in the UNRWA teachers' Telegram chat group on October 7th was not a surprise for anyone familiar with the agency. For nearly a decade, we have [documented](#) the genocidal antisemitism that is widespread among UNRWA's teachers in Gaza, the West Bank, Lebanon, Syria and Jordan.

Until now, we had repeatedly called on UNRWA and its donor states to take remedial measures, including creating an independent inquiry, and firing the teachers of hate. Yet none of these measures has ever been pursued, let alone implemented.

Chairman Mast, Chairman Smith: Today we have reached the conclusion that UNRWA and its donors are clearly not interested in pursuing genuine reform.

For example, neither UNRWA nor any of the donor states ever contacted us following the publication of our January 10th exposé about the Telegram group. While the UN spokesman stated that the UN looks into "any allegations," UNRWA has never contacted us to request evidence. UN Watch has preserved copies of messages, photos, and videos from that chat group, many of which have been deleted by the users. No genuine investigation is possible without this information.

But it's not only that UNRWA is not interested in reform. After October 7th, it's time to stop pretending that UNRWA is at all fixable. The very existence of a Telegram group of 3,000 teachers in which members celebrate Hamas atrocities is but a symptom of the core problem of UNRWA: its true purpose is to undo the 1948 creation of Israel.

Dr. Einat Wilf, co-author of [The War of Return](#), is the world expert on UNRWA. As she [explains](#), the organization currently has two main goals: First, to keep a question mark over the Jewish state until there is a "return" of the millions of descendants of Palestinian refugees.

"That is the only thing that ends the refugee status, the end of Israel," says Wilf. "So this is an organization that keeps the conflict alive, generation after generation, until the Jews don't have a state anymore."

"The second goal, which became very clear in the wake of October 7, is to free up the murderers to be able to murder Israelis." In Gaza, UNRWA pays for and takes cares of education, health and welfare, enabling Hamas to spend all their time, money and resources on weapons and terror tunnels.

I come back to the words of Swiss Foreign Minister Ignazio Cassis, [said](#) in 2018, but valid today more than ever: "UNRWA has become part of the problem. It supplies the ammunition to continue the conflict. By supporting UNRWA, we keep the conflict alive. It's a perverse logic."

If the United States and other governments that fund UNRWA truly care about helping Palestinians and Israelis, it's time to end this perverse logic. Thank you.

Mr. MAST. Thank you, Mr. Neuer.
 I now recognize Ms. Rudman for her opening statement.
 Microphone, ma'am.

**STATEMENT OF MARA RUDMAN, SCHLESINGER PROFESSOR,
 UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA MILLER CENTER**

Ms. RUDMAN. Thank you, and I thank the subcommittee chairs and ranking members——

Mr. MAST. If you could speak into it just a little bit more I think everybody will hear you better.

Ms. RUDMAN. Thank you.

I'd like to thank you and the ranking member and subcommittee Chair Smith, members of the committee, for the opportunity to appear before you. I have warm memories of my service on this committee's staff as legal counsel under Chair Lee Hamilton.

So much of how I learned to approach U.S. foreign policy and the important oversight responsibilities of this committee I attribute to the tutelage of Lee Hamilton. Of course, I alone am responsible for my statement here today.

In my written testimony I discuss, first, the U.S. national security interests at stake in this topic; second, Palestinian basic needs historically, particularly in Gaza, and why meeting them is intrinsic to Israeli security and regional security and stability; and third, why I continue to see a case for U.S. support for UNRWA and/or other U.N. entities with appropriate oversight and related pauses where necessary until and unless alternatives are created. Such support is critical for serving U.S. national security interests and sustainable security for the State of Israel.

In my brief time with you now I want to highlight five key points. No. 1, I am not here to defend UNRWA, which has many shortcomings well documented including here today. So let's start with its most immediate failures.

We have talked about those. They fired 12 staff who based on reporting and the strength and rapidity I would say of the U.S. pause as well on funding were clearly operatives who participated in the barbaric ISIS like Hamas attack on Israelis, and there are allegations that more of the 13,000 Palestinians on UNRWA's payroll may be affiliated in some way with the Hamas movement.

In my experience working with Israeli military, Palestinian leaders, and U.N. officials, I found some in UNRWA leadership to tend toward the sanctimonious, too often painting only in black and white when the reality was much more often a continuum between the two, and in so doing they rarely acknowledged faults or shortcomings within their own organization. This has rendered them on occasion blind and often blinkered in their outlook.

Two, UNRWA's mission is unique and it is critical to Israel's security and regional stability. UNRWA is mandated to provide assistance and protection specifically to some 5.4 million registered refugees.

As has been pointed out, in Gaza, the West Bank, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria UNRWA's mandate includes providing education, health care, social services to its target population as well as employment and direct relief.

There is no other organization right now. It's not WFP, not UNHCR that is set up to be able to take the reins tomorrow and fulfill this.

UNRWA employs 13,000 Palestinians in Gaza. It's the single largest employer in Gaza. It runs the only public school system in Gaza. A majority of the 2 million Palestinians in Gaza depended on UNRWA assistance before October 7th.

For the services UNRWA provides to a desperate population there is no substitute at this time. It does not mean that there are opportunities to create ways forward.

But in terms of what they're doing right now there is no substitute and they are providing for the most basic needs, No. 3—the most basic needs of Palestinians which is part and parcel of providing for security for the State of Israel.

Having 2 million famished increasingly desperate people long treated as expendable by de facto Hamas rulers with no ability to move and limited ability to provide for themselves and their families within walking distance of southern Israel threatens Israelis' security and stability.

Palestinians who are food secure and able to sustain themselves and their families and have a political horizon that will 1 day realistically offer a better future for their children alongside a State of Israel are Palestinians less likely to be drawn to or be forced to serve terrorists forces such as Hamas.

No. 4, Israeli military officials long have been committed to getting humanitarian assistance into Gaza—Israeli military officials. I know from the countless hours I spent with them on the details they prioritize doing so because they saw it as directly serving Israeli security interests.

They work closely with UNRWA leaders and other U.N. officials to devise the most effective and secure means for executing these aims.

They did so appreciating that there was risk involved but they saw a far greater risk to their country and to their security if goods were not able to flow and they knew these U.N. entities were vital actors to ensure provision of such services in Gaza in particular.

Five, U.S. aid to UNRWA is key to meeting basic needs of Palestinians, particularly in Gaza, and that's critical to Israel's security and to U.S. security. For that aid to resume we need a framework to assess what has gone so terribly wrong with the agency, and whether it can be righted with internal reform or requires a transition of responsibilities to another organization within or outside the U.N.

The development and oversight of the audit necessary for such assessment should be led from outside of UNRWA, no question. I have some thoughts on who that—who could do that.

Aid must resume to UNRWA at the same time, though, as the assessment is being carried out. The United States, Israel, the world, cannot afford the risk of famine taking root in Gaza.

That problem will not stay in Gaza. It is very directly threatening to the security and stability of Israel and the region and thus the United States.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Rudman follows:]

Mara E. Rudman

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Testifying before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs: Subcommittee on Oversight and Accountability; and Subcommittee and Global Health, Global Human Rights, International Organizations, for joint hearing entitled: "UNRWA Exposed: Examining the Agency's Mission and Failures."

Tuesday, January 30, 2023

I thank the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittees on Oversight & Accountability and Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations, for the opportunity to appear before you. I have warm memories of my service on the Committee staff, as legal counsel to Chair Lee Hamilton. So much of how I learned to approach U.S. foreign policy, and the important oversight responsibilities of this Committee, I attribute to the wise tutelage and counsel of Chairman Hamilton. His past guidance is foundational to the case I make to you today. Of course, I am solely responsible for my statement, and represent only myself.

Consistent with my Hamiltonian training, I will start with a focus on U.S. national security interests at stake, and how/why that should shape decision-making on how the US proceeds regarding UNRWA and UN operations more generally; I will then highlight historic Palestinian needs, particularly in Gaza, and will conclude with how I see the first two areas making the case for continued U.S. support for UNRWA and other UN entities, with appropriate oversight and related pauses where necessary, until and unless alternatives are created. Such support is critical for serving US national security interests, and sustainable security for the State of Israel.

I. U.S. national security interests at stake

United States security is best protected by a secure and stable Middle East. This is consistent with the national defense strategies of Presidents Trump and Biden. They describe China as a pacing competitor, and Russia as a constant and immediate threat. With a keen eye on how the U.S. outpaces and out-competes these Great Powers, we need to be cognizant that we (and they) are operating on a multi-dimensional world chessboard. In this context, the United States is best served by stability and strong relationships in the Middle East, throughout the African continent, and in Latin America, as well as in Europe and the Asia-Pacific. The time, attention, and resources focused on the Middle East now, as a virtual tinderbox of regional instability has developed, illustrates the point. Vigilance and resources are required to keep the tinder from igniting, or keep the fire maximally contained where it does ignite.

If security and stability in the Middle East is critical to protecting American interests, a safe, secure, sustainable State of Israel is arguably the most important part of the regional equation, from a U.S. perspective. Embedded within the U.S. Israel Strategic Partnership Joint Declaration of July 2022 is language that states that "[c]onsistent with the longstanding security relationship between the United States and Israel and the unshakeable U.S. commitment to Israel's security these commitments are bipartisan and sacrosanct, and they are not only moral commitments, but also strategic commitments that are vitally important to the national security of the United States itself." To review the basic demographic facts, Israel has a population of approximately 9 million people, which includes about 1.7 million Muslim citizens). Palestinians in Gaza number over two million, and Palestinians in the West Bank about 3.2 million. UNRWA has responsibility for administering to some 5.4 million registered Palestinian refugees, many of whom are resident in Gaza, or the West Bank.

II. Security, stability, and Palestinians in Gaza (and the West Bank)

I describe the situation for Palestinians in Gaza not only from research and policy study, but also from direct on the ground observation and experience. I first traveled to Gaza in 1987, when driving into the territory involved no real checkpoints; I subsequently returned on staff delegations during my service on this Committee post Oslo, and with President Clinton in 1999 when he spoke to a convening of the Palestinian National Council on their rejection of the passages of the

Palestinian Charter calling for the destruction of Israel. I was there several times as a non-government official, including in support of President George W. Bush's push for Palestinian elections in 2006. My comments reflect this on the ground exposure, exposure to many Palestinians from Gaza over the years, and my work with Israeli military and security officials, and UN officials, related to the flow of goods and services to and from Gaza and the West Bank.

Gaza has long been a particularly challenging place to live. Palestinians living there, whether under Egypt's control from 1948 to 1956, and 1957 to 1967, or Israel's oversight essentially from 1967, are a relatively large (and ever growing) population packed in a relatively small space. The Gaza Strip is approximately twice the size of Washington, DC, with three times the population, with significant constraints on individuals' exit and entry, and on import and export of goods, extraordinarily limited economic opportunity, extraordinarily limited educational access, overtaxed water and electricity sources. Since the time that Hamas asserted de facto control in a violent overthrow of Palestinian Authority forces in June 2007, the vast bulk of that two million population have suffered even more, as Hamas did and does not prioritize taking care of the Palestinian population it rules, to understate significantly its reign of terror. This was the case prior to the ISIS-like and barbaric Hamas attack on Israelis on Oct 7 of last year, and Israel's subsequent military campaign to eliminate the real and present danger Hamas poses to the Israeli state. And now Palestinians in Gaza, already in a bad place, are in dire circumstances: a huge percentage are homeless, food shortages are intense, clean drinking water is a scarcity, and reestablishing even the non-fully viable economy in place previously will take considerable time.

Having two million famished, increasingly desperate people, long treated as expendable by de facto Hamas rulers, with no ability to move and limited ability to provide for themselves and their families, within walking distance of the portion of Israel's nine million who live in southern Israel, threatens Israeli security and stability. And West Bank Palestinians as well are further destabilized by what is happening in Gaza. Not only are there Hamas cells within/among certain West Bank refugee camps, but the challenges the Palestinian Authority has had in governing effectively since the departure of Salam Fayyad as prime minister in 2013 are well documented.

Providing for the most basic needs of Palestinians is part and parcel of providing security for the State of Israel. Palestinians that are food secure, and able to sustain themselves and their families, and have a political horizon that will one day realistically offer a better future for their children, are Palestinians less likely to be drawn to, or be forced to serve terrorist forces such as Hamas.

When I served in President Obama's administration, I spent a great deal of my time with Israeli military leaders committed to getting humanitarian assistance into Gaza and some goods exported. They prioritized doing so not for altruistic purposes, but because they saw it as directly serving Israeli security interests. They worked closely with UNSCO, UNDP, WFP, and UNRWA leaders to devise the most effective and secure means for executing these aims. They did so appreciating that there was risk involved, but they saw far greater risk to their country, and their security, if goods were not able to flow, and they knew these UN entities were vital actors to ensure provision of such services in Gaza in particular.

III. Role of UN entities, including UNRWA

The United Nations has been involved in the region since its establishment in 1945, and prior to the existence of the State of Israel. The offices of the United Nations Special Coordinator (UNSCO) coordinates the humanitarian and development work of UN agencies and programs in the West Bank and Gaza, in support of the Palestinian Authority and the Palestinian people. Set up in 1994, UNSCO is intended to strengthen UN inter-agency cooperation, mobilizing financial, technical, economic and other assistance. Multiple UN organizations are tasked with providing humanitarian and development assistance to Palestinians. Amid the arguably too many UN entities operating in this area, UNDP, WFP, and UNRWA stand out for the depth and breadth of their role. UNRWA, a United Nations agency established by the General Assembly in 1949, is unique in the UN system in that it is mandated to provide assistance and protection specifically to some 5.4 million registered refugees, in Gaza, the West Bank, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria. UNRWA's mandate has broadened over years to include providing education, health care, and social services to its target population, as well as employment and direct relief.

Is UNRWA, or any of the UN entities perfect? Far from it. The recent termination of 12 UNRWA employees who allegedly participated in the horrific Hamas attacks of October 7, provides one of the more extreme examples. It also shows the need for the ongoing oversight the Biden administration displayed in communicating to the UN that action and thorough investigation was required. For the services UNRWA provides to a desperate population, however, there is no substitute at this time.

Before or alongside any case for phasing out UNRWA in its entirety, consideration must be given to how these 5.4 million Palestinians, including at this point nearly the entire two million in Gaza, will survive with sufficient food, water, electricity, education, and the economic means to support themselves, ultimately. Any other approach seriously endangers Israeli and Palestinians' security – which in turn impacts security for others in the region and beyond, including in the United States. Given the fundamental responsibility of every president of the United States to safeguard this country's security, it is not a risk I would advise any US administration to take.

Mr. MAST. Thank you, ma'am. I now recognize myself for questions and I'd like to start with you.

Looking at some of your comments here you said that you're not here to defend UNRWA, but you did also say in your comments that you are here to make the case that we should continue to support UNRWA.

Kind of sounds to me a little bit like having your cake and eating it, too. But I want to ask you a few questions about this.

Do the Rohingya have an UNRWA?

Ms. RUDMAN. I believe I stated, sir, that UNRWA is a unique agency with a unique vision, and also that it's not the same all the time.

Mr. MAST. So no UNRWA for Rohingya? No UNRWA for Rohingya? None? Ma'am, no UNRWA for Rohingya?

Ms. RUDMAN. Sir, as I said UNRWA is unique.

Mr. MAST. No UNRWA for Sudanese?

Ms. RUDMAN. That would—that would imply by an organization being unique that there is not a similar organization elsewhere in the world for other refugees.

Mr. MAST. So none for the Sudanese either, correct? You've worked in this field. None for the Sudanese?

Ms. RUDMAN. I'm sorry, sir. I'm doing my best to answer your question, which I believe I'm doing.

Mr. MAST. None for the Sudanese either.

So I'd like to know from your opinion what percent or number of UNRWA employees do you believe are Hamas or support Hamas?

Ms. RUDMAN. I do not have the basis for making that assessment. I read the same press reports that I'm sure you've read that talk about a percentage within UNRWA that is, roughly, around the same percentage as estimated in the Palestinian population at large in Gaza. So between 10 and 15 percent.

Mr. MAST. Say that one—your estimate is that between 10 and 15 percent of UNRWA employees, just to make sure I'm hearing you correctly, are possibly Hamas or supportive of Hamas or Palestinian Islamic Jihad or Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade or one of the terrorist organizations that exists in the Gaza Strip?

Ms. RUDMAN. What I'm saying, sir, is that press reports have indicated that the percentages of UNRWA staff that may be affiliated in some way with Hamas are, roughly, similar to the—to the percentages in the general population that are thought to be affiliated. So between 10 and 15 percent. But I want to be clear that I'm relying—

Mr. MAST. Do you look at that and say that's out of this world, that's crazy, no way, not a chance? Or do you look at it and say, seems like it might be a reasonable estimate?

Ms. RUDMAN. I believe if they employ 13,000 people in the population—the single biggest employer—it would not be surprising if the percentages are, roughly, that of the general population.

Mr. MAST. Thank you. As you're here to make the case for continued support for UNRWA, per your statement, what would you need to see to say this is a threshold, this has gone too far, there can no longer be support for UNRWA? Would it be if UNRWA fired 100 people?

If they said 100 people—we have the evidence these individuals took part in the attack. Would that to you reach the threshold of saying, all right, I'm no longer here to support UNRWA?

Ms. RUDMAN. I'm here, sir, to look at what's in the best interest of U.S. national security, which was my teaching under the former chair of this committee, and what's in the best interest of Israel's security and I believe that is finding some function, some way of providing for the most basic needs of Palestinians.

Mr. MAST. So 100 people confirmed working for Hamas as a part of UNRWA, for you, would not be a threshold for cutting ties with UNRWA?

Ms. RUDMAN. So for me what would be a threshold is finding a suitable framework that can be put in place both to evaluate UNRWA and to be able to go forward with other means of providing aid at the same time.

Mr. MAST. So there's no threshold for bad behavior?

Ms. RUDMAN. The threshold is U.S. national security interests and concerns for me, sir.

Mr. MAST. No threshold for bad behavior, though?

Ms. RUDMAN. Same answer applies.

Mr. MAST. So none. And I think this is concerning because I heard this in remarks from my colleagues. You were invited here as the Democrat witness of choice. They chose for you to be the person that they requested to be here.

And, again, in your remarks you say that you're here to make the case for continued support of UNRWA and I think this is what we're going to continue to see very likely from the Administration is in this case that there is no threshold for bad behavior.

It does not matter if it's one individual that was a part of Hamas or one of these other terrorist organizations, or a hundred that were a part of them that took part in the attacks, or there's a hundred right now that are participating in holding hostages.

Doesn't matter. No threshold for bad behavior. This is some sacrosanct entity that just simply must continue no matter what, and that cannot be the case that we have, moving forward.

I will not show support for that especially, as I said in my opening statement, I think that we have a shell game going on from the Administration right now where they're saying that they're cutting off the funding, pausing the funding for UNRWA, but in fact they waited until just after they allowed tens of millions of dollars to be released to UNRWA and then now they are saying they're going to pause funding for UNRWA. Absolute shell game, in my opinion.

In that I'm now going to yield time to Ranking Member Crow for as many questions as he needs to ask.

Mr. CROW. Thank you, Chairman.

Well, first of all, we need to just clear the air here. You mischaracterized our witness' testimony repeatedly and tried to put words into her mouth. She did not say at any point that there was no threshold for bad behavior.

In fact, she specifically answered your question about what the criteria and the framework should be and that is centering our national security and our interests, centering Israel's security and interests, as well as the rights and dignity of the Palestinian people.

Mr. MAST. Did you want to yield?

Mr. CROW. Those should be the measures and the gauges and, frankly, I will push back on the notion that she answered in the manner in which you characterized her answer.

Mr. MAST. Did you want to yield to me or——

Mr. CROW. Yes, I'll yield to you.

Mr. MAST. I did very specifically ask her to clarify, are you saying that there is no threshold. I asked the question are you saying there is——

Mr. CROW. Yes, and she answered what her threshold was. She gave a very clear answer to that.

Mr. MAST. No threshold for bad behavior.

Mr. CROW. No, she provided the framework for what her threshold was.

Mr. MAST. Which was no threshold——

Mr. CROW. Because it wasn't your answer you kept going after her.

Mr. MAST. I asked for—I do not want to take up your time. It's yours. But I did ask if there's no threshold for bad behavior.

Mr. CROW. And she answered very clearly.

Mr. MAST. Without answering.

Mr. CROW. So, Ms. Rudman—I will reclaim my time if that's fine for you, Chairman.

Mr. MAST. Absolutely.

Mr. CROW. All right. But I also heard you say, Ms. Rudman, is that you have no allegiance or loyalty to UNRWA the organization. Just like me, right. I have no allegiance and loyalty to any one organization. I'm not going to sit here and defend UNRWA nor should I, and I have very real concerns.

What I have an allegiance and loyalty to is the mission, right, the services that are being provided by this entity and that is your concern as well.

So what I want to do is get beyond the point where people just criticize because the problem with policy right now is we're very long on criticism. People roll in here and they're very long on criticism and they're very short on solutions.

So I'd like to take a moment to talk about solutions, right, and you made a very clear point that despite the very real concerns about UNRWA they are the only game in town on some very key points.

Right now there's no other entity that exists that provides the scope of services that UNRWA provides to the Palestinian people.

So could you explain for us for a moment, given your vast experience in this area and the substantial time that you've spent personally in Gaza, how we would go about identifying those core services and transitioning them either to existing organizations that currently do not provide those services or to create a new entity that would still do it.

Because at the end of the day there are very important things that need to happen, right, and services that need to be provided. So how do we get there?

Ms. RUDMAN. Thank you, Representative Crow, for your comments and for the question.

I think that the most basic needs I'm going to put, though I recognize for this panel education is a primary focus, I would focus

first on food and water and electricity, understanding and appreciating the importance of education as well.

And so I would look at the structures inside Gaza, the staffing and the employees. As we have talked about, UNRWA has many more than—they have the whole infrastructure inside.

So how do you replicate that? That would require figuring out whether it's UNHCR—I think less likely. UNDP is quite active in Gaza but, again, not anywhere near the numbers. World Food Programme that handles distribution and goods going in and out but not with, again, staff on the ground to carry out the delivery of these means.

There are ways you might be able to divide the responsibilities among AND between but you're still going to need screening mechanisms, auditing mechanisms, things to ensure that what has happened with UNRWA and their staff is not replicated elsewhere.

What I can tell you is that the Israeli military, recognizing absolutely the importance of getting goods into Gaza, does not want to be, ought not to be for a variety of reasons in Gaza responsible for distribution of that food.

They are quite active on the crossing points at—and have been historically again pre-October 7th at Nir Oz and at a couple of the other crossing points—thank you, Kerem Shalom—and so watch very closely goods coming in and out and have kind of strict means for that.

So there are roles, again, for Israeli military but they are not inside Gaza. So what I would do is figure out exactly who does what, who has which resources in which ways, how do you make sure that food and water, the basic necessities, are getting in to people and how you develop the mechanisms to better screen staff who are working for these—for any of these agencies at the same time, not just UNRWA.

Mr. CROW. And because UNRWA is a organization that historically lives paycheck to paycheck, so to speak, and in the United States and I believe nine other countries at this point have joined the U.S. in cutting funding and I've seen estimates that that funding will run out by mid-February.

Is it your—is it your professional opinion that what you just described could be accomplished in 2 weeks or do we really need to look seriously at, you know, an interim gap measure or to resume some limited funding with appropriate oversight to make sure people do not starve to death in that time?

Ms. RUDMAN. That's exactly my concern. I do not think it can be reserved and it can be put in place by flipping a switch, and it will take time. I think it's important that it be done. I think there are ways of doing it.

But it's not going to happen in a week or two and I heard that the view that there's much more money out there UNRWA is very much paycheck to paycheck, probably, like, still paying last month's debts and the United States and Germany are about—kind of over \$500 million between the two. So quite a significant impact.

So there needs to—my view is there needs to be some transition plan, which I recognize is not—and I do not speak for the United States government—I have not heard what their plan is on that front.

Mr. CROW. Thank you. I yield back.

Mr. MAST. Thank you, Mr. Crow.

And I would say that I do not have an allegiance to UNRWA's mission. My allegiance is to America and Americans singularly.

I now yield to Ranking Member Smith.

Mr. SMITH. I appreciate that.

Mr. Goldberg, you talked about the horror show, and I think that was a very apt description of what UNRWA does. I mean, do you know of any instance where an UNRWA employee or leader dissented from Hamas and offered a vision that was inclusive and respectful of Jews?

Mr. Sheff, you talked about the hate and violence being endemic. You know, one of my—when I was growing up I remember eight or 9 years old I saw the musical by Rodgers and Hammerstein called "South Pacific" and there was a—there was one song that as a young kid caught my attention and I've thought of it ever since in all of my human rights work, and I do a lot of it, because it just—it talked about hate.

Two of the paragraphs—two of the song, "You've got to be taught to hate and fear. You've got to be taught from year to year. It's got to be drummed into your dear little ear. You've got to be carefully taught. You've got to be taught before it's too late, before your sixth or seventh or eighth, to hate all the people your ancestors, relatives hate. You've got to be carefully taught."

In my opinion, and I've been at this—I served with Lee Hamilton—I've been raising UNRWA issues for decades. We have given them as the U.S. Government \$7 billion years to date and we get crickets back. We get false reform that never happens.

There's no transparency and, unfortunately, it has gotten worse over the years. It has—and we have seen the results. One generation of young people after another who wants to kill Jewish people, who hate Jewish people, have an absolute ugly caricature of who Jewish people and Jewish kids and adults actually are and dream of the day when they are all killed.

I mean, is there anybody in an UNRWA camp or in an UNRWA school that dissents from the Hamas charter of 1988 and stands up and say, you know, that charter is an outrage when you talk about human rights?

Do they? I do not see them doing it. If they do it what happens to them?

Mr. Hillel, you talked about bombshell revelations. None of this is a bombshell to you or me and others who've been following this. I've met with the UNRWA board over the years. They always have a nice slick presentation that sounds like, wow, what are we talking about? They know better than us.

And, yes, I understand why the Israelis as a matter of necessity would have to do some kind of accommodation. What else are they going to do when the entire international community including the United States are all on board, say this is the means to the end?

I believe that the people in Gaza do need to get food, clothing, shelter, and their children need an education that is free of anti-Semitic hate. That's what they deserve.

This is—this brainwashing, frankly, in my opinion, is child abuse of these kids. You wonder why they're filled with all this hate. They're taught year to year to year to year.

And so if you want to comment on that as well. I do believe they need a new platform. You know, I do not know if UNHCR or any of those—maybe, you know, necessity is the mother of invention.

This has to be the pivot point what has happened with UNRWA now, and the international community including the Biden Administration and if he gets another term or whoever follows has to say enough is enough.

Otherwise, this will be happening again. A couple years we'll have another incidence like this and we'll have more kids toting AK-47s and rocket grenade launchers and other means of violence who are killing innocent people.

As you said, Mr. Sheff, about the burning bus you see that bus burning and they're celebrating. I mean, that is disgusting on steroids and I do hope, you know, you would speak to what might be a follow-on group.

But, you know, to say we're going to go right back to UNRWA and we're going to go right back to the same teachers who have been inculcating this hate-filled agenda which is poisoning those kids those kids need—you know, we see it with child soldiers in Uganda. Remember all those years? I've worked on all of that, too.

These kids needed to be deprogrammed and find a way out of the hate that they have been—that has been inculcated into their hearts, minds, and souls in this case by their teachers.

So if you could speak to that, Mr. Sheff.

Mr. SHEFF. ? Sure. I've never heard that musical reference before. Extremely opposite. And thank you so much for that.

Yes, textbooks are uniquely authoritative, especially in the MENA region in the Middle East where you get one book, one grade, one subject, and they carry the values, the identities that leaders wish to pass down to the next generation for good or for bad.

This is how we create the societies of the future that we want to see, through these textbooks, through education and, of course, for bad. You know, we know that one of the first things that Hitler did when he came to power was change the textbooks and there he was in 1939 with enough young people who would join the Einsatzgruppen and commit those terrible acts they committed and textbooks were used then for good by Germans after the war in order to deradicalize that society.

They are incredibly powerful and, yes, Palestinian children deserve a set of textbooks which is filled with ideas of peace and tolerance, with those UNESCO standards. And this is not rocket science, by the way.

This has been done time and time and time again. These textbooks can be changed in a matter of weeks. They look like this.

What you're looking at here is a Palestinian textbook. This one actually has a picture of Dalal Mughrabi, the terrorist that I was telling you about before which is taught in Palestinian Authority schools, which is taught in UNRWA schools and was taught in Hamas schools.

You know, it's a magazine. All you need to do is switch the PDF, put in material which is better than Dalal Mughrabi material which can inspire young people rather than teach them to be terrorists.

Weeks—that is how long it can take in order to change the school curriculum. So we're talking about what can we do in the future. Again, this can be done really simply.

Those schools in Gaza can have a new school curriculum which is filled with these ideas of peace and tolerance and, by the way, it needs to be the Palestinian Authority as well because they are producing this.

UNRWA is teaching the textbooks which the Palestinian Authority created as well, of course, as UNRWA creating its own material. So let us insist on this. Let us demand this. Futures absolutely rely on changing these textbooks.

Thank you, sir.

Mr. MAST. Thank you, Mr. Sheff.

Mr. Smith?

Mr. SMITH. Just one very brief followup.

I remember in June 2021 when UNRWA was pressured into removing their Gaza director after he gave an interview that Hamas and others condemned.

Can you—perhaps, Hillel, you can give us a little background on what happened there?

Mr. NEUER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

That episode is actually a very telling episode. You know, there was a war between Israel and Hamas in May 2021 and afterwards the UNRWA Gaza director Matthias Schmale, a German national, was interviewed on Israeli TV and he was asked whether the Israeli strikes against Hamas were precise and he said, yes, they were very precise.

And he wasn't thinking when he gave his answer to adhere to the Hamas script, which UNRWA officials invariably do, what everyone else in Gaza does, because it's an authoritarian terrorist regime. If you do not follow the script when you speak to the media, you're going to get in a lot of trouble. You're going to get hurt very badly.

And he said—he conceded that Israel's strikes against Hamas were very precise. They were able to hit a precise point when they were successful and not—and not hit civilians and so forth.

And moments later there were protests orchestrated by Hamas throughout Gaza. There were pictures of him photoshopped onto an Israeli military uniform as if he was an Israeli—even though he's someone who was quite anti-Israel for many years.

But because he slipped in his interview he was deemed persona non grata, protests against him and his deputy, and he was forced to leave. Hamas forced the head of UNRWA in Gaza to leave.

Then the—his boss, Deputy Commissioner General Leni Stenseth, a former Norwegian diplomat who has gone back to Oslo to be the head of their foreign ministry, she went to visit Yahya Sinwar.

He is the evil mastermind of the October 7th massacre, someone who kills people with his own hands—you know, Palestinians with his own hands who he considers collaborators. A vicious murderer.

She went to see him—this is their headline in the newspaper—and she said that she wants to reaffirm her solidarity with the Palestinians. Basically, the message was we went off script but do not worry.

Mr. MAST. Thank you, Mr. Neuer.

We have to move on to the next person, Mr. Neuer. Thank you. Thank you for your testimony.

The chair now recognizes Ms. Wild.

Ms. WILD. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

My first and foremost concern is always for children. It was unbearable to see what happened to Israeli children on October 7th and since when they were tortured, murdered, taken hostage, many of them having to witness their parents' murders. It was horrific.

It's equally unbearable, at least for me, to watch what Palestinian children are suffering and their deaths, their medical problems, which are extensive, their hunger.

And so I start with the children as a starting point because I think that if we consider all children to be innocent and deserving of a safe place to live, water to drink, and food to eat we might be able to find some common ground in solving this problem.

And aside from that basic humanitarian concept I think we have to recognize that desperate childhoods often give rise to violence in adulthood whether it's here in the United States or elsewhere, and I think we can all agree we do not want to create future generations of terrorists. Full stop on that.

So with that, I'm going to direct my question to you, Ms. Rudman, to the national security part of this. You've got a special expertise in national security and your testimony—your written testimony has reflected that focus. Thank you for that very comprehensive report.

Could you talk about this concept of aid to the Palestinian civilian population from a national security perspective?

Ms. RUDMAN. Sure. Thank you, Congresswoman.

The issue is, as you have reflected, the threat from the risk to security from people who are desperate and Gaza—I was first there in 1987 or 1988.

It has never been an easy place to live. It has gotten worse and worse and more and more difficult even before October 7th and certainly under Hamas rule.

I would just say on that point to Chairman Smith's comment I actually do know a number of Palestinians who survived very difficult childhoods, who survived UNRWA schools. They cannot speak out publicly in Gaza because of the nature of Hamas rule and the lack of freedom of speech.

But there are any number of Palestinians who are absolutely concerned about both their future, their children's future. Those who could leave and are living in other places also under very difficult circumstances.

But there are any number of people who can be reached with their basic needs being taken care of while they cannot do it themselves who want jobs, who want futures, and it's in our national security interest to find a way.

And Israel, I believe, has repeatedly made the calculation that it's in their security interest as well to ensure that basic needs are covered for people who—and let's just be clear.

These are people who—it is a small area from Israel itself. Gaza is maybe twice the size of Washington, DC. but with no exit—entrance or exit. But it is actually walking distance as Dahara (phonetic) and I was at kibbutz Nir Oz. I was at kibbutz Be'eri in December. They are within easy walking distance of Gaza.

And in addition to that, there's a population of three and a half million Palestinians in the West Bank who watch, reflect, see what's happening to Palestinians in Gaza and react as well.

And so on the relative scale of what it costs the United States, and I do not make light of what \$300 million is—that's a significant amount of money. But the cost to the United States, the cost to Israel, the cost to regional stability, of not feeding people, of not getting water in, is far, far higher than a clearly inadequate agency but the agency that has the infrastructure doing it until and unless we have an alternative.

So I think it very much comes back to the risk that the United States is willing to take on in this situation and the risks that Israel will absorb as well if we do not find a means to continue to go forward with basic services.

Ms. WILD. Thank you. I would have followup, except that my time is up. Thank you very much. I yield.

Mr. MAST. Thank you, Ranking Member Wild.

The chair now recognizes Mr. Perry.

Mr. PERRY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ladies and gentlemen, I think it shocks the conscience of every person even if you've, because of your professional norms, have been exposed to some of this kind of stuff to see the kind of carnage that's happened in Israel and Gaza since October. Shocks the conscience.

However, there's a reason this is happening and it's not the Jews that attacked Gaza. It is not the Jews.

Mr. Neuer, UNRWA's commissioner General Lazzarini do you know of any time that he has denounced the Hamas charter?

Mr. NEUER. No, sir. I'm aware of no time that he has ever denounced the Hamas charter.

Mr. PERRY. And I suspect, like me, you have read the Hamas charter and you know that it specifically calls for the destruction of Israel and the massacre of Jewish people?

Mr. NEUER. Absolutely.

Mr. PERRY. Mr. Goldberg, does the United Nations Relief Workers Agency—UNRWA—the United Nations Relief Workers Agency, does it provide cash or simply materiel, supplies, to the people in Gaza? How does—for the American people that aren't familiar how does that work?

Mr. GOLDBERG. There's a range of services that would typically be provided by State actors and so rather than—this is, by the way, why if you're a supporter of a two-State solution, I've never understood why you support UNRWA. It's antithetical to statehood building.

But there are a number of—a range of local government type services—streets and sanitation, housing, education. So a lot of services that are being provided but there's also cash assistance.

Now, back in the day when we started oversight in the Congress this was literally bags of cash being handed out and they did not have—

Mr. PERRY. So can I—can I drill down on that? Because Ms. Rudman, I think, appropriately said, you know, we have got to provide food, water, electricity.

I imagine when you say housing that might be building material and thinking in my mind's eye, thinking back to pictures from Gaza of tunnels. Tunnels are hard to build. You know, you need—you need equipment. I remember the tunnels were lighted so that's electricity.

My point is for a concrete tunnel with electricity you probably got the concrete somewhere. You probably got the electricity somewhere, and it's reasonable to believe, I think, that the American taxpayer has been a part and parcel to funding that stuff. Is that a stretch for me?

Mr. GOLDBERG. That is not a stretch, sir. That is guaranteed.

Mr. PERRY. So if I'm running my household and I only have so much a month to feed my family, provide a roof over their head, clothing and education, but I want to spend all my money killing my neighbor is it my neighbor's—is it my neighbor's job then to go ahead and continue to provide the roof over my head and the food in my belly?

Is that—does that seem reasonable to anybody here? Does it—Mr. Goldberg, does it seem reasonable to you?

Mr. GOLDBERG. Nothing about UNRWA has ever seemed reasonable to me.

Mr. PERRY. Well, the United Nations—the United Nations Relief Workers Agency is a terrorist-supporting entity, ladies and gentlemen. America's taxpayers pay for the absolute worst of it. The absolute worst of it.

They pay for all—they do not get a say. They send over the money, they send over the material, and it gets used against America's interests. It gets used against America's national security interest, against the world's national security interests, and everyone in this room knows it.

Everyone in this room knows it including people that would protest by showing blood on their hands. They're literally the ones with the blood on their hands. They're supporting that.

Now, for those who say there is no other organization to take this mission, no substitute, and that we must continue to fund UNRWA—the United Nations Relief Workers Agency—while the assessment is being made—while the assessment is being made.

Well, I do not know how many years you need to make the assessment, ladies and gentlemen. I've made the assessment. The American people are tired of getting up early in the morning and going to work and trying to pay their bills and also be forced to pay for people that get money from UNRWA to slaughter Jews.

They're tired of doing it and they're sick of it. We had a vote on the 28th of September. I know because I offered the amendment—

I offered the amendment to defund this terror-supporting organization. Came close—213 to 218. We lost. We came close.

If we had the vote today, I suspect it might be different because America can finally see what many of us here have seen for years and decades, years and decades, as you have, Mr. Goldberg.

This absolutely must end and must end now.

Mr. Chairman, I think this highlights and the information that we have highlights the fact that we all believe in the best of people and humanity and our heart cries out to anybody on either side of this equation and the tragedies that have happened.

But we, the United States of America and the American people, cannot be complicit any longer, and I yield.

Mr. MAST. Thank you, Mr. Perry. The chair now recognizes Ms. Manning.

Ms. MANNING. Thank you, Chairman Mast and Chairman Smith, and thank you to all our witnesses for joining us today.

I am outraged by reports that at least 12 of UNRWA's own employees participated in or helped plan the heinous October 7th terrorist attacks against Israel, attacks in which 1,200 innocent civilians were brutally murdered and hundreds were taken hostage with many, including young women and children, who are still being held by Hamas.

It is sickening to think that any teacher of children would participate in that attack or that many other UNRWA employees might have links to Hamas or Islamic jihad.

I strongly support humanitarian assistance for the innocent Palestinians in Gaza and what Hamas has done to the very people it was elected to govern is appalling.

That's why what the Administration—but it is simply intolerable to allow a U.N. agency to have employees who are members of Hamas and that is why the Administration was right to suspend funding to UNRWA pending investigation. Our international assistance can never be used to promote terrorism.

Many of us have long demanded reform to UNRWA's fundamental problems including its mission creep, the ongoing politicization of its mandate, its own employees' violations of U.N. principles of neutrality and tolerance, and the persistence of biased, anti-Semitic content in textbooks used in UNRWA schools in both the West Bank and Gaza.

In many UNRWA schools teachers have literally been raising terrorists with the appalling anti-Semitic content in their textbooks.

Given the serious legitimate humanitarian needs as we look at the day after Gaza I hope our witnesses can help us understand how we can go about overhauling UNRWA because I just do not think we can tolerate what we have recently seen and I'm concerned that what we have recently seen is just the tip of the iceberg with regard to UNRWA.

Mr. Goldberg, according to its website, the U.N. High Commission on Refugees works—protects refugees and works with governments and partners to find long-term solutions so they can find a safe place to call home, and that includes integration into the host community or resettlement into integration in a third country and helping them access livelihoods so they can live with greater independence and contribute to their communities.

In other words, the UNHRC helps refugees build new lives. Does UNRWA do this?

Mr. GOLDBERG. No, ma'am. It has a mandate to keep people in refugee status indefinitely and raise them to internalize that as a vision that 1 day they will return to homes and destroy modern Israel, push the Jews into the sea.

It is core to the mission to keep Palestinians limited in their economic and political rights. In my view, it is anti-human rights as an organization.

Ms. MANNING. And the day after this conflict is resolved if the international community were to establish a new mechanism to serve the same population in Gaza, how would or should its workforce and its mandate be different from UNRWA's current workforce and mandate?

Mr. GOLDBERG. That's a great question, ma'am, and that's actually where the focus of our attention should be. If we all can agree on the premise that UNRWA is done and now we're moving on to what comes next now we can actually have a policy discussion, which is very important.

The U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees can play a role. There are other places in the world where conflict breaks out where we have IDPs. UNHCR moves in very quickly.

By the way, they did that in Syria where UNRWA was operating. UNRWA couldn't operate anymore. UNHCR came in and took over a lot of responsibilities.

We have the World Food Programme. We have UNICEF. We have other organizations. But also if we get to a place where Hamas is finally out of control of Gaza, where we get to a place where we have reform in the Palestinian Authority, at some point we also have to talk about moving this out of the multilateral system into a bilateral aid program with true oversight, metrics for success, how are you moving people to economic success, political prosperity, openness, et cetera.

If you're just looking at handing a check over to an organization that just keeps people in despair you're going to get more people in despair. You're going to get the terrorism you do not want.

Ms. MANNING. Thank you. I have many more questions but, unfortunately, my time has expired.

Mr. MAST. Thank you, Ms. Manning.

The chair now recognizes Mr. Mills.

Mr. MILLS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I think it's simple to say that over the 20-plus years that the United States has been involved in overseas conflict, whether that be the war in Iraq or the war in Afghanistan, that you cannot simply defeat ideology through bombs and bullets.

This is something that is taught. This is something that is trained, and that is why even after the Russians fell in Afghanistan it was such a big element for us to want to fight toward education of our children because it's very proven through many studies that children are not born with hate. They are taught hate.

And so I agree with many of our panelists on the ideas that the first thing that we have to do is root out the hatred in these curriculums and textbooks that are actually intentionally looking at breeding the next generation of terrorists.

The problem for me, however, is that many are trying to act as if the United States stops being a donor to UNRWA that it simply ceases to exist. It's just not true.

You've got Germany, EU, Sweden, Norway, Japan, France, Saudi Arabia, Switzerland, Turkey, Canada, Netherlands, et cetera, et cetera, who are all donors into these programs.

I think that it's simple to say that we all echo the same sympathies that Representative Perry mentioned by saying that it's not OK for any civilians of any type to lose their lives. That's what we're trying to prevent.

But we certainly cannot continue to fund the very organizations that are responsible for these attacks and UNRWA is directly responsible as are many of these organizations for the horrendous, horrific, and barbaric attack that occurred on October 7th.

But I would also argue that this is systemic across the United Nations, which I have said should be replaced with the notion of being the Useless Nations because you had Resolution 2231, the nuclear JCPOA that was set up to try and keep Iran from funding and continuing terrorism.

And under General Secretary Ban Ki-moon and Guterres, we know multiple violations of mid-range ballistic missiles and other types of terrorist activities, that was taking place where they wouldn't do anything until President Trump came forward and removed us from these failed policies.

So I think this is a deeper issue. You know, whether it's the 12 members who participated in the event itself, whether it's the 3,000 UNRWA teachers who are celebrating this massacre and yet they're screaming for more aid to try and develop peace it's all a failure and a false premise.

But I will tell you right now \$343 million, Ms. Rudman, is a lot of money. When you're \$34 trillion in debt, when you have no economic growth strategy in the United States that enables us to actually ensure that we have opportunities for the American citizens and which we serve, and when we're continually being pulled back into these kinetic elements of warfare whether it be in Iran, whether it be the Iraq and Afghan conflict, whether it be the Ukraine conflict, whether it be defending the 12 percent of global shipments through the Red Sea, the bottom line is that the time is now to start thinking about America.

The time is now to start not looking at things as just business as usual across D.C. and the swamp.

And so I'll tell you I absolutely support with full heart the end of funding to UNRWA and their destabilizing role that they've played within the Middle East.

I'm one of the members who actually went over to Israel recently. You know, when the attack took place on October 7th I actually went over on October 11th and helped to rescue and evacuate 255 Americans, 96 by ground.

I'm not sitting here having these 5-minute discussions for talking points so I can post on social media for clicks and likes. We have to have real effective change, and we have to acknowledge that Hamas is a terrorist organization.

We have to acknowledge that Hezbollah is a terrorist organization under Hassan Nasrallah. We have to acknowledge that the

Iranian-backed militias, whether it be through Qais Khazali or Hadi al-Amiri or Muqtada al-Sadr or any of the ones who are continuing to try and make the 150-plus attacks on American soldiers, the 30-plus attacks that's happened in our shipping lanes, or the three brave heroes that just lost their lives in the outpost in Tower 22, the 13 who lost their life on August 26, 2021, that many people want to forget in the botched withdrawals.

Our domestic and foreign policy must change in America. It cannot be the decades and decades of failed policies that has either resulted in America training eight of the 11 coup leaders in Africa or whether it be funding organizations like UNRWA who continues to support terrorist activities that resulted in many people losing their lives.

I stand with Israel's rights to defend itself and I stand with the American colleagues that are here who are willing to defund UNRWA and stop these terrorist organizations like Hamas from using our money to build the terrorist tunnels and continue these types of horrific attacks.

With that, I hand back.

Mr. MAST. Thank you, Mr. Mills.

The chair now recognizes Ms. Dean.

Ms. DEAN. Thank you, Chairman Mast, and thank you, Chairman Smith, Ranking Member Crow, Ranking Member Wild, for holding this important hearing.

Thank you to our witnesses for testifying and sharing your knowledge and expertise with us on this important matter.

But let's remember we're here for the purpose of oversight. We are here, I hope, for the purpose of solutions, not just white washing or black washing or whatever kind of washing entire structures until and unless they deserve it.

The allegations of the UNRWA employee involvement in the October 7th attack is deeply troubling—we can all agree upon that—and warrants a thorough and independent review.

I too have traveled to Israel since the war 5 weeks into the war, visiting with Minister of Defense Gallant, visiting with our Ambassador, visiting with the prime minister, visiting with hostage families.

What Israel suffered is unspeakable. There are no words. What I want to do now is to say that is a truth that we must deal with but we also have to deal with the war, the prosecution of the war, and how do we keep people from famine—a basic thing.

Professor Rudman, I appreciated your five points and in your fifth point you indicated something that you had an idea—I'm sort of jumping to the end of the story—that you had an idea of something or some structure that could be put in place around UNRWA to address the gravest needs that the people of Palestine, that the Gazans, are enduring and how we fulfill that both for Israel's security and our own national security interests.

What were some of your ideas?

Ms. RUDMAN. So I think there are any number of different structures, going forward. The challenge is the immediate period and how we get through that. In other words, people need to—now you cannot stand—that while I agree with some of the others on this panel that there are entities out there.

Those entities are not currently set up to be able to move forward and get food and water in to the many, many innocent Palestinians in Gaza at this point.

And so I think the two things need to happen in parallel. One, the investigations that the United States and others are calling for into how UNRWA—how this came to be with UNRWA—I know we have a variety of views on that here on this panel.

But an investigation from outside of UNRWA. I think that the United States and Germany are two logical countries as the two biggest donors by some degree to UNRWA to carry out that kind of investigation.

I think you could also go to former leaders of various U.N. entities. I think there's a leader of UNHCR who is quite familiar with what's been going on—with aspects on the ground from his prior experience.

I would like to get his insights on how things could run—what we could set up and in which ways. But the challenge is you have an immediate issue they need to address.

Ms. DEAN. Well, that's what I want to ask you.

I agree with the pause, based on the reporting, but if the pause of funding to UNRWA is sustained—this abrupt pause is sustained—what is the outcome in Gaza?

Ms. RUDMAN. If the funding does not resume we have people who will be starving and it's—because it's not just us. There's a number of countries that have followed the United States' lead on this. I understand that.

But there is not enough funding going in to UNRWA to be able to feed people. It's that simple.

Ms. DEAN. On the question of educational materials it seems to me that should be something that pressure could be brought to bear to make that happen. Do you see a path to that?

And Mr. Sheff also, do you see a path to that? Yes? First, Professor?

Ms. RUDMAN. Sure. Yes, I think there are people working on it. People on this panel have.

I think there are people in other countries in the region, some of whom were named as well by Mr. Sheff, and there are folks—there are people within Israel who have worked on changing their curriculum as well.

So there's a route forward. That is not an UNRWA specific challenge, though. That's a broader challenge on Palestinian Authority curriculum as well.

I also know you met with our Ambassador. You know, he's very committed as well to addressing this. So there are routes forward to doing that and I just put food and water as the more immediate pressure. But I understand the need to address this as well.

Ms. DEAN. Mr. Sheff, if you'll indulge me just a few more seconds.

Mr. Sheff, what's the prospect of cleaning up the educational materials?

Mr. SHEFF. Sure. So very briefly then, it's a matter of will. It's as simple as that. This is not complicated. This is a matter of exchanging material in the textbooks, making sure that that is material of peace and tolerance.

But I would argue, actually, if you'll allow me that this is about UNRWA and UNRWA made the choice—the choice—to teach the Palestinian Authority's curriculum. It did not have to.

There are organizations around the world that do not teach the host nation curriculum because it is appalling—Yemen, the Houthi curriculum, just as an example.

So they absolutely made that choice and not only that they created their own material to go with those textbooks which is equally as bad.

Is it possible to be done? Yes. Really very simple, indeed. Curricula is changed all over the world all the time. Is there a will? I think there really ought to be, do not you?

Ms. DEAN. And to just conclude, I hope there is a will on this committee to get at the oversight, to get at the truth, and to get at solutions.

Thank you. I yield back.

Mr. SHEFF. Thank you, ma'am.

Mr. MAST. The chair now recognizes Mr. Moran.

Mr. MORAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Before I get in some questions I just want to make clear that in my opinion under no circumstances should U.S. taxpayers be on the hook to pay organizations that work contrary to the economic and national security interests of the United States.

UNRWA seems to be doing just that and that is highly unfortunate and we need to take a continued close look at this. Most notably, in connection with recent events in Israel UNRWA has a history of perpetuating the problem through indoctrination of children to hate Jews, instigate violence, hate the West, and in latest reports even hiring persons linked to the Hamas terrorist attack in Israel. It's totally unacceptable.

Mr. Goldberg, I want to ask you a couple of questions in regard to that. I thought I understood Ms. Rudman to say that there's some—there's other organizations that exist but none of them really are equipped to do this work that UNRWA is doing.

Is that the case or are there are other private organizations outside of U.N. control that can do substantially similar items and complete the same mission that UNRWA purports to do now?

Mr. GOLDBERG. It is 100 percent false. How do I know that? This isn't the first time we have had a conflict in the world where we had to move quick funding for humanitarian support.

The U.N. moves at our direction. U.N. agencies move at our direction and the money. Follow the money. Follow into conflict. We move very quickly when we want to to set up relief for people in need when there is crisis in the world. We have done that for decades. There are organizations that exist.

I have heard this argument now repeatedly from members of the committee. UNRWA is indispensable. What's the alternative? If we cut it off we're going to just have horrific suffering and loss.

Well, let me take that logical argument to the next level because this is really important. Hamas runs the health ministry in Gaza. Hamas runs the utilities in Gaza. Hamas runs the ministry of tourism and trade and economy in Gaza.

My goodness, we have no alternative to Hamas, I guess. Hamas should stay.

Is that the logical conclusion? Would any of those members say we want Hamas to stay in charge of Gaza—what's the alternative?

No. So why would you make that case for the United Nations Hamas Relief and Works Agency?

Mr. MORAN. I agree with you, Mr. Goldberg and, frankly, I find it ironic that we're sitting here talking about supporting an organization that purports to support the plight of refugees when oftentimes they're the ones that are causing a lot of the suffering or at least contributing to the cause of the suffering by supporting organizations like Hamas.

And I notice that when we talk about how you still—how UNRWA selects its employees they do some background checks. But those checks do not include checks that would exclude Hamas-connected individuals. Is that true?

Mr. GOLDBERG. Correct. If you look at their statement and the agreement we have with UNRWA they reference United Nations sanctions lists, not U.S.-designated foreign terrorist organizations and certainly not the U.S. intelligence community.

Mr. MORAN. Yes, and I think that—I hope that all of us on this committee would agree that when we look at what happened on October the 7th and subsequent to that and the plight of the refugees in this region the cause—the proximate cause, the single cause of that is Hamas and the hatred behind Hamas' attacks. Would you agree with that as well?

Mr. GOLDBERG. Yes, sir.

Mr. MORAN. So what's preventing the United States from re-directing the 300-plus million that's presently going to UNRWA to another organization that has no ties to terrorism, no ties to Hamas, that can accomplish much of the same thing?

Mr. GOLDBERG. Political will.

Mr. MORAN. That's what I thought.

Wouldn't it be better if we actually had the political will to turn away from entities and organizations like UNRWA that embrace organizations like Hamas and for the United States to say no, there is a better more strategic pathway that we can take and that is to support organizations that can accomplish the mission and are strategically aligned with our friends and allies and, frankly, with just morality itself? Would you agree with that?

Mr. GOLDBERG. Yes, sir.

Mr. MORAN. Are you aware of any circumstances prior to the most recent firing of 12 employees, any of you on the panel, in which UNRWA employees have been removed from their position after publicly or privately making anti-Semitic statements or giving support to Hamas?

Is anybody aware of any of that? Go ahead, sir.

Mr. NEUER. I'm not aware of a single case, and we have talked about hundreds. We have talked about UNRWA teachers, school principals inciting to jihadi terrorism and the slaughter of Jews. I'm not aware of one case that UNRWA has communicated to us where they have fired that individual.

Mr. GOLDBERG. I do recall one case of a headmaster of an UNRWA school who was moonlighting as an Islamic Jihad commander. He was removed by an Israeli air strike.

[Laughter.]

Mr. MORAN. Well, that's one successful removal. Do any of you have any analysis on how the curriculum for these children when UNRWA goes in to educate children in these areas—how is that curriculum developed?

And one of my big questions here is is there any part of the educational curriculum or programming that is overtly pro-American or pro-Israeli that teaches the benefits of democracy?

Mr. SHEFF. So, you know, a really important question. The curriculum is developed in Ramallah; it is developed by the Palestinian Authority.

And, you know, you had this moment actually between 2014 and 2016 when the Middle East and many regions started looking at this school curriculum and that is when the United Arab Emirates, when Morocco, when other countries and Egypt, other countries, started making these decisions about the need to take out the hate, to take out the incitement, to create better societies of the future and this has been rolled out over years and now, as I said before, you know, there are really exemplary school curricula in the MENA region.

The Palestinian Authority decided to go entirely in the opposite direction. Between 2014 and 2016 it spent an enormous amount of time and effort and money creating a curriculum that was even worse than the one that came before.

Any ideas of peacemaking were entirely removed and what was left was a curriculum centered on jihad, centered on young people sacrificing themselves, centered on anti-Semitism, centered on hate, and that is the curriculum which UNRWA, a neutral United Nations organization, adopted as is without changing a line, a jot, a tittle of this school curriculum.

And just to make sure it got rammed home they created their own supplementary material to go with it. So it comes from the Palestinian Authority. UNRWA adopted this and I need to say this again. They did not need to. It's supposed to be best practice to teach the host curriculum.

There's no best practice about this curriculum and organizations all over the world make sure that they do not teach hate.

UNRWA made a choice, a decision, to teach hate in its schools in Gaza and in the West Bank, and it is continuing to this day in the West Bank.

We can stop this and we need to stop this.

Mr. MORAN. Thank you for your comments. I know my time's out.

In conclusion I'll just say UNRWA is not a new organization. It's not a fledgling organization. It's been around for a long time. These are not negligent mistakes. These are intentional acts. We need to walk away from this organization.

Thank you. I yield back.

Mr. MAST. Thank you, Mr. Moran.

I now recognize Mr. Schneider.

Mr. SCHNEIDER. Thank you. Thank you, Chairman.

I want to thank both our chairs and the ranking members for holding this hearing. I want to thank the witnesses not just for your testimony here today but for your lifetime of work addressing this important issue.

Mr. Neuer, you noted in your opening remarks, and I agree, no one should be surprised about the recent report of UNRWA complicity with Hamas. We have been talking about this for years if not decades.

Recent reports estimate that more than 10 percent of UNRWA employees are affiliated with Hamas. But, in fact, according to what I read in those reports it's worse among men. It's estimated that 29 percent of the men working for UNRWA have affiliation with Hamas and approximately half the employees have at least one family member affiliated with Hamas.

On October 7th, as we have just talked about today, at least 12 UNRWA employees crossed a new line actively taking part in the horrific attack of Israeli communities near the Gaza border, brutally murdering more than 1,200, countless cases of torture, rape, mutilation, UNRWA's employees involved with taking hostages back, more than 250 people taken hostage.

And let me pause here to note that there are 130 people still—more than 130 people still held in Gaza now more—for more than 116 days, and the path to deescalation starts with the immediate release of all these hostages. That's what we should be calling for and we should be saying that now.

But Hamas has no interest in deescalation or in peace. Hamas is a nihilistic genocidal terrorist organization founded on and dedicated to the principle of the destruction of Israel and the murder of Jews.

Which brings us back to the topic of UNRWA we are discussing today. No one who's been watching Gaza can be surprised by the reports. No one should be surprised by the extent.

Yesterday's report showed the pervasiveness of the integration of Hamas and Hamas ideology within the fabric of UNRWA. It's a systemic problem. We should not be asked to accept a Hamas-UNRWA link simply as the cost of ensuring humanitarian relief gets to Palestinian civilians.

Mr. Goldberg, you said it in your opening remarks. There are other organizations.

Ms. Rudman, you talked about the uniqueness of UNRWA. What I do not understand is that uniqueness. Why is there but one organization established by the U.N. that for 75 years has kept people in refugee camps, preventing them from rising up to a life and a standard of living that they see among their neighbors?

Why is it that one organization is focused on this single point when there are another organization, UNHCR, who can address the rest of the world? I do not think we have to accept this.

I do not think it's right that an organization charged with doing good should be allowed to be a cover for terrorism and that's why we're talking today about what should happen to UNRWA.

I think there's consensus—I hope there's consensus—that the services provided, the feeding of people who are hungry, providing good education to a population—you talked about it.

How can we give an education that teaches the aspirations of democracy, of integration into a world society that sees success for all nations and not the destruction of perceived enemies?

This is the handle or this is the challenge. Now, we are in a crisis. There is a war. People need to get that humanitarian relief. We have to find another way.

Again, Mr. Goldberg, you talked about it today. We have shown that we can do this in the past. We have to replace UNRWA with something else.

There are organizations prepared to do that. My question as we talked about it—because it's not just food. It's desalinization of water. It's handling of sewage. It's the provision of shelter and, obviously, education.

There are other organizations but based on Mission Order 21 a lot of these organizations are prohibited for dealing with Hamas, having any contact with Hamas. The reality is Hamas is there.

Can we get support from organizations like the World Food Programme to bring more help, more flour and bread and food? Can we work with the Office of Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs to assist with emergency coordination?

I support getting rid of UNRWA. I support the Administration's decision to suspend it. But my question is, as I have 29 seconds left, are there ways to deal with this, to get around this prohibition of having any contact whatsoever with Hamas?

I'll leave that with the last few seconds.

Ms. Rudman?

Ms. RUDMAN. So I think what you're talking about is the U.S. prohibition and in fact there has been assistance that has gone in for things like water and electricity which is not controlled as directly as some others might have said.

But each municipality in Gaza the rules for the United States go to kind of who controls the municipality and there have been times when we have had Administrations that have waived the requirements.

For example, there are very technical people who carry out the—what's needed to get clean water in and out and they are employees of a municipality that might be controlled by Hamas. The United States has at times waived prohibitions to allow those people to be involved in us trying to get water in.

Mr. SCHNEIDER. And I'm going to reclaim my time just because I'm over time and I want to give others a chance.

But we cannot let obstacles block us from replacing UNRWA and getting to a situation where we are taking care of the civilians in Gaza but not supporting terrorism.

And with that, I yield back.

Mr. MAST. The chair now recognizes Mr. Hill.

Mr. HILL. Thank you, Chairman. Thank you, panel, for being with us today. Thank you for both our chairmen of our subcommittees for holding this important hearing. I'm grateful to you.

And what a disgrace UNRWA has become. You know, I was thinking about the whole world that the U.N. attempts to provide care and service to. You know, think about it. It's a massive task.

And yet UNRWA has a budget of about almost a billion dollars, employs 30,000 people, 13,000 of which I think are in Gaza or were, and then the Commission on Refugees, taking care of the whole rest of the world, has a budget of \$10 billion and just 18,000 employees. Let that sink in.

Mr. Goldberg, you know, what's wrong with this picture? Could the U.N. Commissioner on Refugees handle this work and just abandon, since of all the countries are disgusted with that \$806 million or close to a billion dollars with UNRWA?

Why does not this just get transferred to the U.N. Commission on Refugees? Let's pick a handful out of the 13,000 that are effective. What do you think?

Mr. GOLDBERG. That has been the obvious solution for decades but for the United Nations' inherent systemic structural bias against Israel, support for UNRWA's mission of trying to instigate incitement against Israel, that is the only reason that hasn't happened.

Mr. HILL. So you're charging that the U.N. itself is the most anti-Semitic organization on the planet. Is that what you're saying?

Mr. GOLDBERG. One hundred percent correct, documented by U.N. Watch and others.

But I would say—Ms. Rudman said something before and it's very, very much a flag. Don't go to ask U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees is it OK—would you like to do this?

The U.N. Secretary General is already circling the wagons to defend UNRWA. If you ask the United Nations, what do you think, the U.N.—we know what they think. They hate Israel. We tell them what to do. Our taxpayer dollars lead the way, not the other way around.

Mr. HILL. Thank you, and I thank you for that.

I want to shift to Mr. Sheff. Thank you for testifying. I spent a lot of time looking at curriculum—education curriculum—most of the time in Egypt. I'll say that's an area that I've spent quite a bit of time.

And you see—you've reported in your testimony some successful curriculum changes in the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Morocco. Mr. Moran was just talking about this.

And, you know, even though the Commission on Religious Freedom has done a particular study on the Egyptian education system still we struggle with proper terminology and proper framing for Christianity and the Coptic Church, for example, in Egypt.

How did you find the countries that have broken the code and found success? What was the key point on that that you would share?

Mr. SHEFF. A really good question, sir, and I'll try to answer it very, very briefly because it's such a big subject.

In fact, though, just refer back to the point you made before. UNRWA is, frankly, not even good at this distribution job. Last Saturday, they actually asked if there would be a stoppage of trucks going through Kerem Shalom because they couldn't cope with the volume.

So let us not think that this is actually their area of expertise. It really isn't.

Two, in relation to curricula countries change their curricula for their own reasons, not to make the United States or anybody else proud of them or happy for them but because they want to create societies of the future which makes sense to them.

You know, for MBS it is about Vision 2030. It is about a Saudi Arabia that is more open, that is able to trade with the world, that

is less dependent on oil and gas, and there's no question that a curriculum which prepares young people in a tolerant, open, peaceful way will go a long way to a country which in 2030 will be more able to do that.

The UAE—Mohamed bin Zayed made exactly that determination in 2011 and drove a quite remarkable change because that is the UAE he wanted to see, and anybody who's spent time in Dubai, in any other parts of the UAE, can see how successful that has been.

Egypt—

Mr. HILL. Well, I would hope then that leaders in those countries would help lead the change in these reluctant countries including—let me say, I'm a proud supporter of Christian education in the West Bank through the Catholic Church and yet history starts at 600 A.D. and I'm not sure if that's the right way to teach history.

So let me yield back.

Mr. MAST. Thank you, Mr. Hill.

The chair now recognizes Mr. McCormick.

Mr. MCCORMICK. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'll make this fast because I got a lot to go over.

We have talked a lot today about the 12 UNRWA employees but those 12 employees are just the tip of the iceberg when you talk about possibly thousands of employees loyal to Hamas and anti-Semitic and anti-American interests.

Over the years this organization that we spend about 28 percent of the U.N.'s budget is supported by the United States and yet this organization has thousands of allegations of child trafficking, rape, murder, theft, embezzlement, with almost no accountability.

I was in Uganda in 1994 as part of Operation Restore Hope. Watched the U.N. leave and watched almost a million people be killed. And if you look at the U.N.'s history and their involvement in foreign countries, let me list some of them: Congo, Somalia, Rwanda, Libya, Angola, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Haiti, Afghanistan, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Yemen, Iraq, Iran, just to name a few. How's that been going?

Mr. NEUER, there have been hundreds of resolutions of the United Nations condemning Israel. How many have condemned the Palestinian Administration?

Mr. NEUER. I am not aware—

Mr. MCCORMICK. The one they condemned—the one that was run by Hamas, by the way.

Mr. NEUER. I'm not aware of any resolution condemning Palestinian—

Mr. MCCORMICK. Nor am I, but there have been hundreds against Israel, usually in the double digits per year. This is the United Nations, by the way—the United Nations, that organization which we fund 28 percent of.

I know that UNRWA oversees Gaza's educational system and for years has sanctioned the textbooks used that have, quote, encouraged to sacrifice their blood to liberate Jerusalem, with terms such as, quote, jihad warriors, including the attempting to erase Israel's existence and legitimacy.

I know that you, Mr. Neuer, have been against the appointment and nomination of Mr. Pierre along with 18,000 other folks.

Can you tell me exactly why Mr. Krahenbuhl should be opposed?

Mr. NEUER. Thank you, Congressman.

Look, the Red Cross on its own has failed to meet with any of the hostages that are being held in Gaza and that is shameful.

In addition, beyond their diplomatic failure in their public statements we have counted 10 to one their statements are in favor of the Hamas narrative and biased against Israel.

The notion that they would now appoint Pierre Krahenbuhl, the former head of UNRWA who was forced to resign in disgrace, is shocking and we oppose it.

He was forced to resign in 2019 in wake of a major corruption, abuse of power, and ethics scandal which included allegations that he had a very inappropriate relationship with one of his staffers who was paid \$200,000 a year and the Swiss government paid for it.

Several countries suspended funding in 2019 in the wake of the scandal including Switzerland, Belgium, and the Netherlands, and his response was to say he was cleared of the charges, he claimed, in a Swiss TV broadcast. He said it was a conspiracy.

The implication of this broadcast was that it was a conspiracy between the U.S., Israel, and the Swiss foreign minister to besmirch UNRWA.

But the reality is that even people who like UNRWA said it's false, that he was not cleared of the charges. The UNRWA ethics inspector Lex Takkenberg and Professor Ricardo Bocco, both of them leading supporters of UNRWA, said Pierre Krahenbuhl was not cleared of the charges.

So the notion that the Red Cross would appoint this person is shameful and I just want to say in closing that the Swiss newspaper *Le Temps* Luis Lema wrote three parts in investigation.

He wrote that the allegations of corruption are all valid. There was terrible corruption in UNRWA but no one wants to talk about it because it might help the U.S. and Israel in their criticisms. No one wants to talk about it.

Mr. McCORMICK. So this is what—I want to sum this up. We spend about \$13 billion per year right now on the United Nations, the leading funder by far, and this is an organization that has tons of corruption, tons of appointees that are anti-American, anti-Semitic.

I want to call not on just to question what we spend on UNRWA but on the United Nations in general—a top down review. I'm talking about all spending.

I'm very much in favor of ceasing all spending until they get their stuff straight, until they prove they're not corrupt, until they prove they're not anti-American and anti-Semitic.

If you want to help people out of trouble whether you be in Gaza or Palestine or anywhere else in the world how about we start with organizations that are not corrupt, not anti-Semitic, and not anti-American?

That's a better investment. It is a time for a change. It is a time for a choice and let's start there.

With that, I yield.

Mr. MAST. The chair now recognizes Mr. Issa.

Mr. ISSA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ms. Rudman, you had several things you wanted to answer and I—no one's asked you a question in a while. So I'd like—with your distinguished career at the State Department—the State Department has about a \$70 billion budget—you controlled in your time about a \$1.8 billion budget plus or minus.

So you're familiar with large budgets, you're familiar with development, and you're a specialist in the Middle East. Is that a fair reducing of your long career?

Ms. RUDMAN. Thanks. I appreciate it. I was actually only at State for a couple of years and stayed in AID role which you're referencing.

Mr. ISSA. Right.

Ms. RUDMAN. But I spent a lot of time working on budgets. That's fair.

Mr. ISSA. But, you know, looking at your history I want to ask you some questions because I'd like to touch on something, which is the day after. OK.

We're not going to give UNRWA another penny during whatever—however long this kinetic conflict goes on in the region and when we go to startup again on the people of Gaza, the 2 million people of Gaza, things are going to have to be different.

So from your State Department time and your private sector time is it fair to say that—and I'm going to ask everyone this question—is it fair to say that there are sources of people who can be skilled educators who can help teach the children of Gaza in a balanced way what the world is and could be?

Ms. RUDMAN. Yes, there are sources of people including many Palestinians in Gaza if you did not have Hamas as the de facto ruler.

Mr. ISSA. Well, I'm going to agree to disagree on that group being able to do it unless they're supervised at a very close level by people who have a demonstrated history that would say they're not going to go down that road.

I'm not going to disagree with you that in any program, and you've seen some of them, we generally have some local employees. As I like to say, you know, I have no problem with someone carrying a bag of cement, you know, in a construction project being a local. I do have a problem with UNRWA overseeing goods and services coming into Gaza that got used to produce weapons that were stored in their facilities.

So I'm going to ask the same question, Mr. Goldberg, and for that matter any other witness for a moment. You are critics of UNRWA but you're also critics of everything that has been taught to a generation of people in Gaza.

In a short way isn't it fair to say that if America is going to take leadership there are two things we have to do?

One is we have to find the supervisors for the teachers and the teachers who will teach the next generation of Palestinians other than hate and, two, that the United Nations has not historically demonstrated ability to be that NGO that can do that.

Is there anyone that disagrees with those two assumptions, that the record of U.N. is poor and that we must change the teachers of the children of the next generation of Palestinians? Any—

Mr. GOLDBERG. No disagreement.

Mr. ISSA. OK.

Mr. SHEFF. No disagreement, just to say there are services skilled pedagogues in MENA who can be helpful. You need to change the textbooks. You need teacher guides. You need to train the teachers. You need accountability. You need transparency. It can be done.

Mr. ISSA. And just quickly, the top funders—the people who are giving the money for UNRWA—it's an interesting who's who with the United States being such a large one, followed by Germany and in the top six is Japan.

What's amazing to me is a vast amount of the funding comes from Germany and Japan. It comes from countries who themselves went from teaching hate to in a generation being leaders for freedom and democracy. Is that fair?

And Ms. Rudman, I'd like your answer on that, that that piece of history is well demonstrated that we as Americans have led the proper training and emergence of democracy in the past and Germany and Japan are good examples.

Ms. RUDMAN. I think they are good examples. I would note as well that the United States provided tremendous assistance to help them in getting to where they needed to go.

Mr. ISSA. But we did it, and this is my closing question. We did those conversions of the Italians, the Germans, the Japanese. We did it led by Americans, staffed by Americans and other allies, and then at a local level we vetted and found people who would cooperate with us and be part of it.

That was what both in the European and in the MacArthur area made the difference. Is that the model that we should be considering for the day after this conflict?

Mr. SHEFF. Yes. Yes, absolutely, and I think there can be an involvement in MENA countries in that. You know, I think Germans who I'm speaking to are, you know, absolutely horrified about their efforts being turned into the horror show that education is.

By the way, the Japanese are giving money specifically to scientific education. I wonder how they think about math being taught by adding up martyrs, about physics—Newton's Second Law being taught by telling young people to endanger themselves. So, yes, their efforts are being made into a joke, frankly.

Mr. ISSA. Ms. Rudman, is that—as a closing, is that something that all four of you can agree, that that model and that approach should at least be given serious consideration by our State Department?

Ms. RUDMAN. I would support it being given serious consideration. I'd prioritize a little bit differently the immediate day after because I think getting basic needs in to people—there are not buildings for people to be taught in. There are not buildings for people to live in.

Mr. ISSA. And, Mr. Chairman, I think we not only agreed on what I asked to agree on but I would agree with the gentlelady that in fact the day after will have to be comprehensive. We cannot teach people to give up hate if we cannot help feed them and house them.

And so I look forward to this committee, which has the lead role in that day after and, Chairman, thank you for your oversight. And I yield back.

Mr. MAST. I thank the witnesses for their valuable testimony, members for their questions.

Members of the subcommittee may have some additional questions for the witnesses and we will ask you to respond to those in writing.

I now recognize Mr. Crow for any closing remarks that he may have.

Mr. CROW. Thank you, Chairman. Thank you for convening this meeting and to our witnesses today for the very robust discussion.

I'm going to keep it short because we have votes that we have to run to. But the bottom line for me is I'm deeply troubled by the allegations against UNRWA and believe that those allegations must be addressed and that very well may take the form of disbanding and replacing it with a different entity.

But I'm equally—as deeply troubled by any action that would further deepen the catastrophic conditions on the ground for innocent civilians, right.

So for me the issue is very simple—how do we address these allegations and the challenges that have been well documented but make sure that we continue a flow or an increase a flow of aid to the suffering Palestinians in Gaza.

And I look forward to working with everybody to try to figure out what are the solutions to get us there and we need to bridge this, right, because there's a time line challenge.

If we cutoff funding to UNRWA I think there's a very real debate and I, frankly, do not think that there are entities right now that can fill the exact services that are being provided by UNRWA.

So how do we bridge that gap is the challenge to make sure that people that are starving now do not die. With that, I yield back.

Mr. MAST. The chair now recognizes Mr. Smith for a closing statement.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you very much. Mr. Chairman.

And without objection the testimony from Dr. Debbie Soffen, who is the first child abuse—first child advocate, I should say, for the Wiesenthal Center will be made a part of the record.

[The information referred to follows:]

Selected examples from textbooks used in UNRWA schools¹

Firebombing attack on a civilian bus celebrated as a “barbecue party”

بشي كره الليل بالغريزة بل ولبط من نكك، أتمنى ألا تكون فلسطين في الشرق الأوسط بل على ضفاف خط الاستواء، حيث يطول النهار، ويقتصر الليل. الليل في عصر الاستغناء يعني العاهة ... مخابرات تقود مفارز جنود ... يخاصرون ويعقلون ... يحطرون الجوال، ويؤمن الناس في ساحات المساجد، والكنائس، والمدارس، وبين بطون الحارث وأخادها ... ترى من سيعقلون الليلة!!! الجار: حذر الجول لا يملأنا في (الشرقة) مفروض على (الشريش) على ما يبدو هناك حفلة شواء بالقليل الحارقة لأحدى حائلات مستعمرة (بسانوت) على الجبل الطويل.

A reading comprehension exercise in UNRWA-created Grade 9 Arabic Language study material contains a story about a Palestinian firebombing attack on a Jewish bus near the West Bank city of Ramallah, which celebrates the attack as a “barbecue party” (haflat shiwaa). (UNRWA-produced material: 9th grade Arabic Language Summary)

Martyrdom and *jihad* are “The most important meanings of life”

In a Grade 5 Arabic Language summary, a passage titled ‘I Love My Village’ presents martyrdom in a positive light, praising the fact that the land—referring to Palestine—is “mixed with the blood of the martyrs.” It also uses a vocabulary and Arabic grammar exercise to teach students that martyrdom and jihad are “the most important meanings of life” (UNRWA Al-Maghazi Middle School for Boys B, 5th grade Arabic Language summary).

أحب لبلديها الحقن يغلو من الخوفات التي تتركها عواصف المحركات، يهبط أليان والأرواح. أحب خدودها، فلا صلب سكاكين، ولا هتير قطرات، ولا إعدام أنموال، ولا شجج آيات. أحب فيها رائحة الأرض المخطولة بدماء الشهداء، وأجسام الآباء، وخرق القلائص. أحب بلاديها المشقة الشافية، وهي تلمس عرق العليل، وتطهر عطف الظلم، وتروي غدا الأرض، لتخرج أطياب الثمار. أحب ماضي أعادها وأقاربا وهي سائمة في مروجها وجبالها وشعبها.... وأمت حيواتها الترة وهي تترفض جلى برشافة وخبور.

١- الكلمات التي في المستطيل سلطان حلاً من ضمن الأبي: الكلمات مقلتها وأبعادا إليه.

الاستعمال	الحيوان	الغزالة	الأنعام	القطيعي	المصير	الشجيرة	الغزال
الغزال	الغزال	الغزال	الغزال	الغزال	الغزال	الغزال	الغزال

الغزال و أمم محلي الحياء خاصة لشعب يعني ويكاد من حصار واقع وحشية وهم واعقل من أول تلب.

واقعة ترة وقارير. هذا غير شتت الذي غير عن أجدان شور والحشود، وألحبت يتشكرون بالإيمان والعلم وحب.

¹ All mentioned examples are verified to be currently taught in UNRWA schools either in hard copy textbook editions or in digital editions freely available in official online curriculum portals of the Palestinian Authority's Ministry of Education used as of January 2024. These examples are taught in UNRWA schools, Hamas-run schools, and Palestinian Authority schools in all the Palestinian territories. The PA Ministry of Education's main official online curriculum platform where current digital editions of the textbooks and teacher guides can be found: [Elearn Educational Portal \(elearn.edu.ps\)](https://elearn.edu.ps/pc/), https://elearn.edu.ps/teacherguides/#tg_1 (teacher guides)

Children are taught that dying is preferable to living

A chapter glorifying Palestinian martyrs affiliated with war, violence, religious extremism and terrorism as heroes describes dying as better than living. Those who seek to lead fruitful, peaceful lives instead of taking the path of martyrs are criticized, as "Drinking the cup of bitterness with glory is much sweeter than a pleasant long life accompanied by humiliation." The list of Palestinian heroes includes no scientists, doctors, engineers nor any athletes. It includes the founder of the jihadi movement in Palestine, a known antisemite after whom the Hamas military wing is named. (Textbook- Arabic Language, Vol. 1, Grade 5, 2020-23, p. 15)

نَفْتَحِرْ بِهِمْ، وَنَتَعَتَّى بِأَمْجَادِهِمْ، وَنَدْرُسُ سِيرَتَهُمْ، وَنُسَمِّي
أَوْلَادَنَا بِأَسْمَائِهِمْ، وَنُطَلِّقُ أَسْمَاءَهُمْ عَلَى الشُّوَارِعِ وَالْمِيَادِينِ،
وَالْمَعَالِمِ الْحَضَارِيَّةِ، نَعْطُرُ بِذِكْرِهِمِ الْمَجَالِسَ، وَيَتَمَتَّى كُلُّ مَنْ أَنْ
يَكُونَ مِثْلَهُمْ، فَقَدْ زَيَّنُوا صَفْحَاتِ التَّارِيخِ، وَعَلَّمُوا النَّاسَ أَنَّ شُرْبَ
كَأْسِ الْحَنْظَلِ مَعَ الْعِزِّ أَلْذُّ بِكَثِيرٍ مِنْ حَيَاةٍ رَغِيْدَةٍ مَدِيْدَةٍ يُصَاحِبُهَا
ذُلٌّ، فَصَنَعُوا لِلْأُمَّةِ تَارِيخًا مَجِيدًا... إِنَّهُمْ الْأَبْطَالُ.

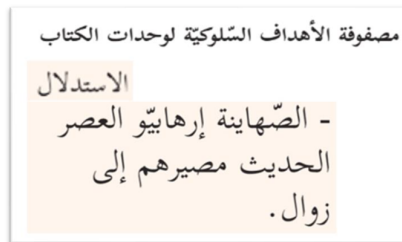


Suicide bombings are glorified, as is cutting the necks of the enemy

Reading comprehension is taught through a violent story which glorifies suicide bombings, recounting that "the daggers of the fedayeen fell on the necks" of enemy soldiers and that they "wore explosive belts." Israeli forces are described as "leaving behind some of the bodies and body parts, to become food for wild animals on land and birds of prey in the sky." An accompanying illustration depicts Israeli soldiers in a tank, shot dead by a Palestinian gunman (Textbook- Arabic Language, Vol. 2, Grade 8, 2020-23, pp. 40-44).

Fate of Israeli Jews is "disappearance"

According to a teacher guide for a Grade 6 Arabic Language textbook, one lesson goal asks students to conclude that "The Zionists are the terrorists of the modern age and their fate is disappearance." The guide therefore infers that Israeli Jews are destined to disappear as a group, invoking potentially genocidal aspirations (Teacher Guide, Arabic Language, Grade 6, 2018-23, p. 207)



Terrorists are glorified as role models



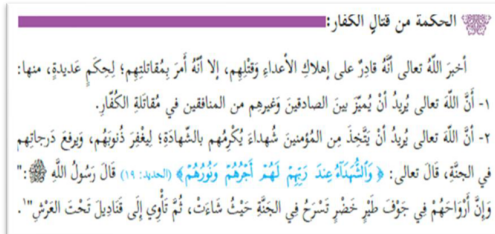
Dalal Mughrabi, who murdered 13 children and 25 adults on a civilian bus in the 1970s, is repeatedly hailed as a hero and national role model, whose behavior should be emulated. She is celebrated in a detailed 10-page Arabic reading comprehension which praises her and the act of terror as "heroism," while the massacre is referred to as "immortal" in the "hearts and minds" of Palestinians. Fifth-graders are invited to follow in her footsteps and view her as a role model – the "crown of the nation" whom "each of us wishes to be like." The path of violence is implicitly presented as the only option for Palestinian women to demonstrate an outstanding commitment to their people (Textbook- Arabic Language, Vol. 2, Grade 5, 2020-23, pp. 51–61).



UNRWA- Classroom photos from UNRWA's "Al-Zaytun Elementary School" in Gaza show a blackboard displaying a large poster of Dalal Al-Mughrabi, along with text venerating her from the fifth grade Arabic language textbook above taught in the UNRWA school.

Those who die as martyrs killing infidels will be rewarded in paradise

An explanation of a Qur'anic surah and hadith teaches students that those who die as martyrs (shuhada') killing infidels (Christians, Jews, polytheists) will reach paradise, where Allah will raise their status. Students are not offered any crucial historical context or alternative explanation about infidels (Textbook- Islamic Education, Vol. 1, Grade 9, 2020-23, p. 13).



الدروس ١

الجمع ضمن الملايين دون حملي

١. بلغ عدد شهداء انتفاضة الأقصى (انتفاضة الحجارة) حوالي ١٣٩٢ شهيداً، وبلغ عدد شهداء انتفاضة الأقصى ٤٦٧٣ شهيداً.

عدد الشهداء في الانتفاضتين = _____ شهيداً

Calculus taught by counting martyrs and suicide bombers

A Grade 4 math exercise asks students to calculate the number of martyrs in Palestinian uprisings (including those who have perpetrated suicide bombings on buses and in shopping centers), accompanied by a photograph of raised coffins at a mass funeral (Textbook-Mathematics, Vol. 1, Grade 4, 2020-23, p. 27).

Newton's Second Law taught through Palestinian aiming slingshot at soldiers

In a Grade 7 science lesson, Newton's Second Law is demonstrated through an image of a masked Palestinian boy aiming a slingshot at approaching soldiers. Students are asked: "What are the forces that influence the object after its release from the branch (slingshot) and the coil?" (Textbook- Science and Life, Vol. 1, Grade 7, 2020-23, p. 57).

القانون الثاني لنيوتن

الجسم والتأثير

استخدم الفلسطينيون أدوات بترية متنوعة لضرب أهدافهم اليومية في الزدانة وسيد الطير أو اللعب والسلمة وغيرها ومنها الدفعة والنايف.

تأمل الصور الآتية، ثم أجب عن الأسئلة التي تليها:

ما العلاقة بين مقدار استطالة كل من معطاف الدفعة والنايف وفرد الشد المؤثرة فيها؟

ما القوى المؤثرة في الجسم بعد انطلاقه من كل من الدفعة والنايف؟

السورة ١

المحاثيل

تأمل الصورة والنتائج على هذه الآلية الكيميائية خلال التجربة

تأمل الصورة الآتية، ثم أجب عن الأسئلة التي تليها:

Hunger strikes of Palestinian prisoners used to teach Chemistry

When teaching about chemical solutions in science, students are encouraged to consider the use of a water and salt solution that kept Palestinian prisoners alive during hunger strikes. The cover page of this page features the above illustration (Textbook- Science and Life, Vol. 2, Grade 7, 2020-23, p. 30).

Removal of peace, tolerance, and recognition of Israel

The following examples were removed as part of the restructuring of the Palestinian curriculum between 2016-2019, which marked its first full reform since September 2000. There were expectations that the new curriculum would be more moderate compared with the previous, Arafat-era textbooks; however, the new textbooks have proven to be more radical in comparison with those published before the reform.

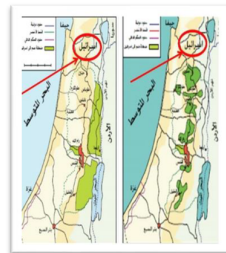
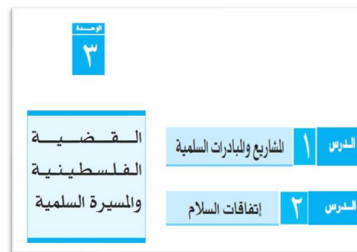


Removed - Yasser Arafat's call for coexistence, peace, and non-violence with Israel

The new curriculum deliberately omits important messages of peace and non-violence in Yasser Arafat's letter to Yitzhak Rabin, such as calling the signing of the Declaration of Principles "a historic event opening a new era of coexistence in peace and stability, an era without violence." Another important omission that appeared in Arafat's letter in the old curriculum is the PLO's commitment to "assume responsibility over all PLO elements and personnel in order to assure their compliance" (Textbook- Modern and Contemporary History of Palestine, Vol. 2, Grade 11, 2014-15, p. 83).

Removed - Study unit about peace agreements, summits and proposals with Israel

A full unit on previous peace negotiations with Israel since 1948, containing two chapters titled "Peace Plans and Initiatives" and "Peace Agreements." Almost all peace negotiation attempts in this unit were omitted from the new curriculum (Textbook- National Education, Grade 10, 2012-13, pp. 43-56).



Removed - "Israel" labelled on maps

The name "Israel" appears on two maps on the same page of a Grade 11 history textbook. The left-hand map shows the 1968 Alon Plan for the annexation of West Bank territories to Israel, and the right-hand map depicts the 1982 Sharon Plan of this annexation. The maps also demarcate the Green Line, which rarely exists on maps in the new PA curriculum (Textbook- Modern and Contemporary History of Palestine, Vol. 2, Grade 11, 2014-15, p. 51).

Removed- Recognition of Jewish past and presence in Palestine

A chart entitled "Historical [Time] table: Palestine throughout the Ages" includes the Jewish kingdoms "The Jews—David's kingdom 1000–923 BC; the northern kingdom of Israel 923–722 BC; the Kingdom of Judea 923–586 BC," the occupation of the Kingdom of Israel by the Assyrians, and the occupation of the Kingdom of Judea by the Babylonians (National Education, Grade 7, 2013, p. 3; History of the Middle Ages, Grade 7, 2014, p. 74).

إن الهدف هو تسوية نهائية وشاملة لل نزاع الإسرائيلي-الفلسطيني بحلول عام ٢٠٠٥. كما طرحت في خطاب لرئيس بوش في الرابع والعشرين من حزيران/يونيو، ورحب بها الاتحاد الأوروبي وروسيا والأمم المتحدة ني ياتين وزاريين للمجموعة الرباعية في السادس عشر من تموز/يوليو والسابع عشر من أيلول/سبتمبر. . . . وستؤدي تسوية تم التفاوض بشأنها بين الطرفين، إلى التنازل دولة فلسطينية مستقلة، ديمقراطية، قادر على البقاء، تعيش جنباً إلى جنب بسلام وأمن مع إسرائيل وجيرانها الآخرين. وسوف تحل التسوية النزاع لإسرائيلي-فلسطيني، وتنتهي الاحتلال الذي بدأ في عام ١٩٦٧، بناء على الأسس المرجعية لمؤتمر قمة سلام مدريد، ومبدأ الأرض مقابل السلام، وقرارات الأمم المتحدة ٢٤٢ و٣٣٨ و١٣٩٧، والاتفاقات التي تلتها إليها سابقاً بين الطرفين. . . .

Removed- Negotiations with Israel as the ultimate goal to live side-by-side in peace and security

A passage on the Roadmap Plan includes important and detailed excerpts of the plan which teach about the conflict resolution on both sides though negotiations, resulting in a "viable Palestinian democratic state existing side-by-side with Israel and its other neighbors in peace and security." In the new PA curriculum, all peace negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians post-Oslo Accords have been removed. The Oslo Accords are taught as a neutral data point, with no attempt to convince students that a peaceful resolution is preferred—or even necessary (Modern and Contemporary History of Palestine, Vol. 2, Grade 11, 2014, pp. 88–89).

Removed- Israel's peace treaty with Jordan

Curricula pre-2016 discuss the peace agreement between Israel and Jordan and the border between them (History of the Arabs and the World in the Twentieth Century, Grade 12, 2014, p. 65).

الكرامة، وتمكن الفدائيون الفلسطينيون والجيش الأردني من صد العدوان. ووقعت الأردن معاهدة السلام مع إسرائيل عام ١٩٩٤م، واعترف الطرفان بالحدود بينهما وفقاً للحدود التي وضعها الانتداب البريطاني.

MICHAEL T. MCCAUL, TEXAS
CHAIRMAN

BRENDAN P. SHIELDS
STAFF DIRECTOR



GREGORY W. MEEKS, NEW YORK
RANKING MEMBER

SOPHIA A. LAFARGUE
DEMOCRATIC STAFF DIRECTOR

One Hundred Eighteenth Congress
U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Foreign Affairs
2170 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

January 15, 2024

Mr. Philippe Lazzarini
Commissioner-General
United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA)
Under-Secretary-General
United Nations

Dear Mr. Philippe Lazzarini:

As you know, the United States of America is the single largest donor to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). In 2022, the Biden administration donated \$344 million to UNRWA, and has continued to donate hundreds of millions of dollars throughout 2023 and during the Israel-Hamas war.¹

However, there have been a number of concerning reports that have called into question the very mission and effectiveness of UNRWA. Recently, the Israel Defense Force alleged that Hamas terrorists are stealing UNRWA food and supplies intended for humanitarian purposes.² Though UNRWA has denied these most recent allegations, diversion of food, fuel, and supplies by terrorist organizations, like Hamas, is not a new problem.³

In fact, the risk of diversion in the region is so high that the USAID Office of Inspector General (USAID OIG) issued a fraud awareness alert after the Biden administration provided \$100 million in aid through USAID, UN agencies, such as UNRWA, and other international NGOs. Specifically, USAID OIG stated its investigative priority is, "...to ensure that assistance does not fall into the hands of foreign terrorist organizations (FTOs) including, but not limited to,

¹ UNRWA, "Funding Trends," *UNRWA.org*, December 31, 2022, <https://www.unrwa.org/how-you-can-help/government-partners/funding-trends>; UNRWA, "The United States Contributes US\$ 153.7 Million to UNRWA in Support of Palestine Refugees," *UNRWA.org*, June 1, 2023, <https://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/news-releases/united-states-contributes-us-1537-million-unrwa-support-palestine-refugees>.

² Meet the Press, "IDF Spokesperson claims 'Hamas goes into UNRWA facilities and takes food' intended for relief," *NBC News*, December 26, 2023, <https://www.nbcnews.com/meet-the-press/video/idf-spokesperson-claims-hamas-goes-into-unrwa-facilities-and-takes-food-intended-for-relief-200964165779>.

³ Lazzarini, Philippe, "The Gaza Strip: UNRWA calls for unimpeded and safe access to deliver much needed humanitarian aid," *UNRWA.org*, December 29, 2023, <https://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/official-statements/gaza-strip-unrwa-calls-unimpeded-and-safe-access-deliver-much-needed>.

Hamas.”⁴ USAID OIG went on to say that it, “... has identified deliberate interference and efforts to divert humanitarian assistance in regions where FTO activity is prevalent ... [t]his includes systemic coercion of aid workers by FTOs...”⁵ We must be clear-eyed about the reality that diversion by Hamas is a real threat and one that is very likely happening with UNRWA aid.

We also remain concerned by UNRWA’s repeated failure to uphold United Nations standards of neutrality in the agency’s operations in Gaza. Hamas tunnels have been found suspiciously close to UNRWA schools, as these terrorists continue to use children and their schools as human shields.⁶ There have been blatant and repeated instances of UNRWA employees, including teachers, using anti-Semitic rhetoric and posting messages of anti-Israel hate on social media.⁷ Assessments by NGOs continue to reveal anti-Israel content in educational materials used in UNRWA schools, which increases our concern that UNRWA, through this curriculum, has in some way aided Hamas’ call to destroy Israel (most recently, we have seen extremely troubling reports that an Israeli hostage was held in an UNRWA teacher’s attic after being kidnapped in the October 7th Hamas attacks).⁸

Our constituents are horrified that their taxpayer dollars may have, through UNRWA failures, supported Hamas terrorists. Therefore, we request that you appear before the House Foreign Affairs Committee to answer our questions and address the concerns of the American people. We ask that you indicate your willingness and availability to appear before the Committee by no later than January 24th, 2024.

Sincerely,



Michael T. McCaul
Chairman
House Foreign Affairs Committee



Brian Mast
Chairman
Subcommittee on Oversight
and Accountability

⁴ USAID Office of the Inspector General, *Gaza Response – Fraud Awareness November 2023*, https://oig.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/2023-11/Situational%20Alert%20-%20Diversion%20and%20Material%20Support_0.pdf.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Fabien, Emanuel, “IDF says it destroyed Hamas tunnel next to UNRWA School,” *The Times of Israel*, November 8, 2023, https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/idf-says-it-destroyed-hamas-tunnel-next-to-unrwa-school-in-gaza/; Foundation for Defense of Democracies (FDD), “Hamas Terror Tunnel Next to UNRWA School in Gaza Destroyed,” November 10, 2023, <https://www.fdd.org/analysis/2023/11/10/hamas-terror-tunnel-next-to-unrwa-school-in-gaza-destroyed/>.

⁷ UN Watch, “UN Teachers Call to Murder Jews, Reveals New Report,” March 14, 2023, <https://unwatch.org/un-teachers-call-to-murder-jews-reveals-new-report/>.

⁸ The Jerusalem Post, “Released hostage says he was held by UNRWA teacher in Gaza – report,” *The Jerusalem Post*, November 30, 2023, Updated: December 2, 2023, <https://www.jpost.com/middle-east/article-775777>; UN Watch and IMPACT-se, *UNRWA Education: Reform or Regression? A Review of UNRWA Teachers and Schools Concerning Incitement to Hate and Violence*, March 2023, <https://unwatch.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/2023-Report-UNRWA.pdf>.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Chris Smith".

Christopher H. Smith
Chairman
Subcommittee on Global Health,
Global Human Rights and International
Organizations

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Darrell Issa".

Darrell Issa
Member of Congress

CC:
Rep. Gregory W. Meeks, Ranking Member, House Foreign Affairs Committee

Mr. SMITH. I want to just point out for the record that decades ago Dr. Soffen, who's a pediatrician, brought to my attention some of the most horrific things that were happening by UNRWA which just blew my mind in terms of the hatred that was being conveyed to these children.

And, again, you got to be taught. They're being taught and they'll keep getting taught. You know, we—and, Mr. Goldberg, you made a very good point about how we know how to set up emergency situations for refugees.

We have been doing it forever, and the United States takes the lead not just in funding it but doing it. I remember when the Kurds left—in Operation Provide Comfort. They got out to the border of Turkey.

Our military in that case, especially from a humanitarian point of view, provided food, clothing, medicine, and saved the lives of so many people.

There are ways to do it. Hamas is disgraced. So is its proxy or its identical twin and that would be UNRWA. They have disqualified themselves and if we cannot during this terrible time when they have proven themselves beyond any reasonable doubt to be absolutely anti-Semitic but even more than that they have taught these kids to hate. That cycle will never be broken if we in any way, shape, or form countenance any further support for UNRWA.

Let's find the alternative. Let's do it. Let's put our minds to it and our money in order to save lives and to save these children from child abuse.

Mr. MAST. Thank you, Mr. Smith. I now recognize myself for a closing statement.

I want to start by a word of thanks for many. I want to start by thanking President Trump, No. 1, for being the first to have the stones to defund UNRWA. He went out there and he did it. He saw the writing on the wall and he went out there and did it.

I want to thank the witnesses for their testimony today which show to be that to have been a correct course of action. You all provided vital information, context, raised important questions about UNRWA and UNRWA has a lot to answer for.

We reached out to UNRWA's Commissioner General Mr. Philippe Lazzarini requesting that he appear before this committee and the American people.

In his response, which I will introduce for the record, while declining to appear publicly Mr. Lazzarini goes on to tell us a number of things, that UNRWA is committed to neutrality, he said—that UNRWA conducts quarterly integrated assessments of their installations and to ensure adherence to neutrality.

I guess these assessments must have somehow missed the missiles, the weapons, the anti-Semitic textbooks in the schools, and the terrorist tunnels being built underneath them.

He must have missed that 10 to 15 percent of the employees are tied to Hamas. The letter goes on to tell us that UNRWA has a zero tolerance policy with regard to staff neutrality and yet we know that at least 1,200 UNRWA staffers have direct ties to Hamas and other terrorist organizations and at least 12 staffers who were directly involved in the October 7 attacks.

My assessment today is that the Administration will likely ignore the facts and go back to funding UNRWA at some point and I say what was said here before. I'll repeat what was said in this hearing essentially.

I'm going to say this—I'm going to paraphrase the way that I interpreted this. There are many here that are not here to defend UNRWA but they will support continuing to give UNRWA the earnings—the dollars—of the American people with no threshold for bad behavior.

That cannot be the course of action for Congress, for the Administration, for America whatsoever. I can tell you that to expect, moving forward, we will be introducing legislation to claw back any recent dollars that were sent to UNRWA.

And in that I thank again the witnesses for their testimony. Pursuant to committee rules all members may have five legislative days to submit statements, questions, and extraneous materials for the record subject to length limitations.

And without objection, this committee stands adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 4:37 p.m., the subcommittees adjourned.]

APPENDIX



**COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
SUBCOMMITTEE HEARING NOTICE
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6128**

**Subcommittee on Oversight and Accountability
Brian Mast (R-FL), Chairman**

**Subcommittee on Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations
Chris Smith (R-NJ), Chairman**

January 25, 2024

TO: MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

You are respectfully requested to attend an OPEN hearing of the Committee on Foreign Affairs to be held by the Subcommittee on Oversight and Accountability at 2:00 pm in room 210 of the House Visitor Center. The hearing is available by live webcast on the Committee website at <https://foreignaffairs.house.gov/>.

DATE: Tuesday, January 30, 2024

TIME: 2:00 pm

LOCATION: HVC-210

SUBJECT: “UNRWA Exposed: Examining the Agency’s Mission and Failures”

WITNESSES: Richard Goldberg
Senior Advisor
Foundation for Defense of Democracies

Marcus Sheff
Chief Executive Officer
IMPACT-se

Hillel Neuer
Executive Director
UN Watch

Mara Rudman

Schlesinger Professor
University of Virginia Miller Center

*NOTE: Witnesses may be added.

By Direction of the Chair

The Committee on Foreign Affairs seeks to make its facilities accessible to persons with disabilities. If you are in need of special accommodations, please call 202-226-8467 at least four business days in advance of the event, whenever practicable. Questions with regard to special accommodations in general (including availability of Committee materials in alternative formats and assistive listening devices) may be directed to the Committee.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
MINUTES OF FULL COMMITTEE HEARING

Day Tuesday Date January 30, 2024 Room RHOB 2172

Starting Time 2:21 am Ending Time 4:37 pm

Recesses ☐ (____ to ____) (____ to ____) (____ to ____) (____ to ____) (____ to ____) (____ to ____)

Presiding Member(s)

Rep. Brian Mast

Check all of the following that apply:

Open Session ☒

Executive (closed) Session ☐

Televised ☒

Electronically Recorded (taped) ☒

Stenographic Record ☒

TITLE OF HEARING:

UNRWA Exposed: Examining the Agency's Mission and Failures

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Attached

NON-COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mr. Murphy

HEARING WITNESSES: Same as meeting notice attached? Yes ☒ No ☐

(If "no", please list below and include title, agency, department, or organization.)

STATEMENTS FOR THE RECORD: *(List any statements submitted for the record.)*

Attached

TIME SCHEDULED TO RECONVENE _____

or

TIME ADJOURNED 4:37 pm

Meg Wagner
Full Committee Hearing Coordinator

Committee on Foreign Affairs

Joint Subcommittee Hearing: Oversight and Accountability & Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations

118th Congress

ATTENDANCE

Meeting on: “UNRWA Exposed: Examining the Agency’s Mission and Failures”

Date: January 30, 2024

Convened: 2:21 PM

Adjourned: 4:37 PM

[illegible]

MATERIALS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD



January 25, 2024

The Honorable Michael McCaul
Chairman
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
2170 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington DC, 20515

Dear Chairman McCaul:

This is in response to your letter of January 15, 2024, concerning the mission and effectiveness of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA).

UNRWA is grateful for the ongoing support of the United States government and its people and appreciates this opportunity to supply additional facts. We hope the observations below will address your concerns, clarify any misconceptions about the Agency and its operations, and provide you with the necessary reassurances that UNRWA is doing everything required to ensure it upholds humanitarian principles, including the neutrality of its operations.

First though, let me reiterate the United Nations position on this tragic situation. As UNRWA Commissioner-General Philippe Lazzarini stated on 15-October, “*Last week’s attack on Israel was horrendous – devastating images and testimonies continue to come out. The attack and the taking of hostages are a flagrant violation of international humanitarian law.*”¹

Nowhere is safe in Gaza

UNRWA serves as the backbone of the humanitarian response in Gaza. Currently over 1.7 million displaced Gazans are sheltering at, or near, 154 UNRWA facilities and receiving assistance from the Agency.

Displaced Gazans hope that the UN ‘blue flag’ will offer them some level of protection during this conflict. However, this hope has been dashed as various UNRWA facilities have been struck - on average - twice daily, including yesterday on the Khan Younis Training Centre. To date, there have been 235 separate incidents impacting our premises resulting in more than 330 internally displaced persons being killed and more than 1,150 injured.²

Direct delivery of humanitarian aid to those in need

UNRWA donors, including the United States, rightly want to be certain that all possible steps are taken to prevent the use of humanitarian assistance by combatants. The Agency and its humanitarian partners have a responsibility to ensure that assistance reaches intended beneficiaries and minimizes the risk that funds or assets are diverted. This is a matter of accountability to our mandate, our donors, and most importantly, to the people we serve.

Further, the 2023-2024 U.S.-UNRWA Framework for Cooperation commits the Agency “to take all possible measures to ensure funding provided by the United States to UNRWA does not provide assistance to, or otherwise support, terrorists or terrorist organizations.” This includes reporting to the United States on any actions taken regarding staff misconduct and aid diversions.³

¹ “UNRWA Commissioner General Philippe Lazzarini remarks on the situation in the Gaza Strip,” October 15.

² UNRWA Situation Report on the Situation in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank #65, January 18, 2024.

³ 2023-2024 Framework for Cooperation Between the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and the United States of America. Department of State, June 1, 2023.

While Gaza is particularly sensitive, UNRWA builds on the good practices globally in applying due diligence and risk management for the movement, storage, and distribution of humanitarian aid. All while also acknowledging the Agency operates in a high-risk environment.

UNRWA employs safeguards to ensure it can deliver assistance to people in need in a principled manner, even in complex environments such as Gaza. These safeguards were in place before the conflict. For example:

- UNRWA does not make transfer of values to the de facto authorities or any Palestinian faction. Under its Privileges and Immunities, the Agency is immune from paying taxes, including indirect taxes, to a host government. Local staff and vendors do not pay income tax to the de facto authorities and neither do vendors working on our projects and providing services.
- UNRWA takes measures to ensure that it has no financial ties with any individual or organization on the UN Security Council Consolidated Sanctions List. During periods of escalation, the Agency has emergency screening procedures to ensure the provision of aid is coming in an effective manner (i.e. rapid screening of new vendors like bakeries). Subcontractors and implementing partners are also vetted.
 - This includes sharing staff lists with all host countries, including Israel.
- All payments (contractors, suppliers, staff, etc.) are processed through the Bank of Palestine, which does not pay tax to the de facto authorities, and are also vetted against European Union sanctions lists. All payments through the Bank of Palestine are also subject to the banking regulatory framework governed by the Palestinian Monetary Authority in Ramallah.
- The external, independent UN Board of Auditors annual audit and UNRWA's Department of Internal Oversight Services internal audit and investigations act as pillars of internal control and oversight.

In Gaza today, these safeguards minimize the risk of humanitarian supplies from being diverted. Evidence in support of our practices comes from the Biden Administration itself with a senior official recently stating, "the Israeli government has not brought to the attention of the U.S. government... any specific evidence of Hamas theft or diversion of assistance provided via the U.N. and its agencies. Full stop."⁴

UNRWA: committed to humanitarian principles, including neutrality

The Agency is constantly on-guard to maintain its humanitarian space, which UNRWA must have in order to provide services to Palestine Refugees living in one of the most complex humanitarian settings. Despite the massive challenges imposed by a conflict of such a scale, the Agency continues to work to ensure the neutrality of its installations.

UNRWA protection teams in our five fields of operation conduct quarterly integrated assessments of almost 1,000 installations. These assessments review adherence to neutrality and the level to which our installations are able to provide safe, inclusive, accessible and dignified services to Palestine Refugees. During each of the second and third quarters of 2023 for example, UNRWA assessed 99 percent of active Agency installations. The most frequent issues identified during the facility inspections concerned a lack of adequate UN signboards, 'no weapons' signs, and UN flags.

In the current conflict we have already recorded 23 incidents of military use and/or interference at UNRWA premises.⁵

UNRWA has a zero-tolerance policy with regard to staff neutrality violations and takes all credible allegations seriously. The Agency acknowledges that zero tolerance does not equate to zero risk. The key is how the Agency deals with such cases.

Whenever potential incidents of staff misconduct are brought to the Agency's attention the allegations are immediately assessed and actions that may constitute misconduct are investigated.

⁴ Washington Post, "Despite U.S. pressure on Israel, casualty count in Gaza remains high," January 14, 2024.

⁵ UNRWA Situation Report on the Situation in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank #65, January 18, 2024.

Where alleged misconduct is substantiated, appropriate disciplinary measures are imposed in line with the Agency's regulatory framework – up to and including dismissal. Other significant measures are also taken, often in combination, including heavy fines (months of salary), demotion (resulting in severe loss of income), and ineligibility for promotion.

In past conflicts UNRWA has discovered the neutrality of its facilities had been compromised by armed groups in Gaza to cache munitions, including during the 2014 conflict.⁶ In such instances, UNRWA protests to the de facto authorities and the Palestinian Authority, condemning the fact that these weapons components had been stored at a UN facility, in breach of the inviolability of UN facilities. UNRWA also immediately informs Israel. The Agency follows a similar protocol regarding suspected tunnels linked to its facilities, including sealing cavities by injecting cement whenever discovered.⁷

UNRWA education: committed to academic excellence

UNRWA devotes considerable time and resources to ensuring its teaching reflects UN values. The UN, in any refugee situation across the world, utilizes host country curriculums. This practice is aimed at ensuring students can matriculate into host country educational systems at any level and more broadly participate in the social and economic life of the host country.

This is particularly relevant for UNRWA as our school system ends after grade 9 and students transition to local schools for upper secondary, then university. As recently passed House legislation notes, UNRWA reviews all host country textbooks, grades 1-9, to ensure consistency with UN positions, educational appropriateness, and adherence to UNESCO standards.⁸ All UNRWA schools utilize official UN maps which include Israel.

Internationally recognized outside evaluators – including a 2021 World Bank-UNHCR study⁹ – empirically demonstrate that UNRWA's educational outcomes are among the best in the region and at the lowest cost per student. UNRWA's students in Gaza, the West Bank, and Jordan “scored an average of a quarter of a standard deviation higher in international assessments than public school children, implying an advantage of almost a year of learning.”¹⁰

An objective next step to ensure quality and consistent adherence to UN values and principles, including neutrality

In light of the difficulties created for policymakers by accusations levied against UNRWA and the subsequent Agency response, UNRWA Commissioner-General Lazzarini has taken the decision to request an independent review of these claims of unchecked pro-Hamas activity within the organization, including potential employee neutrality violations. The review will determine what is true and untrue and assess how the Agency addresses problematic cases.¹¹

The review's terms of reference will also provide for potential recommendations to strengthen the Agency's procedures and an assessment of the allegations.

Recall, we have already seen in a related independent review of Palestinian Authority textbooks commissioned by the European Union that the work of one organization accusing the Agency of promoting values contrary to UN principles was “marked by generalising and exaggerated conclusions based on methodological shortcomings.”¹¹

Finally, we appreciate your offer to discuss these matters with the committee. While UN Privileges and Immunities forbears the Commissioner-General from being subject to committee rules and procedures and joining the committee in open session – let alone the security risks to our staff posed by answering

⁶ UN Security Council, 8532nd Meeting, May 22, 2019

⁷ “UNRWA Strongly Condemns Neutrality Breach Against the Agency in Gaza,” November 29, 2022.

⁸ H.R. 3266, the “Peace and Tolerance in Palestinian Education Act.”

⁹ “The Global Cost of Inclusive Refugee Education,” World Bank-UNHCR, February 24, 2021.

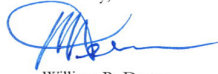
¹⁰ “UN Agency Seeks Review of Alleged Pro-Hamas Activity in Its Ranks,” Associated Press, January 17, 2024.

¹¹ “Report on Palestinian Textbooks,” Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research, 2021.

certain questions in an unclassified setting - he would nonetheless be pleased to answer in writing any additional questions and to meet you and your colleagues one-on-one, or in a members only setting, when he next travels to Washington, DC.

In closing, we hope the committee will allow us to continue our indispensable, lifesaving work in the knowledge that UNRWA takes seriously its responsibilities as a credible, neutral humanitarian partner with the United States.

Sincerely,



William R. Deere
Director
UNRWA Washington Representative Office

cc:
Members, House Committee on Foreign Affairs

RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

Questions for the Record Submitted to

Dr. Mara Rudman by

Representative Dina Titus

House Committee on Foreign Affairs

January 30, 2024

Question #1

Before this hearing, we learned that twelve UNRWA employees in Gaza played varying roles in the October 7 attack on Israel. This is an egregious breach of trust, and the United States, as UNRWA's largest donor, made the right decision to suspend funding in response. UNRWA's mandate has built-in requirements of neutrality for its staff, as well as conflict and risk-mitigation systems in place to ensure humanitarian assistance is reaching those in need. What does "neutrality" mean in practice within this context? Does UNRWA or the UN more broadly have policies in place to enforce this? What oversight mechanisms does the State Department have in place to monitor UNRWA activities and ensure the proper use of U.S. taxpayer dollars?

Answer: Your question goes to the oversight mechanisms existing within UN authorities, UNRWA authorities, and at the U.S. Department of State. I do not work at nor am I affiliated with any of these entities and thus not able to provide the responses you seek. I would recommend you reach out to them directly to pose these questions.