



May 21, 2023

Mr. Hillel C. Neuer  
Executive Director  
UN Watch  
Case Postale 191, 1211  
Geneva 20, Switzerland

Dear Mr. Neuer:

UNRWA acknowledges receipt of the UN Watch communication dated 24 April 2023. I am responding on behalf of the Agency.

UNRWA considers that its highest responsibility is the education of Palestine refugee children. We are proud that UNRWA's learning institutions provide safe, inclusive, and equitable quality education services in line with global refugee education standards, UN values, and UNESCO standards. Internationally recognized and neutral evaluators (including UNESCO, the World Bank, UNHCR, MOPAN, the British Council and ITAD Ltd) all praise the quality and efficiency of the teaching in UNRWA's schools and commend the students' educational outcomes, often outperforming their peers in public schools by one year and at a lower cost per student.

UNRWA is committed to ongoing improvement of its services so that it can continue to support the best possible education for Palestinian children who will go on to contribute to peace and development within the region. Rather than contribute to this effort, the methods employed by UN Watch appear designed to undermine UNRWA. At no point has the organization ever contacted UNRWA for comment prior to publishing its various exposes, a step credible research organizations invariably follow. Further, the work of the partner organization in this latest expose, IMPACT-se, has been characterized by a robust 2021 academic review undertaken by the Georg Eckart Institute on behalf of the European Commission as "marked by generalising and exaggerated conclusions based on methodological shortcomings."

This said, I invite you to share with us all new evidence that you state you uncovered of other allegedly serious violations committed by UNRWA staff at the earliest opportunity as we take every allegation very seriously and wish to look into the matter promptly.

Credible UNRWA partners know that the Agency consistently takes significant steps to address the very issues UN Watch purports to expose. Once again, here are the full facts:

- The UNRWA job application form requires prospective employees to attest to no previous, disqualifying conduct.
- Falsifying, misrepresenting or intentionally withholding information are grounds for the rejection of an application or termination of an employment offer.



Mr. Hillel C. Neuer  
Page Two  
May 21, 2023

- UNRWA provides mandatory training on the responsibilities of being a UN employee, particularly in their role as neutral actors, including related guidelines on the use of social media.
- UNRWA employees understand that a violation of their responsibilities as UN employees or the Agency social media policy exposes them to disciplinary action.
- UNRWA reviews every allegation brought to its attention of potential employee misconduct, including those raised in UN Watch/IMPACT's latest report.
- If employees are found to be in violation of the Agency's rules and regulations, the Agency takes appropriate action. Previous such cases have resulted in dismissal, demotion, denial of promotion and significant loss of pay.

UNRWA has repeatedly acknowledged that zero tolerance of hate speech does not equate to zero risk, particularly in an organization of such size and scope. It appears that after approximately a year between exposes, UN Watch identified seven out of the Agency's 28,000 personnel (0.025 per cent), who allegedly infringed UNRWA's neutrality and social media policies. While any alleged breach of our rules, regulations and policies is of concern, these numbers speak for themselves, something that groups like UN Watch always regrettably neglect to mention.

These are complex times in UNRWA's five operating fields, marked by ongoing security challenges, severe economic deterioration, ongoing civil war, and natural disasters. Despite these protracted humanitarian and human development challenges, the Agency devotes considerable resources to employee training and, as necessary, investigation of potential employee neutrality violations - including strengthening over the past two years the internal measures to mitigate and respond to breaches. Still, more can always be done, and the Agency continues to strengthen the systems in place, including the expansion of digital learning education and additional employee training encompassing the entire spectrum of humanitarian principles.

Sincerely,

William R. Deere  
Director  
UNRWA Representative Office  
Washington, DC