



H.E. Philippe Lazzarini
Under-Secretary-General and Commissioner-General of UNRWA
United Nations

11 August 2021

Excellency,

I am writing in response to your letter dated 8 August 2021. At the outset, please allow me to express my appreciation for your prompt investigation of the disturbing findings of incitement to terrorism and antisemitism by UNRWA teachers uncovered in the 2 August 2021 UN Watch report entitled “Beyond the Textbooks”.

Having said that, I was concerned that your proposed solution to these alarming reports is simply to train UNRWA personnel in ‘neutrality’. If your agency is, indeed, committed to a “zero-tolerance policy for hatred including antisemitism”, as you yourself write, then the answer to these acts of hatred and incitement should be immediate dismissal, not merely participation in a tolerance or diversity workshop. As you saw, the UN Watch report cited above, included very troubling examples of teacher impropriety, including a teacher that quoted Hitler in a positive light. Such behaviors go well beyond poor judgment by educators that ‘neutrality training’ can remedy. Given the troublesome history of UNRWA textbooks and teaching materials having included violent and antisemitic content that your organization has pledged to remove, I expect more from you than mere ‘retraining’. Teachers that teach violence, hatred and antisemitism have no place in a UNRWA classroom, or any classroom for that matter, and should be fired at once.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'G. Erdan'.

Gilad Erdan
Ambassador of Israel to the United States and the United Nations

CC: H.E. Mrs. Linda Thomas-Greenfield, Permanent Representative of the United States to the United Nations