

Foreign Minister Sigmar Gabriel
Federal Foreign Office
Auswartiges Amt
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Germany

Via Fax: +49-3018-17-3402

2 February 2017

Dear Minister Gabriel,

Today, UN Watch released a report exposing again the rampant use of Facebook by UNRWA personnel to incite and glorify murderous terrorism targeting Israelis and to post classic anti-Semitism, celebrating Nazism and bemoaning that it didn't succeed in eradicating all the Jews. The report details some 40 examples of such Facebook posts by UNRWA employees, including principals and teachers throughout the UNRWA system, from Lebanon and Syria to Jordan and Gaza. UN Watch is extremely troubled by this dangerous conduct by UN staff, which violates UN humanitarian principles of neutrality and impartiality and UN and UNRWA internal policies for the conduct of employees.

Last year, your government was the [fifth largest donor](#) to UNRWA with total donations of \$91,724,417. During that same period, the European Union gave UNRWA an additional \$136,751,943.

Your officials visited UNRWA and had the following connections to relevant UNRWA projects or officials:

In September 2010, Michael Bierhoff, the head of Germany's Beirut Mission, attended a graduation ceremony for 171 students of UNRWA's North Training Center near Tripoli, Lebanon (NTC). NTC was established in 2008 with the help of a [generous donation from the German government](#). At the graduation ceremony, Bierhoff commented about the importance of education for progress and noted the German government's "considerable" contribution to the success of NTC and its graduates. German flags are also displayed prominently throughout the school as is seen from pictures posted to [NTC's Facebook page](#).

One of the UNRWA employees identified in UN Watch's report – [Ahmad Nasser](#) – was a principal at NTC. In response to an anti-Semitic post by another UNRWA employee celebrating Hitler and the Nazi genocide against the Jews, Nasser commented that God "should not have left any of them [the Jews]." Nasser also posted to his own profile an anti-Semitic cartoon and a photo expressing pride that the

school had hosted the anti-Semitic Sheikh Hisham Khalifa who has made statements like “The Jews are known for their love of money and their enslavement to it.”

Nasser went on to become an employee of the Sibli Training Center, another EU funded vocational school in Lebanon. He is featured in one photo from 2015 with several EU officials in front of an EU/UNRWA banner at a ceremony at the Sibli Training Center. The photo appears on the Facebook page “[European Union in Lebanon](#).” In the photo, Nasser is standing in the back right next to EU’s official representative in Lebanon, Abel Piqueras Candela.

Germany has also substantially contributed to other UNRWA educational projects, including in Gaza and Jordan. [Announcing a 3 million Euro donation](#) for schools in Gaza in 2012, Bettina Tewinkel, a German government representative in Amman, Jordan referred to UNRWA as Germany’s partner and noted Germany’s “aims at improving the learning opportunities for young people. Tewinkel was thanked by UNRWA external relations and communications officer, Marina Skuric-Prodanovic.

In February 2015, Germany’s Ambassador to Jordan, Ralph Tarraf, and UNRWA’s Jordan Director, Roger Davies, opened the extension of a preparatory school for boys in Husn, Jordan, [built with a “generous contribution” from the German government](#). At the ceremony, Ambassador Tarraf talked of opening a school as a “sign of hope... for a better future.”

In its report, UN Watch exposed 18 UNRWA educators in Lebanon, 8 in Gaza and 10 in Jordan who posted anti-Semitism and incitement to terrorism on their Facebook profiles. Echoing the sentiments of Germany’s representatives in Lebanon, Gaza and Jordan about the importance of education for progress and a better future, UN Watch is alarmed by the radicalization of UNRWA’s educational staff, funded by Germany and the EU, and the effects of this on the Palestinian youth of today and tomorrow.

We hope that you will take action to ensure that Germany’s contributions to UNRWA are not used to radicalize Palestinian youth or to incite murder and genocide. We thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Hillel C. Neuer
Executive Director