

The Case Against UNRWA

Big Picture

UNRWA, the UN refugee agency for Palestinians, presents itself as a humanitarian agency. In reality, it has become deeply entangled with Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, and other terrorist groups — using Western-funded tax dollars to empower extremism.

Senior UNRWA officials [regularly meet with these terror organizations](#), refer to them as “partners,” and allow them to shape agency policy.

Terror-linked figures have been allowed to [lead UNRWA schools and unions](#). Thousands of its teachers have praised Hitler while [celebrating Hamas’s October 7th massacre](#). UNRWA students have been [taught violent jihad](#).

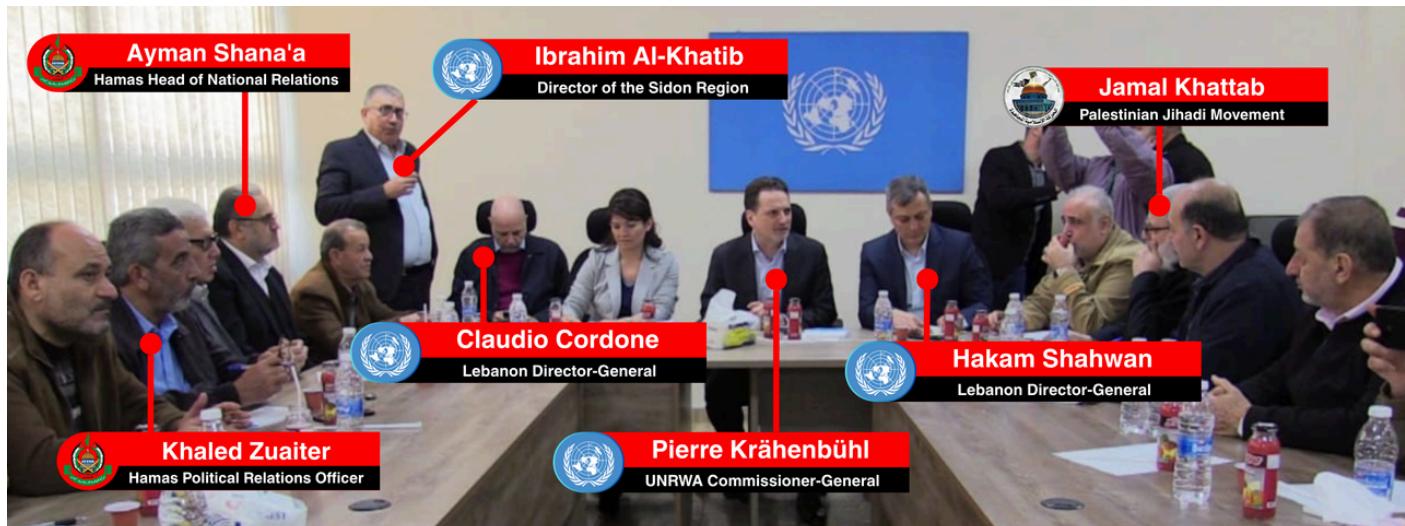
Since 1949, UNRWA has refused to resettle so-called refugees and instead taught generations that their home lies on the other side of the fence. This narrative fuels endless grievance, hatred, and violence.

Donor countries must stop funding an agency that perpetuates war. Aid should flow through other agencies which already operate in Gaza, and which are experts at this task everywhere else in the world, such as the WHO, the World Food Programme, and UNICEF.

Go Deeper

UNRWA’s Complicity with Terrorism

- [Photographic evidence](#) has revealed that the most senior UNRWA officials, including current UNRWA Commissioner-General Philippe Lazzarini, have regularly met with leaders from U.S. and EU-designated terror groups including Hamas and Islamic Jihad. UNRWA and terror leaders have mutually praised each other for their “cooperation” while describing each other as “partners.”



Former UNRWA Commissioner-General Pierre Krähenbühl (2014-2019) holding an official meeting with terror chiefs in Lebanon.

- A [new interactive map](#) by UN Watch exposes a terror network of over 400 UNRWA employees with ties to Palestinian terrorist organizations, refuting UNRWA's claim that it is only "a few bad apples."
- As revealed in *The Wall Street Journal*, [leaked intelligence confirms](#) that over 10% of UNRWA employees in Gaza are affiliated with terrorist organizations.
- As confirmed by *The Washington Post*, an UNRWA social worker was captured on film [kidnapping the limp body](#) of 21-year-old Israeli Yonatan Samerano into Gaza in a UN car.
- As reported by the BBC, former British-Israeli hostage Emily Damari said that she was [held by Hamas in UNRWA facilities](#) during her 15-month captivity. Israeli Neta Heiman Mina wrote in Canada's National Post that her 84-year-old mother Ditzia Heiman was [held hostage in the home of an UNRWA teacher](#).
- While Hamas's October 7th massacre was still unfolding, UNRWA teachers in a 3,000-member UNRWA staff Telegram group [cheered and celebrated the attacks](#), sharing photos and video footage of those events while praying for the terrorists' success and for Israel's destruction.

UNRWA Schools Hijacked To Teach Terror

- In violation of neutrality principles, UNRWA schools [glorify terrorism](#) and [promote antisemitic content](#), violating neutrality principles. A student from UNRWA's Jalazone Boys' School located a few miles outside of Ramallah [shared](#):
"There's no peace in our schools. It's all about us returning to our land. The solution is Jihad in the path of Allah."
- Current Hamas spokesman [Suhail al-Hindi](#) is a founding member of the terror group who previously doubled as the head of the UNRWA teachers' union in Gaza. Al-Hindi is also revered by UNRWA staff for a campaign to prevent the inclusion of Holocaust education in the UNRWA curriculum.
- As [confirmed by Hamas itself](#), the head of the UNRWA teachers' union in Lebanon, Fateh Sharif, was Hamas's terror chief in the country up until he was eliminated in a targeted airstrike. UNRWA previously [awarded](#) Fateh Sharif for his role educating Palestinian kids.



Student at UNRWA's Jalazone Boys' School in an exclusive interview obtained by UN Watch.



Then UNRWA Lebanon Director-General Munir Manna awarding Hamas's Leader in Lebanon, Fateh Sharif.

- Sharif's and Al-Hindi's successors have open ties to terror groups and pledge to follow in their footsteps. Israel maintains that [at least 15%](#) of UNRWA's senior educators in Gaza are members of Hamas or Palestinian Islamic Jihad.

UNRWA's Political and Pathological Agenda

The entire purpose of the agency is to perpetuate grievance, hatred, and war, by refusing to resettle Arab refugees from 1948 and their descendants. Since its creation in 1949, the agency has brainwashed Gazans into believing that their home is not Gaza, but rather on the other side of the fence, in Israel.

There is a direct line between this narrative, part of a radicalization process that took place over many years in UNRWA schools, and the invasion of Israel by thousands of Gazan terrorists breaking through the fence and massacring Israeli civilians on October 7th. For Hamas, they were merely exercising their UNRWA-promoted "right of return."

While the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) aids over 35 million refugees worldwide with the goal of resettlement and self-reliance, Palestinians are the only group served by a separate agency — UNRWA — which perpetuates their dependency instead of resolving it.

Because UNRWA lacks a resettlement mandate, Palestinians living under Palestinian rule in Gaza and the West Bank or those who hold citizenship in foreign nations, including the over two million living in Jordan with Jordanian citizenship, are uniquely classified as refugees by UNRWA. By inflating its refugee numbers, UNRWA is able to maintain its political narrative.

UNRWA's Operational Collapse and its Replacement

- Israel's restrictions on UNRWA operations, following confirmed ties to Hamas, make the agency ineffective in supporting Palestinians.
- UNRWA Commissioner-General Philippe Lazzarini has [admitted](#) that the activities of his agency could indeed be replaced by other aid organizations, such as the World Food Programme (WFP), WHO, UNICEF which already operate around the globe to meet humanitarian challenges.
- UNRWA staff have also been [caught stealing](#) and reselling humanitarian aid in Gaza during the current war to the detriment of the people UNRWA is mandated to support.

The Path Forward: UNRWA Must be Defunded

- Multiple significant donor nations — including the [United States](#), [Sweden](#), the [Netherlands](#), and [Italy](#) — have already fully or partially suspended their funding to UNRWA because of the organization's inefficiency and ties to terrorism.
- States must redirect taxpayer funds away from UNRWA and toward organizations that guarantee transparency, maintain accountability, and operate independently from terrorist groups.
- Funds designated for UNRWA should instead go to the numerous other international organizations and vetted NGOs already operating intensively and efficiently across Gaza and in the region.