

The Honorable Amb. Nikki Haley
U.S. Mission to the United Nations
799 United Nations Plaza
New York, NY 10017
Via Fax: +1-212-415-4443

February 2, 2017

Dear Ambassador Haley,

We are obliged to inform you that, as documented in the enclosed UN Watch report that I am presenting today before Congress, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) is in gross breach of material provisions of its 2017 funding agreement with the U.S. Department of State.¹

The report demonstrates how incitement to Jihadist terrorism and antisemitism is rampant among UNRWA teachers and other employees throughout the organization's schools and other facilities in Gaza, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria.

As the largest bilateral donor to UNRWA, having provided more than \$380 million to the agency in 2015, the United States must act immediately to ensure UNRWA's compliance with the agreement.

Today's UN Watch report exposes more than 40 Facebook pages of UNRWA employees who promote and glorify terrorism and antisemitism.

Regrettably, when we exposed 30 similar cases of online incitement last year, the response of UNRWA spokesman Chris Gunness was to lash out at UN Watch, and to deny or downplay the problem. Only after months of sustained media attention did the UN spokesman in New York announce quietly that a few employees had been suspended. The identities of the perpetrators, or the duration of their suspensions, were never disclosed. UNRWA itself has never issued any statement on the matter, neither on its website or elsewhere.

That so many UNRWA employees continue to publicly display Facebook posts which celebrate radical Islamic terrorism and incite antisemitism demonstrates that UNRWA—despite its claims to have established disciplinary systems—is failing to take the issue seriously, and that its employees know that.

Likewise, senior UNRWA echelon's daily political advocacy targeting Israel—an anomalous practice and breach of neutrality among humanitarian agencies

¹ [2017 Framework for Cooperation Between the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and the United States of America.](#)

worldwide—creates an overall atmosphere in the organization where teachers clearly feel comfortable erasing the Jewish state from the map.

UNRWA’s violations of its obligations are as follows:

1. Breach of UNRWA’s Undertaking Regarding UN Principle of Neutrality

The agreement obligates UNRWA to act in accordance with “UN humanitarian principles of neutrality and impartiality.” (*See*, Section II, p. 1). These well-defined humanitarian principles are explained in various UN publications. For example, a June 2012 paper titled “[What are Humanitarian Principles?](#)” published by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs explains neutrality as follows: “Humanitarian actors must not take sides in hostilities or engage in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature.”

The incendiary Facebook posts by UNRWA personnel supporting, glorifying and legitimizing murderous anti-Israel terrorism is a gross violation of this duty of neutrality. These UN employees are openly “tak[ing] sides” in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and engaging in “political, racial, religious or ideological” controversies.

Examples from today’s UN Watch report, include:

- **Khader Awad**, an UNRWA teacher, who posted a photo of a Jew with three guns and a knife trained on his head, with a caption reading “*Blood = Blood. #KillThem.*”
- **Mohammad Alsayyed**, an Assistant Head Teacher at UNRWA, who praised the “awesome kidnapping” of three Israeli teenagers in June 2014 and posted a photo of himself presenting an award to a student—and a banner that erases Israel from the map.
- **Hussein Amrah**, an UNRWA school principal who published numerous photos and videos to Facebook glorifying Hamas fighters and celebrating terror attacks in Israel.

2. Breach of UNRWA’s Undertaking to Reject Racism

The agreement obligates UNRWA to reject “racism in all forms.” (*See*, Section II, p. 1). Yet UNRWA teachers and principals are in gross violation of this obligation by posting classic antisemitism on Facebook. Examples from today’s UN Watch report, include:

- **Ghanem Naim Ghoneim**, an UNRWA teacher who has two photos posted of Adolph Hitler, whom he calls “our beloved,” and “Hitler the great.”
- **Om Alaa**, an UNRWA teacher whose Facebook page features a picture of Adolf Hitler and his “top” ten quotes.

3. Failure to implement undertaking regarding e-training for social media

Under the agreement, UNRWA must implement “e-training on UNRWA’s policy on social media use by UNRWA personnel.” (*See*, Section III, p. 3). UNRWA is in glaring breach of this provision. Based on today’s UN Watch report, it is clear that if UNRWA has taken any actions in this regard, they have been an utter failure.

Furthermore, UNRWA’s e-training obligation is supposed to be implemented in connection with its broader obligation to comply with Section 301(c) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (*see*, Section III, p. 2), pursuant to which UNRWA must ensure the United States that its contributions are not going to assist persons who are involved in terrorism. The fact that UNRWA personnel are actively inciting, glorifying and honoring terrorists on their Facebook profiles calls into question whether UNRWA is in fact in compliance with FAA Section 301(c).

4. Failure to Discipline Teachers Who Incite Terrorism and Antisemitism

Under the agreement, UNRWA must take “clear and consistent . . . disciplinary action” against its personnel who violate UNRWA’s regulatory framework. (*See*, Section III, p. 3). In response to UN Watch’s reports from last year, [UNRWA claimed that it took disciplinary action](#) against some of its personnel in the form of suspensions and loss of pay. However, UNRWA did not identify the employees subjected to disciplinary proceedings or state the length of the suspensions. In any event, whatever disciplinary action UNRWA took plainly was not effective—today’s UN Watch report shows that the conduct is continuing unabated throughout UNRWA’s facilities across the Middle East.

The United States must demand that UNRWA employ a zero tolerance policy for this type of incendiary Facebook activity by its employees, just like that applied to teachers in the United States and the United Kingdom. In November 2016, the Oberlin College Board of Trustees [dismissed an assistant professor](#) for anti-Semitic Facebook posts. Similarly, in October 2015, the UK government [banned a teacher](#) from the classroom for life over an anti-Semitic Facebook post. Palestinian students deserve the same rights that UNRWA’s donors grant their own.

5. Violation of Internal UN Policies on Impartiality

In addition to these flagrant breaches of the 2017 funding agreement, UNRWA is also in violation of UN and UNRWA internal policies concerning staff neutrality and impartiality.

[Article 101\(3\) of the UN Charter](#) states that the “paramount consideration” in employing staff is “securing the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity.” The quality of “integrity” is central to the [UN Staff Rules and Staff Regulations](#), which require staff members to “uphold the highest standards of . . . integrity.” This includes, but is not limited to, “probity, impartiality, fairness, honesty and truthfulness in all matters affecting their work and status.” *See* Regulation 1.2(b). This value is again reflected in Rule 1.2(f) requiring staff to remain neutral and impartial, especially with respect to public pronouncements.

Moreover, UNRWA's own [International Staff Regulations](#) expressly incorporate this UN "neutrality rule" for its staff, stating in Regulation 1.4 that staff must "avoid any action and in particular any kind of public pronouncement which may adversely reflect on their status or integrity, independence or impartiality which are required by that status."

The UNRWA staff Facebook posts exposed by UN Watch today and last year reflect a brazen flouting of these UN and UNRWA regulations.

In light of the foregoing, we urge you to:

(a) Demand that UNRWA be in full compliance with its obligations under the 2017 funding agreement, including each of the provisions outlined above, prior to the U.S. releasing any further funds to UNRWA;

(b) Demand that UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres and UNRWA Commissioner-General Pierre Krähenbühl immediately condemn their employees' incitement to terrorism and antisemitism;

(b) Demand that UNRWA adopt a zero tolerance policy for employees who incite racism or murder by immediately terminating them, and prominently post on its website these and other actions it is taking to root out this insidious conduct by UN staff.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Hillel C. Neuer
Executive Director