UN Watch



MEET THE ALUMNI

THE FIRST UNRWA YEARBOOK

Selected profiles from the investigation into over 800 terrorists taught by UNRWA

December 2026

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ABOUT UN WATCH

Founded in 1993, UN Watch is a non-governmental organization based in Geneva, Switzerland that monitors the United Nations by the yardstick of its charter and protects human rights worldwide. For more information, please visit our website: www.unwatch.org.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This report was researched by UN Watch's Luis Pelaez with assistance from UN Watch fellow Bella Ingber and interns Reuben Elphinston and Micah Weinstock. The report was written by Legal Advisor Dina Rovner and edited by Executive Director Hillel Neuer.

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Introduction

Palestinians are the only population with a dedicated UN refugee agency: the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA). Unlike UNHCR, which provides humanitarian assistance and protection to approximately 130 million refugees and displaced people worldwide,[1] UNRWA also provides public services ordinarily delivered by governments, including education and healthcare. In 2025, UNRWA employed approximately 26,000 staff serving 3.25 million people,[2] compared with UNHCR's 12,600 staff[3] for 130 million people. That translates into one staff member for every 125 people at UNRWA, compared with one for every 10,000 at UNHCR.

Education is central to UNRWA's operations and fundraising. In 2025, it accounted for 39% of the agency's total expenditure across all funding streams—approximately $452 million of $1.16 billion.[4] According to UNRWA, its education program aims to "uphold the principles of human rights, tolerance, and respect."[5] The evidence presented here casts serious doubt on that claim.

Key Findings

In stark contrast to UNRWA's stated educational objectives, UN Watch's research reveals that UNRWA graduates have pursued careers in jihadi terrorism with Hamas and other Palestinian terrorist organizations for decades. This is not a new phenomenon: even the perpetrators of the 1972 Munich Olympics massacre attended UNRWA schools.[6]

Yet the scale of the problem is far greater than previously reported. **UN Watch is currently investigating the cases of more than 800 UNRWA school graduates for alleged involvement in terrorism.**

These cases under investigation are mostly limited to deceased UNRWA school graduates whom Hamas and other terrorist organizations publicly eulogized as "martyrs." This tally of 800 therefore mostly excludes living members, past and present, as well as those who died without a public eulogy. Indeed, Hamas has generally refrained from publishing eulogies for its members who took part in the October 7th massacre and the ensuing hostilities. Over the decades covered by this report, therefore, the total number of UNRWA graduates who have served in terrorist organizations may well run into the thousands.

This report examines the evidence in 50 of those cases. The graduates profiled include senior Hamas leaders, suicide bombers, operatives who launched rockets, and intelligence operatives.

Among them are the following individuals:

- **Ismail Haniyeh**, Hamas Political Bureau Chairman (2017–2024), who praised and defended the October 7 attacks and opposed releasing Israeli hostages before the war ended.
- **Mohammed Deif**, longtime commander of Hamas's Al-Qassam Brigades, who masterminded suicide bombings that killed dozens of Israeli civilians during the 1990s and Second Intifada, and was a principal architect of the October 7, 2023 massacre, in which approximately 1,200 people were killed and 251 were abducted to Gaza.

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3. *Human resources, including staff welfare*, UN Doc. EC/77/SC/CRP.19, **UNHCR** (August 18, 2026), https://www.unhcr.org/system/files/protected-files/docs/default/2026-08/crp-19-human-resources-97-sc-english.pdf, archive link: https://unwatch.org/wp-content/uploads/crp-19-human-resources-97-sc-english.pdf .
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6. *@EinatWilf*, **X** (October 10, 2023, 1:37 PM), https://x.com/EinatWilf/status/1711692436190249232, archive link: https://archive.li/juygR.

- **Ghazi Abu Tama'a**, senior Hamas military commander and member of the Qassam Brigades' Military Council who commanded the Central Brigade for 14 years, oversaw weapons and combat services, and helped supervise the October 7, 2023 attacks on Israel.
- **Abdel Fattah Hussein Kharousha**, Hamas terrorist sentenced in 2019 to three years in prison for planning a shooting attack on a bus carrying Israeli soldiers in Nablus. Shortly after his release, on February 26, 2023, he shot and killed Israeli brothers Hillel Menachem Yaniv (21) and Yagel Yaakov Yaniv (19) in their car near Nablus.
- **Salah Mustafa Ali Othman**, Hamas terrorist responsible for multiple shooting attacks against Israelis, including a 1993 bus shooting and car hijacking near French Hill in Jerusalem that killed two Israelis.
- **Muadh Saad Al-Masri**, Hamas terrorist who participated in the April 7, 2023 shooting attack on the Dee family vehicle, killing sisters Rina Dee (16) and Maia Dee (20), and fatally wounding their mother, Lucy Dee (48), who died three days later.
- **Abdul Hadi Siam**, Hamas operative who joined the organization at age 18, participated in a June 22, 2001 suicide attack at the Dugit settlement, and rose through the ranks to become a commander. He participated in successive Hamas military campaigns in Gaza, including the war that followed the October 7, 2023 Hamas attacks.
- **Khalil Hamed Al-Kharraz**, a founder of the Qassam Brigades' operations outside the Palestinian territories who became deputy commander of the Brigades in Lebanon. During Operation Protective Edge in 2014, he oversaw rocket launches from Lebanon into Israel.
- **Mahmoud Marzouq Abu Watfa**, early Qassam Brigades member who helped transform the organization from small armed cells into a structured military force. He later served as director of Hamas's Internal Security Service and as a liaison between its political leadership, particularly Yahya Sinwar, and its security institutions.
- **Mohammed Ibrahim Shaheen**, Qassam Brigades operative who received advanced military training in Iran and maintained close ties to senior Hamas leader Saleh al-Arouri. Following October 7, 2023, he directed rocket launches from southern Lebanon into Israel.
- **Mohamed Ashraf Abed**, Hamas operative who joined the Qassam Brigades at age 15 and participated in digging military tunnels. According to his Hamas biography, he routinely carried a rifle to remain ready for operations. His uncle also served on the Qassam Brigades' General Military Council.

The findings draw primarily on two sources: eulogies published on Hamas's Al-Qassam Brigades website and biographies published by Vision PD: The Encyclopedia of the Palestinian Elite.

UN Officials and Donor Governments Praise UNRWA Education

Despite the longstanding record of UNRWA graduates pursuing careers in jihadi terrorism, senior UN officials and major donor governments have repeatedly praised UNRWA's education system as promoting peace, tolerance, human rights, and regional stability, and as a bulwark against radicalization.

UN Officials Praise UNRWA Education:

- **António Guterres, UN Secretary-General (2019):** UNRWA students learn "United Nations values of human rights and tolerance."[7]
- **Philippe Lazzarini, UNRWA Commissioner-General (2024):** UNRWA education "champions human rights and gender equality" and promotes "tolerance and respect for cultural identity."[8]
- **Leni Stenseth, UNRWA Deputy Commissioner-General (2023), current Director General of Norway's Ministry of Foreign Affairs:** "UNRWA schools produce the future partners for peace that this region needs."[9]
- **Pierre Krähenbühl, UNRWA Commissioner-General (2017):** UNRWA students "learn about tolerance & peaceful conflict resolution."[10]

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7. *Addressing Pledging Conference for Palestine Refugee Agency, Secretary-General Urges Donors Maintain Their Support at 2018 Levels,* **UN** (June 25, 2019), https://www.un.org/unispal/document/addressing-pledging-conference-for-palestine-refugee-agency-secretary-general-urges-donors-maintain-their-support-at-2018-levels/, archive link: https://archive.li/NJJAY.
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Donor Governments Praise UNRWA Education:

- **European Union — Federica Mogherini, High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (February 2018):** "For Palestinian kids, this means the possibility to keep hoping, to build their own future [...] and it means also fighting radicalization. So it is also here an investment in our own security."[11]

- **Germany — Dirk Niebel, Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development (December 2012):** "The German Government has demonstrated strong support for education in Gaza—the [principal] way we work to alleviate the effects of these harsh conditions, and one of the most important human development priorities of all the Agency's services."[12]

- **United Kingdom — James Roscoe, Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations (June 2019):** "We recognise its unique mandate [...] to protect and provide essential health and education services to Palestinian refugees across the Middle East. And we know that UNRWA is a vital humanitarian and stabilizing force in the region."[13]

- **Japan — Jiro Okuyama, Ambassador to Jordan (March 2023):** "UNRWA's role in providing Palestinian refugees with essential services such as healthcare, education, and social security is vital for both humanitarian needs and stability in the Middle East."[14]

- **Canada — Marie-Claude Bibeau, Minister of International Development (November 2016):** "We want to see Palestinian refugee children in classrooms where they can learn universal values of tolerance and respect."[15]

- **Norway — Erling Rimestad, State Secretary (February 2023):** "Ensuring that UNRWA has enough funding to provide education, food and health services is important for stability in the Middle East."[16]

- **Spain — Juan Carlos Gafo, Ambassador to Lebanon (October 2009):** "Education is not only a basic right but, I believe, the basis for conflict prevention and access to labour market."[17]

- **France — David Bertolotti, Ambassador to Jordan (July 2019):** "UNRWA schools are an open window to the world and the possibility of a life lived in dignity."[18]

- **Italy — Fabrizio Marcelli, Ambassador to Lebanon (December 2025):** "Education promotes hope and peace, and Italy remains committed to supporting all Palestine Refugee children in Lebanon."[19]

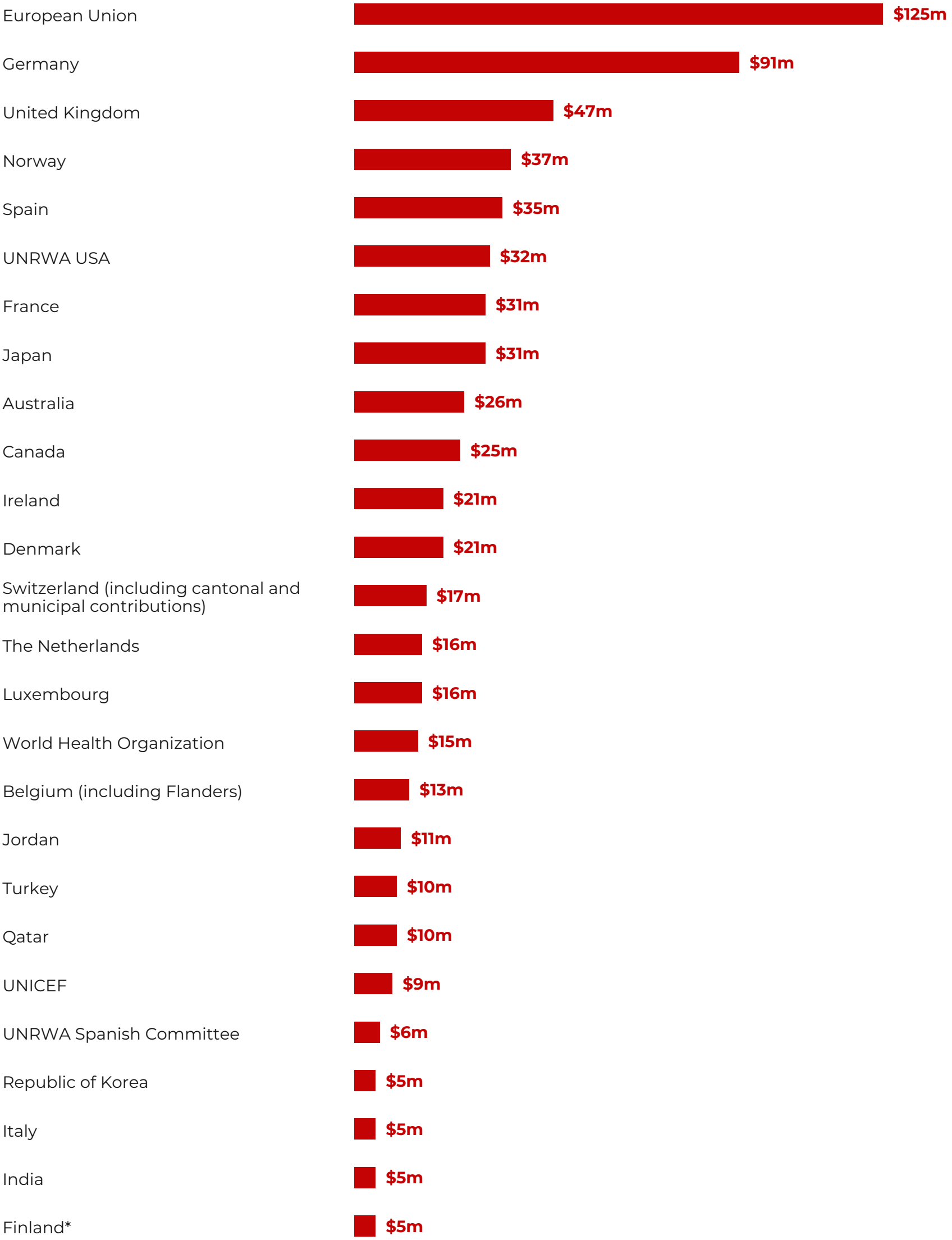
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Who Funds UNRWA

In 2025, UNRWA's top funders were:

Contributions in US$ millions



** Finland has recently announced an end to its funding of UNRWA.*

The Colonna Reforms Have Not Resolved UNRWA's Failures

The fact that UNRWA's education system is consistently producing hundreds of graduates who become terrorists, together with evidence of incitement in classroom materials and Hamas affiliates serving as teachers and principals, calls into question the UN's claim that UNRWA has the strongest neutrality safeguards of any UN agency.

Following revelations that UNRWA employees participated in the October 7 atrocities and that a 3,000-member UNRWA staff Telegram group praised those crimes, donor governments suspended over $450 million in funding.[20] In response, Secretary-General António Guterres commissioned the Colonna Review to examine UNRWA's adherence to the humanitarian principle of neutrality.[21] Yet, as Guterres's spokesperson acknowledged, a central purpose was "to reassure donors who may have doubts."[22]

Unsurprisingly, UNRWA and its defenders portrayed the April 2024 Colonna Report as vindication.[23] In a report published on November 10, 2026, UNRWA claimed to have implemented 42 of its 50 recommendations (84%).[24] However, in a draft resolution adopted a week later by the Fourth Committee of the UN General Assembly, the number of recommendations claimed to have been "closed" by UNRWA was reduced to 41.[25]

Donor governments have seized on these figures as evidence that UNRWA is reforming:

- **Germany — Ambassador Florian Laudi, Deputy Permanent Representative to the UN (November 18, 2026):** "We commend the Agency's response, the completion of 41 of 50 recommendations of the Independent Review, and the Agency's zero-tolerance policy towards violations of its neutrality."[26]
- **Ireland — Neale Richmond, Minister of State for International Development (September 24, 2026):** "I would like to acknowledge the enormous progress UNRWA has made delivering on the Colonna report recommendations."[27]
- **Belgium (June 30, 2026):** "We also welcome the progress made in implementing the recommendations of the independent Colonna Report, which has contributed to strengthening neutrality, oversight, and accountability within the agency."[28]
- **Liechtenstein — Ambassador Christian Wenaweser, Permanent Representative to the UN (June 30, 2026):** "We have been encouraged by UNRWA's swift and constructive response to the recommendations and note the significant progress already made, with 80% of the report's 50 recommendations now completed."[29]

20. *Daily Press Briefing by the Office of the Spokesperson for the Secretary-General,* **UN** (February 21, 2024) https://press.un.org/en/2024/db240221.doc.htm, archive link: https://archive.ph/J4kVh.
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29. *Id.*

Yet these endorsements rested on a deeply misleading measure of progress. UN Watch's own independent assessment found that no more than 13 of the 50 Colonna recommendations had been implemented as prescribed.[30] We found that UNRWA had repeatedly declared recommendations complete after taking mere preliminary administrative steps, even when the required reforms remained unimplemented. For example, commercial and staff-union vetting recommendations were closed despite implementation remaining dependent on funding. Likewise, UNRWA declared reform of its Staff Union Statute complete after merely drafting and transmitting a revised statute that the unions had not adopted.

UN Watch found that the reforms failed to address the very problems at the heart of UNRWA's neutrality crisis: Hamas infiltration of its workforce and the promotion of hatred and violence in its schools.

Failure to Screen for Hamas Membership: Despite its claims of rigorous neutrality safeguards, UNRWA has no demonstrated system for screening teachers or other employees for Hamas membership. Its principal sanctions screening relies on the UN Security Council Consolidated Sanctions List, which does not include Hamas or Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ).[31]

Failure to Investigate Terrorist Affiliations: UNRWA's Neutrality Investigations Unit received 40 complaints in 2025, authorized 31 investigations, and substantiated just 13 allegations.[32] Meanwhile, by June 2026, USAID's independent Office of Inspector General had referred 108 current or former UNRWA personnel for suspension or debarment consideration based on evidence of participation in the October 7 attacks and/or affiliation with Hamas's military wing. Those referred included school principals, deputy principals, teachers, counselors, security personnel, and medical staff.[33]

Failure to Hold Employees Accountable: UNRWA subsequently dismissed 70 Gaza employees following a safety and security assessment, but expressly stated that the dismissals were not part of a disciplinary process and did not validate the allegations against them.[34]

Failure to Eliminate Incitement from Schools: Despite UNRWA's textbook reviews, teacher training, classroom inspections, and other purported safeguards, IMPACT-se's examination of the 2025–2026 Palestinian Authority curriculum used in UNRWA schools continued to identify material glorifying terrorism and martyrdom, promoting violent jihad, and conveying antisemitic narratives.[35] Moreover, in testimony reported by *Jusoor News*, an UNRWA teacher in Gaza alleged that fellow teachers were "aggressively pushing" ideologies of killing and violence onto their students, suggesting that the problem extends beyond textbooks to classroom instruction itself.[36]

Most significantly, UN Watch found that despite its purported neutrality reforms, UNRWA continued to employ Hamas militants as teachers and school principals, while failing to acknowledge their Hamas affiliations even after their deaths:

- **Mohammad Juma Shuwaideh**, an UNRWA school principal and senior Gaza Staff Union official previously exposed in UN Watch's September 2025 *Schools in the Grip of Terror* report, remained employed until June 2026.[37]

30. *Report Card on UNRWA Reform: An Evaluation of the Agency's Claims Against the Evidence On Implementation of the Colonna Report,* **UN Watch** (September 2026), https://unwatch.org/wp-content/uploads/Colonna-Report-Card-UN-Watch-September-2026.pdf.
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- **Nabhan Mohammed Nabhan Al-Amsi**, killed by Israel in July 2026, was mourned by UNRWA's Gaza Staff Union as a teacher, while the IDF identified him as head of the Military Intelligence Desk in Hamas's Gaza Brigade.[38]
- **Imad Yousif El Samhouri**, a veteran UNRWA educator and school principal killed by Israel in 2025, was subsequently eulogized by Hamas in a martyr video identifying him as an operative and commander.[39] Yet the UN continued to honor him as a fallen employee. In June 2026, his name was read out and commemorated at a ceremony where Secretary-General António Guterres paid tribute to UN personnel killed in the conflict.[40]
- **Fateh Sharif**, a veteran UNRWA school principal in Lebanon and Hamas's leader in the country, remained employed for months after UN Watch alerted Commissioner-General Philippe Lazzarini to his terrorist ties. UNRWA did not officially declare him worthy of dismissal until two weeks after he was killed in an Israeli strike on September 30, 2024, and Hamas publicly identified him as its leader in Lebanon. An UNRWA dispute tribunal subsequently ruled that his heirs were entitled to death benefits because he was still an employee at the time of his death.[41] In other words, because Mr. Lazzarini refused to fire Fateh Sharif for months after UN Watch published the dossier documenting his terror ties, Western taxpayers are now funding UNRWA's payment of death benefits to the heirs of this senior Hamas terrorist.

Conclusion

As long as UNRWA continues to employ Hamas terrorists as educators, fails to investigate its employees' terrorist affiliations or screen applicants for Hamas membership, and uses textbooks containing hateful antisemitic content, it cannot credibly claim to uphold "the highest standards of neutrality" and to "inculcate the values of tolerance, democracy, human rights, mutual respect, and conflict resolution."

UN Watch's findings expose the stark contradiction between the agency's record and the claims of its donors, who portray UNRWA education as a force for stability and a safeguard against radicalization. On the contrary, the evidence reveals an education system that produces hundreds of graduates who pursue careers in jihadi terrorism.

Palestinian refugees benefit from a dedicated UN agency with extensive staffing and funding to provide public services ordinarily delivered by governments—an arrangement distinct from the UNHCR system serving other refugee populations. Yet despite these extraordinary resources, UNRWA has failed to ensure that its schools are free from terrorist influence and antisemitic incitement. Its education system has proven fundamentally unfit for its purpose.

Donor governments seeking to assist Palestinians must stop supporting this failed system and redirect their funding to other qualified organizations, within or outside the UN, capable of providing quality education, enforcing meaningful neutrality safeguards, and ensuring that international assistance is not diverted to terrorism.

38. *UNRWA Health Department Staff Meeting,* **Facebook** (July 22, 2026), https://www.facebook.com/groups/Employee.un/permalink/37949440474640166, archive link: https://cdn.unwatch.org/archived-page/Health%20Department%20Staff%20Meeting.html; *Israel kills three Hamas members in Gaza,* **Shafaq News** (July 25, 2026), https://shafaq.com/en/Middle-East/Israel-kills-three-Hamas-members-in-Gaza, archive link:https://archive.ph/kWwgu.
39. *@HillelNeuer*, **X** (August 13, 2026, 7:07 PM), https://x.com/HillelNeuer/status/2087934023251198301.
40. *@HillelNeuer*, **X** (August 13, 2026, 7:44 PM), https://x.com/HillelNeuer/status/2087943325345014227.
41. *Sharif v. UNRWA,* UN Doc. UNRWA/DT/2026/054, **UNRWA Dispute Tribunal** (September 9, 2026), https://unwatch.org/wp-content/uploads/Judgment-054-SHARIF.pdf. *See also Court ruling obliges UNRWA to pay the entitlements of the martyr Fateh Sharif to his children with interest,* **Palestinian Refugees Portal** (September 18, 2026), https://refugeesps.net/post/37075/, archive link: https://archive.li/xCaJB.



UNRWA

STAFF

Notable Employees

UNRWA's International Administration

Commissioner-General, 2014-2019



Pierre Krähenbühl

Ousted after sexual misconduct scandal.

Commissioner-General, 2020-2026



Philippe Lazzarini

Gave in to the demands of Hamas, PFLP & DFLP leaders at a meeting in Beirut.

Deputy Director for Programs, 2015-2018



Gwyn Lewis

Agreed to "strong partnership mechanism" with leaders from Hamas, DFLP, PFLP and Islamic Jihad.

Deputy Commissioner-General, 2020-2023



Leni Stenseth

Met with Sinwar and "expressed her solidarity." Current Director General of Norway's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

> ***We at UNRWA are fully prepared to have a strong partnership mechanism with them. However, the principle is that this partnership should not reach a point where some believe we are partners in decision-making...***

— UNRWA officials at a meeting with leaders from Hamas and Islamic Jihad
14 February 2017

Regional Directors

GAZA | 2012-2015



Robert Turner

Signed MOU with Hamas leader Suhail Al-Hindi.

LEBANON | 2012-2015



Hakam Shahwan

Ousted after corruption scandal.

LEBANON | 2014-2026



Dorothee Klaus

Lied to German radio about Fateh Sharif's Hamas ties.

GAZA & LEBANON | 2015-2021



Matthias Schmale

Reassured Hamas that "UNRWA is on their side" at Hamas rally.

LEBANON | 2017-2022



Claudio Cordone

Presented award to Hamas leader Fateh Sharif.

LEBANON | 2023



Munir Manna

Presented award to Hamas leader Fateh Sharif.

GAZA | 2021-2024



Thomas White

Coordinates with DFLP leaders on hiring policies.

TOP DONORS

2025 Funding



EU

High Rep. Kaja Kallas

$125 million



Germany

FM Johann Wadephul

$91 million



United Kingdom

FM Ed Miliband

$47 million



Norway

FM Espen Barth Eide

$37 million



Spain

FM José Manuel Albares

$35 million



France

FM Jean-Noël Barrot

$31 million



Japan

FM Toshimitsu Motegi

$31 million



Australia

FM Penny Wong

$26 million



Canada

FM Anita Anand

$25 million



Ireland

FM Helen McEntee

$21 million



Denmark

FM Lars Løkke Rasmussen

$21 million

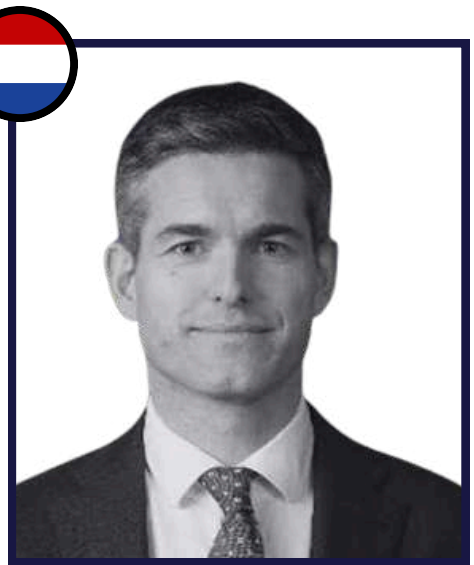
ON ADVISORY COMMISSION



Switzerland

FM Ignazio Cassis

$17 million



The Netherlands

FM Tom Berendsen

$16 million



Luxembourg

FM Xavier Bettel

$16 million



Belgium

FM Maxime Prévot

$13 million



Jordan

FM Ayman Safadi

$11 million



Turkey

FM Hakan Fidan

$10 million



Qatar

FM M. Al Thani

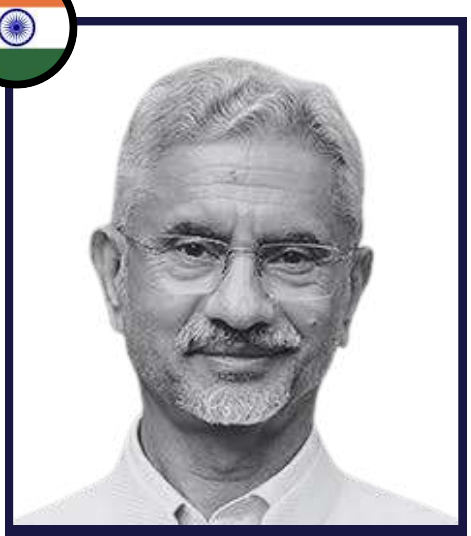
$10 million



Finland

FM Elina Valtonen

$5 million



India

Minister S. Jaishankar

$5 million



Italy

FM Antonio Tajani

$5 million



Republic of Korea

FM Cho Hyun

$5 million

UNRWA FACULTY

UNRWA
Gaza



Abd al-Hadi Said Al-Agha
UNRWA School Teacher

HAMAS
Minister of Education

UNRWA
Gaza



Abdullah Muhammad Abu Qatifan
UNRWA School Teacher

HAMAS
Infantry

UNRWA
Gaza



Ahmed Nimer Hamdan
UNRWA School Principal

HAMAS
Co-Founder

UNRWA
Gaza



Essam Al-Daalis
Head of UNRWA Teachers Union in Gaza

HAMAS
Politburo Member

Spotlight on Notable Teachers and School Principals





UNRWA FACULTY

UNRWA Gaza



Imad Yousif El Samhouri
UNRWA School Principal and Teacher

HAMAS
Platoon Commander

UNRWA Gaza

Muhammad Yusuf Al-Najjar
UNRWA School Teacher and Social Worker

Black September
Founder

UNRWA Gaza



Muhammad Taha
UNRWA School Teacher

HAMAS
Co-Founder

UNRWA Gaza

Nazmi Hussein Zaarab
UNRWA School Teacher

HAMAS
Commander

Spotlight on Notable Teachers and School Principals

UNRWA
Gaza



Suhail Raafat Al-Ghossain
UNRWA School Teacher

HAMAS
Rocket Commander

UNRWA
Gaza



Naji Abdala Abu Aziz
UNRWA School Principal

HAMAS
Manufacturing Unit

UNRWA
Gaza



Saeed Seyam
UNRWA Union Leader and School Teacher

HAMAS
Politburo Member

UNRWA
Gaza



Muhammad Hassan Shama
UNRWA School Teacher

HAMAS
Co-Founder



UNRWA ALUMNI

Spotlight on
Notable Graduates

FAMOUS UNRWA ALUMNI

Ismail Haniyeh

UNRWA Graduate and Architect of October 7th 2023



Haniyeh the UNRWA Teacher



Haniyeh the Hamas Leader

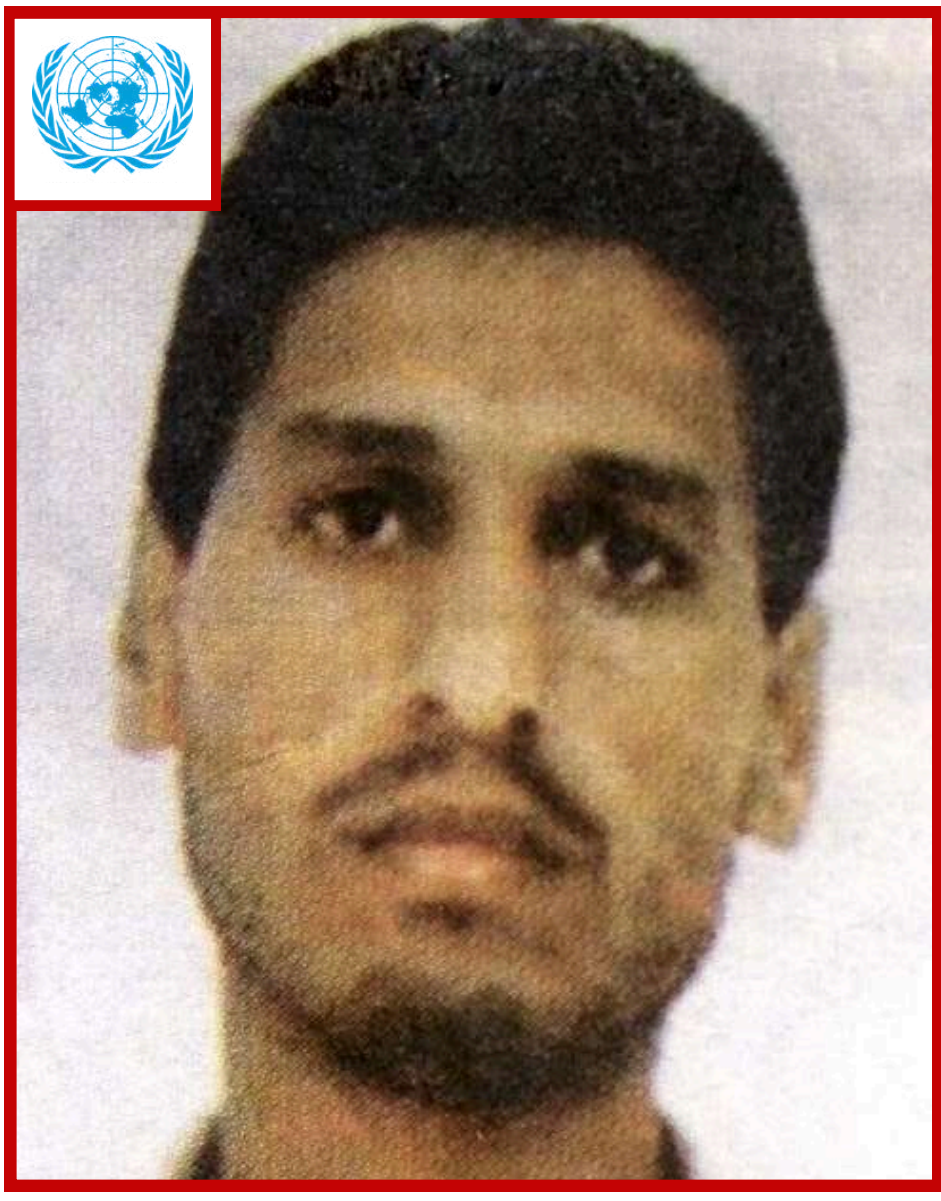
Hamas Leader: Chairman of Hamas Political Bureau

Ismail Haniyeh was a former UNRWA graduate turned school teacher and Hamas leader who served as chairman of Hamas's Political Bureau from May 2017 to July 2024. Haniyeh led Hamas's electoral list in the 2006 Palestinian elections, campaigning on armed resistance against Israel. He maintained close ties with UNRWA personnel and union officials, including Suhail Al-Hindi, a former UNRWA staff union leader in Gaza who sits on the Hamas Politburo, and Fateh Sharif, a former UNRWA staff union leader in Lebanon who was Hamas's leader in the country. Haniyeh publicly praised UNRWA unions for their role in Hamas's campaign of jihad. As Hamas's political chief, he led the organization during the October 7, 2023 terrorist attacks. Following the massacre, Haniyeh praised the attack's impact, defended Hamas's actions, and declared that Israeli hostages would not be released until the war ended. He repeatedly rejected Israel's legitimacy, publicly supported armed attacks against Israel, and pledged to continue fighting.

FAMOUS UNRWA ALUMNI

Mohammed Deif (Al-Masri)

UNRWA Graduate and Architect of October 7th 2023



Deif the UNRWA Graduate



Deif the Hamas Leader

Hamas Leader: "The Shadow Man"

Mohammed Deif was an UNRWA graduate and the Hamas leader who gave the attack order on October 7, 2023 adding that "the humiliation of the Jews and their annihilation by the servants of Allah" is "God's promise." According to the Encyclopedia of the Palestinian Elite (Vision-PD), Daif "completed his primary education in schools run by UNRWA and obtained his high school diploma in the sciences." He joined Hamas upon its founding, and was involved with the Qassam Brigades. He worked with Yahya Ayyash and participated in planning and implementing major Hamas operations in the West Bank and Gaza, including the kidnapping of Nachshon Wachsman on October 11, 1994. Deif was responsible for several major attacks in the 1990s and early 2000s that killed dozens of Israelis and wounded more than 160. He assumed leadership of the Qassam Brigades on July 23, 2002, and established the Shadow Unit to guard and conceal Israeli hostages and prevent their rescue by Israel, including those taken captive during the October 7, 2023 attacks.

Maysara Abdul Shakour Al-Arair

Gaza

UNRWA Graduate - Gaza



Hamas Infantry



Maysara Abdul Shakour Misbah Al-Arair attended UNRWA primary and preparatory schools and later joined the Qassam Brigades. Active in mosque activities from a young age, he regularly attended the Al-A'idoon Mosque before moving to the Al-Tawfiq Mosque in Gaza City's Shuja'iyya neighborhood, where he pledged allegiance to the Muslim Brotherhood in 2016. According to a eulogy published on the Qassam Brigades website, Al-Arair was dedicated to his military duties and encouraged his peers to participate in "jihad operations" and "tunnel digging." Hamas described him as someone who "loved jihad and fighting Jews" and urged others to join the fight.

Raed Ibrahim Al-Rantisi

Gaza | Born: 1992

UNRWA Graduate - Nuseirat Prep.



Qassam Special Unit



Raed Ibrahim Khamis Al-Rantisi was an UNRWA school graduate and Qassam Brigades operative described as an "outstanding student." Influenced by the "martyrdom" of a family friend, he joined Hamas and the Muslim Brotherhood before entering the Qassam Brigades in 2008. He served in the Brigades for approximately sixteen years, initially in the tunnel units and later in the Qassam Special Unit, where he led a group of fighters, monitored their activities, and trained fellow operatives in combat readiness. Al-Rantisi also participated in the 2012 and 2014 Gaza conflicts, providing security and assisting with artillery operations. According to Hamas, "mothers in the neighborhood encouraged their children to emulate him … setting an example for committed Muslim youth."



Lord Hylton

Member of the House of Lords

The existence of UNRWA is the one thing that assures displaced and exiled Palestinians that they have not been totally forgotten by the international community. The fruit of its very good educational work over many years is a pool of talent and brain power among the Palestinian people which is second to none in the Middle East. It will be a precious asset for the future peace and prosperity of the whole region.

17th June 1992

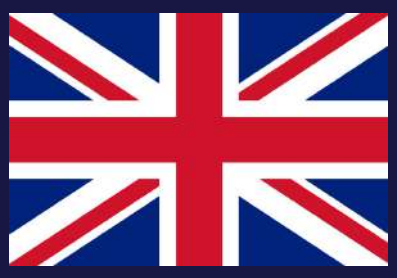
The UK is gravely concerned at the UNRWA bills that Israel's Knesset has passed. This legislation risks making UNRWA's essential work for Palestinians impossible, jeopardising the entire international humanitarian response in Gaza and delivery of essential health and education services in the West Bank.

28th October 2024



Keir Starmer

Prime Minister



UK Total Donation to UNRWA:

1.25 billion GBP

2025 donation:
25 million GBP



Anneliese Dodds, UK Minister for Development and Women and Equalities, visits Jalazone UNRWA school in the West Bank, 4 December 2024.



Yvette Cooper, UK Foreign Secretary, visits UNRWA school in Jordan, 4 November 2025.

"The UK remains a strong supporter of UNRWA... And we know that UNRWA is a vital humanitarian and stabilizing force in the region."

25th June 2019

James Roscoe

Deputy Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom to the United Nations



James Cleverly, UK Foreign Secretary, visits UNRWA Jalazone Girls' School in the West Bank, 13 September 2023.

Abdel Fattah Hussein Kharousha

West Bank | Born: 1972

UNRWA Graduate - Askar Refugee Camp

Hamas Armed Assault Operative





Abdel Fattah Hussein Kharousha was an UNRWA school graduate who joined Hamas at a young age and developed what was described as an “unbreakable bond” with the Qassam Brigades. In 2019, he was arrested for planning a shooting attack against a bus carrying Israeli soldiers in Nablus and served three years in prison alongside his son. Shortly after his release, on February 26, 2023, Kharousha carried out a terrorist shooting attack on an Israeli car near Nablus, killing two Israeli brothers, Hillel Menachem Yaniv (21) and Yagel Yaakov Yaniv (19).

Sami Mahmoud Barhoum

Gaza | Born: 1986

UNRWA Graduate - Khan Younis Elem.

Hamas Explosives Expert





Sami Mahmoud Barhoum attended UNRWA primary schools, where he was described as an “outstanding student,” and joined the Qassam Brigades in 2003. He participated in armed operations along the Gaza border, serving as a guide for militants, excavating tunnels, and planting explosive devices. In one operation, he dug a tunnel to target an Israeli tank and planted a barrel bomb. He also fired a missile at an Israeli armored vehicle, killing one soldier and seriously wounding another. During the IDF’s May 2004 Operation Rainbow in Rafah, Barhoum reportedly helped repel Israeli armored vehicles and served as a guide for Palestinian militants.

Muhammad Gamal Haroun

Gaza | Born: 1985

UNRWA Graduate - Nuseirat Elem. & Prep.

Hamas Artillery Operative





Muhammad Gamal Haroun was an UNRWA school graduate from the Nuseirat refugee camp who joined the Qassam Brigades in 2004. Stationed along the front lines in Nuseirat and the Juhr ad-Dik area, he helped prepare ambushes, plant explosive devices, and launch rockets targeting Israeli cities and communities. He also served alongside the Brigades' artillery unit and fought against Israeli forces during incursions into Nuseirat. Haroun participated in Operation Cast Lead (2008–2009), Operation Pillar of Defense (2012), and Operation Protective Edge (2014). According to Hamas, during the 2014 conflict, he killed several Israeli soldiers and struck an Israeli target with an advanced anti-tank missile, inflicting what Hamas described as "heavy losses on the Zionist enemy."

Salah Mustafa Othman

Gaza | Born: 1971

UNRWA Graduate - Fakhura Prep. Boys

Hamas Armed Attack Operative





Salah Mustafa Ali Othman was an UNRWA school graduate and Qassam Brigades operative who joined Hamas and pledged allegiance to the Muslim Brotherhood in early 1988. He entered the Qassam Brigades in 1993 and participated in multiple armed attacks, including the 1993 French Hill bus shooting and car hijacking in Jerusalem, in which two Israeli civilians were killed and others wounded. Othman was also involved in shootings targeting Israeli military checkpoints and vehicles. In a eulogy published on the Qassam Brigades website, Hamas praised his "wisdom, discretion, strength, decisiveness, and courage" and described him as encouraging others to join the fight.

Muadh Saad Al-Masri

West Bank | Born: 1987

UNRWA Graduate - Nablus Elem. & Prep.



Hamas Armed Attack Operative



Muadh Saad Al-Masri was an UNRWA school graduate and Hamas operative described as a “model student” who was “eager to earn the affection of his classmates and teachers.” He later studied physical education at An-Najah National University, graduating with honors. Al-Masri joined Hamas at a young age and was arrested multiple times for his activities with the organization. On April 7, 2023, he participated in a terrorist shooting attack on the Dee family’s vehicle, killing sisters Rina Dee (16) and Maia Dee (20) and fatally wounding their mother, Lucy Dee (48), who died three days later.

Abdul Hadi Siam

Gaza | Born: 1978

UNRWA Graduate - Al-Shati camp



Hamas Brigades Commander



Abdul Hadi Muhammad Siam, also known as “Abu Al-Abed,” was a senior Qassam Brigades commander who attended UNRWA primary schools. He joined the Brigades at the age of 18 and participated in a June 22, 2001 suicide attack in the Dugit settlement. Siam went on to hold leadership positions in military intelligence, naval operations, and the naval commando unit, commanding the Beach Battalion before becoming commander of the Support and Combat Services Corps. Known as “the Camp General” for his battlefield leadership, he participated in the Second Intifada and successive Gaza conflicts beginning in 2008, including the war that followed the October 7, 2023 Hamas attacks. He survived several assassination attempts.

Khalil Hamed Al-Kharraz

Lebanon | Born: 1969

UNRWA Graduate - Rashidieh Camp



Hamas Brigades Commander



Khalil Hamed Al-Kharraz was a senior Qassam Brigades commander in Lebanon who attended UNRWA primary schools in the Rashidieh refugee camp. He became involved with Hamas upon its founding in 1987 and was among the founders of the Qassam Brigades outside the Palestinian territories, eventually rising to deputy commander of the Brigades in Lebanon. His early activities included training military operatives and providing security for senior Hamas figures. During the Second Intifada, Al-Kharraz coordinated the supply of weapons to the Qassam Brigades in Gaza through Sudan, Libya, and Egypt. During Operation Protective Edge in 2014, he oversaw rocket launches from Lebanon toward Israel, resulting in his detention for one month by Lebanese military intelligence. Following his death, the Qassam Brigades praised him as a “great jihadist leader.”

Muhammad Al-Sahhar

Gaza | Born: 1994

UNRWA Graduate - Nusierat Prep.



Hamas Field Commander



Muhammad Al-Sahhar attended UNRWA primary schools and later became a Qassam Brigades operative, graduating with distinction from the Brigades’ military academy. In 2010, at the age of 16, he pledged allegiance to Hamas and joined the Qassam Brigades the following year. According to his eulogy published on the Brigades’ website, Al-Sahhar was described as having “many qualities and virtues that made him beloved by all his fellow students and teachers.” Hamas stated that he “loved jihad from a young age” and “longed to one day take up arms to fight the enemies of God, the Jews and their allies.” During his service in the Brigades, he was described as “one of the most active brothers.”

> ***UNRWA is an important stabilising factor** in the region **and is essential to provide basic services like education** and health care for the most vulnerable. The EU is and will remain a staunch and reliable supporter of UNRWA, both politically and financially.*
>
> *28th March 2018*

Johannes Hahn

European Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations



Johannes Hahn visits UNRWA Ramleh school, 28 March 2018.

The EU's total donations to UNRWA:
4.5 billion Euros
2025 donation:
116 million Euros



Michael Ohnmacht
EU Ambassador to Syria; Head of EU Delegation

"The European Union remains committed to supporting both quality education and vocational training for young Palestine Refugees."

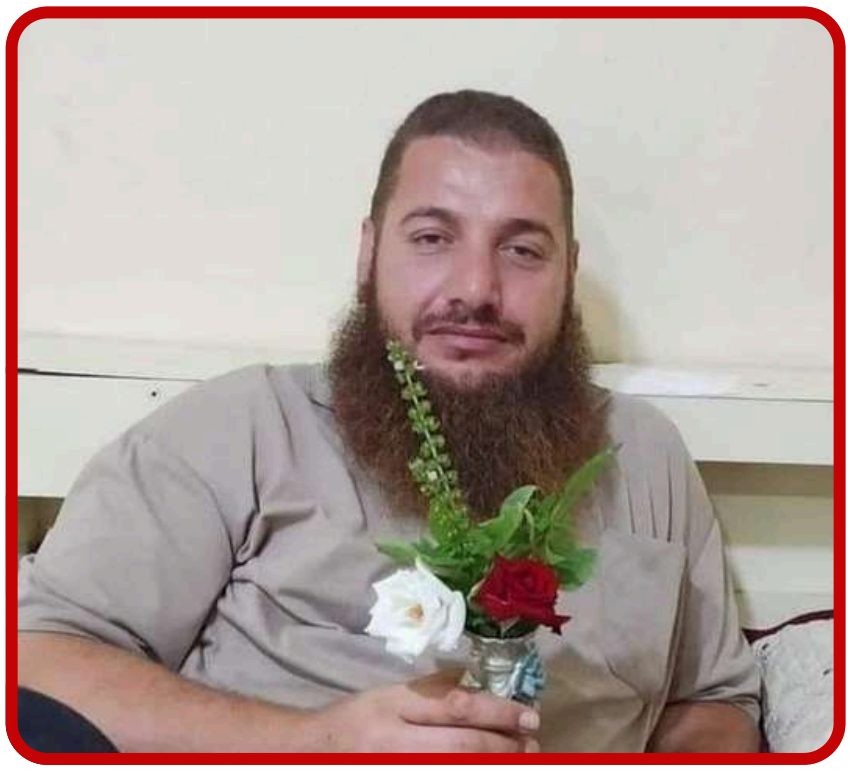
19th October 2026

Fouad Youssef Washah

Gaza | Born: 1986

UNRWA Graduate - Bureij Elem. & KYTC

Hamas Brigades Commander





Fouad Yousef Ibrahim Washah was an UNRWA graduate who became a commander in the Qassam Brigades. Described in a Qassam Brigades eulogy as “a role model to students,” he attended an UNRWA vocational institute, where he specialized in occupational safety and health. Washah joined Hamas at a young age, becoming involved in its educational and outreach activities while also working in Civil Defense. He subsequently underwent military training, participated in excavating tunnels for the Qassam Brigades, and rose to command one of its field units. Washah also fought during Operation Cast Lead (2008–2009), Operation Pillar of Defense (2012), and Operation Protective Edge (2014).

Manar Khamis Al-Hams

Gaza | Born: 1974

UNRWA Graduate - Rafah Prep. Boys

Hamas Field Commander





Manar Khamis Saleh Al-Hams was an UNRWA preparatory school graduate who became a company commander in the Qassam Brigades. He joined the Brigades in 2001 and quickly distinguished himself through what Hamas described as his “exceptional abilities and the suitability of his personality for military work.” He rose through the ranks from group leader to platoon leader and eventually company commander, participating in numerous operations against Israel beginning during the Second Intifada. Hamas praised Al-Hams as an “excellent mentor” and an “exemplary leader.” According to Hamas, he also held the rank of lieutenant colonel in the Health Department of Hamas’s Military Medical Services.

Mahmoud Marzouq Abu Watfa

Gaza | Born: 1967

UNRWA Graduate - Gaza



Hamas Internal Security Chief



Mahmoud Marzouq Abu Watfa attended UNRWA primary schools and became a senior Hamas security official, serving as Deputy Director and later Director of the Internal Security Service and as Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior. A former university lecturer and early member of the Qassam Brigades, he helped transform the organization from small armed groups into a more structured military force and was a founding leader of the Al-Radwan Battalion. Abu Watfa participated in the First and Second Intifadas and worked alongside senior Hamas figures, including Bassem Issa, Imad Al-Alami, and Ahmed Al-Jabari. He also served as a liaison between Hamas's political leadership, particularly Yahya Sinwar, and its security institutions. Abu Watfa survived multiple assassination attempts and reportedly continued carrying out his police duties by bicycle during the war that followed the October 7, 2023 Hamas attacks. He was killed in an Israeli airstrike on March 18, 2025.

Attallah Abu Al-Subh

Gaza | Born: 1948

UNRWA Graduate - Rafah



Hamas Minister of Culture and Prisoners



Attallah Abdel Aal Muhammad Abu Al-Subh was a senior Hamas political official and former UNRWA teacher who attended UNRWA schools and taught at its schools in Gaza from 1969 to 1984 before becoming a university professor. Involved in the Islamic Movement from a young age, he preached at mosques throughout Gaza and co-founded the Hamas-affiliated National Islamic Salvation Party, serving as its legal advisor. Following the 2006 Palestinian elections, Abu Al-Subh joined Hamas's political leadership in Gaza, serving as Minister of Culture and Minister of Prisoners and Released Prisoners Affairs. He was interrogated on multiple occasions and spent three years in Israeli detention, as well as one month in detention by Palestinian Authority forces.

Mohammed Ibrahim Shaheen

Jordan | Born: 1982

UNRWA Graduate - Baqaa Camp



Hamas Rocket Operations Commander



Mohammed Ibrahim Shaheen, also known as “Abu Al-Baraa,” was a senior Hamas military figure in Lebanon who attended UNRWA primary schools and later worked as a physics teacher at UNRWA and government schools from 2005 to 2006. He joined the Muslim Brotherhood in the 1990s and became a leader of the Islamic Bloc at university before joining Hamas in 2004. Shaheen began working for the Qassam Brigades in 2009, traveling to Syria, Turkey, and Lebanon and receiving advanced military training in Iran. In 2023, he settled in Lebanon following the deportation of Qassam Brigades members from Turkey. A close associate of senior Hamas leader Saleh Al-Arouri, Shaheen oversaw rocket launches from southern Lebanon into Israel during the war that followed the October 7, 2023 Hamas attacks. He was killed in an Israeli airstrike on his vehicle on February 17, 2025.

Jawad Abu Shamala

Gaza | Born: 1974

UNRWA Graduate - Khan Younis



Hamas Internal Security Chief



Jawad Ismail Abu Shamala was a senior Hamas leader and former UNRWA teacher who attended UNRWA schools and later taught at its schools in the Gaza Strip. He joined Hamas in his youth, participated in the First Intifada, and was active in the Islamic Bloc at the Islamic University of Gaza. Abu Shamala rose through the ranks of Hamas, serving as head of its security apparatus in Gaza from 2017 to 2021, where he oversaw sensitive intelligence and security matters. He also headed Hamas’s economic department, managing the organization’s financial resources and development projects. Following his death, Hamas praised his role in overseeing the organization’s political, security, and economic affairs.

Bashir Ali Shalt

Gaza | Born: 1966

UNRWA Graduate - Gaza



Hamas Infantry



Bashir Ali Salim Shalt was a Qassam Brigades militant and UNRWA graduate who joined the Muslim Brotherhood at an early age. He formally entered the Qassam Brigades in 2005, serving in its infantry unit. Shalt was active in Islamic outreach (da'wah), participated in religious marches and rallies, and founded the "Al-Arifin Billah" Mosque. According to his eulogy, he participated in numerous jihadist missions and was described as a "role model of commitment and discipline" who was "always ready to answer the call to jihad."

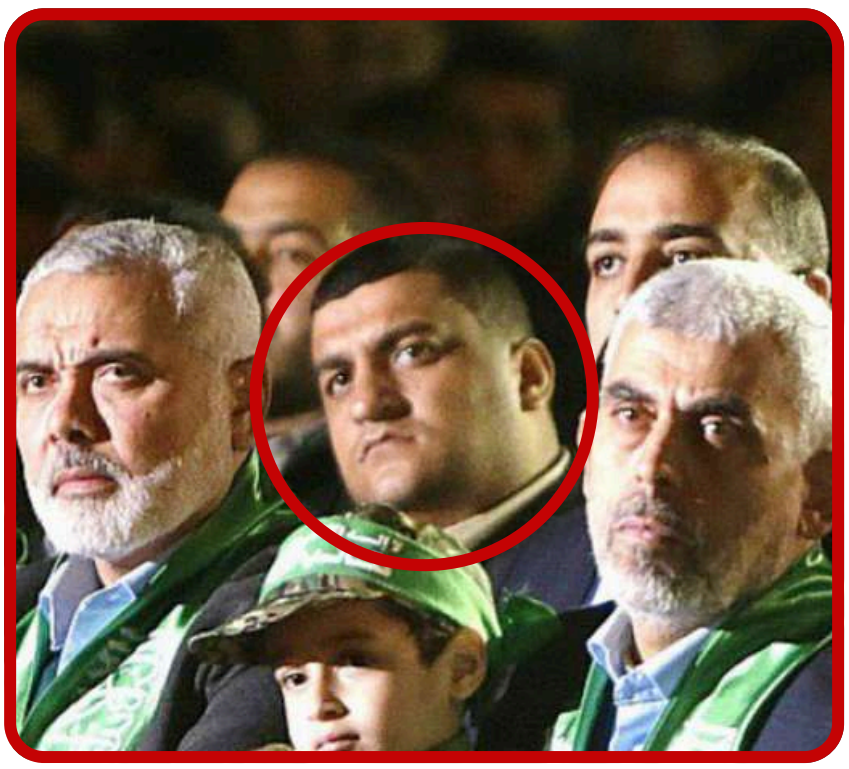
Rizq Ali Abdul Rahim Arouq

Gaza | Born: 1984

UNRWA Graduate - Gaza City



Popular Resistance Movement Deputy Secretary-General



Rizq Ali Abdul Rahim Arouq was an UNRWA graduate who served as deputy secretary-general of the Popular Resistance Movement in Palestine. After attending UNRWA schools, he studied law at Al-Azhar University and journalism at the Islamic University of Gaza. Arouq held several media positions, helping establish the Palestinian Ministry of Interior's media office and founding the youth-oriented Al-Jazeera Talk project. He later rose to deputy secretary-general of the Popular Resistance Movement and represented the faction in Palestinian reconciliation talks. Arouq advocated "escalating resistance" in Gaza and the West Bank and confronting U.S. and Israeli policies. He described the "right of return" as "an inherent and inalienable right" and a "central priority" of the "liberation battle."



With three new funding agreements, Germany continues its solidarity... Germany is a reliable partner for UNRWA.

9th December 2022

Oliver Owcza

Head of the German Representative Office in Ramallah



With this latest donation to UNRWA schools, the German Government has demonstrated strong support for education in Gaza... one of the most important human development priorities of all the agency's services.

9th December 2012

Dirk Niebel

Federal Minister of Economic Cooperation and Development



Annalena Baerbock visits UNRWA School in Talbieh camp in Jordan, 18 March 2022.

Germany's total donations to UNRWA:
1.5 billion Euros
2025 donation:
88 million Euros

Annalena Baerbock
German Foreign Minister

"Germany remains a dependable partner for UNRWA as an essential factor for stability in the region..."

18 March 2022

A German delegation inaugurates a new UNRWA school in Talbieh, Jordan, 5 October 2022.



"I am honored to have had the opportunity to visit UNRWA schools... UNRWA's role in providing Palestinian refugees with essential services such as healthcare, education, and social security is vital for both humanitarian needs and stability in the Middle East. Japan remains committed to supporting the efforts of UNRWA..."

27th March 2023

Jiro Okuyama

Ambassador of Japan to Jordan

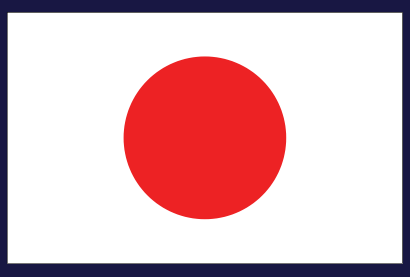


Recognizing UNRWA's indispensable role in Gaza, even as it works to enhance governance and manage risks, the Government of Japan decided to resume funding to help UNRWA...

18th April 2024

Yoichi Nakashima

Japanese Ambassador for Palestinian Affairs



Japan's total donations to UNRWA:
$1.15 billion USD

2025 donation:
$31 million USD



Kaoru Shimazaki visits UNRWA Amman New Camp Preparatory Girls' School, 13 September 2022.

Kaoru Shimazaki
Ambassador of Japan to Jordan

"Recognizing the significance of UNRWA operations from a humanitarian perspective and for the regional stability, we need to ensure UNRWA can fulfill its mandate..."

13th September 2022

Yusuf Ahmad Al-Zamli

Gaza | Born: 1990

UNRWA Graduate - Rafah Elem.

Hamas Armed Attack Operative





Yusuf Ahmad Musa Al-Zamli was a Hamas militant and UNRWA elementary school graduate. He joined the Qassam Brigades in 2010, motivated by a strong desire for “jihad,” and later specialized in armored warfare. According to his eulogy on the Qassam Brigades website, during Operation Cast Lead (2008–2009) prior to his joining the Brigades, he evacuated his family from their home, converted it into an ambush site, and planted an explosive device under the cover of reconnaissance aircraft. The eulogy also states that he refused to marry, as he “desired nothing but to marry the maidens of Paradise.”

Rabah Hassan Labad

Gaza | Born: 1959

UNRWA Graduate - Jabalia Prep. Boys

Hamas Tunnel Operative





Rabah Hassan Shaaban Labad was a Qassam Brigades militant and graduate of UNRWA schools in Jabalia. Labad became involved with the Muslim Brotherhood in 2000 and joined the Qassam Brigades in 2007. According to his eulogy on the Qassam Brigades website, he encouraged others to participate in “jihad operations and tunnel digging” and assisted in military activities, including the construction of Hamas tunnels. He reportedly led a group in 2015 and frequently volunteered for guard duty out of “love for jihad.” Hamas described him as an “exemplary soldier” devoted to jihad and deeply moved by the deaths of fellow militants.

Waseem Samir Azzam

Gaza | Born: 1994

UNRWA Graduate - Nuseirat Primary



Hamas Nukhba Unit Member



Waseem Samir Azzam was a Hamas Nukhba militant and UNRWA primary school graduate. He joined the Qassam Brigades in 2012, advancing from soldier to member of Hamas's elite Nukhba unit. According to his eulogy on the Qassam Brigades website, Azzam "loved jihad from a young age" and "longed to one day carry a rifle to fight the enemies of God, the Jews and their allies." As a Nukhba operative, he participated in tunnel excavation, military ambushes, and border guard operations. Hamas described him as "unafraid of death or being killed in the path of God."

Muhammad Nazir Abu Aoun

Gaza | Born: 2002

UNRWA Graduate - B/Lahiya Prep.



Hamas Infantry



Muhammad Nazir Muhammad Abu Aoun was a Hamas militant and UNRWA graduate. His father instilled in him a commitment to jihad from a young age. He regularly attended the Shadi Haboub Mosque in Beit Lahia, where he participated in religious outreach and other mosque activities. According to his eulogy on the Qassam Brigades website, he dreamed of "taking up arms to fight the enemies of God, the Jews and their allies." He joined the Brigades in 2020, specialized in infantry, and completed several military training courses.

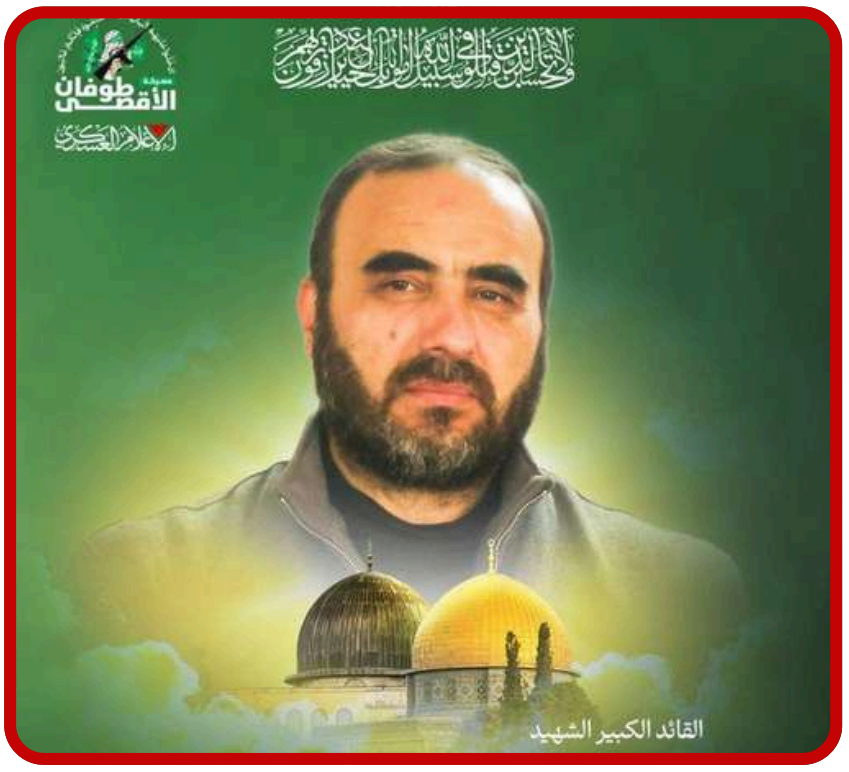
Ghazi Ismail Ahmed Abu Tama’a

Gaza | Born: 1974

UNRWA Graduate - Gaza



Hamas Commander Central Brigade



Ghazi Ismail Ahmed Abu Tama'a was a senior Hamas military commander, member of the Qassam Brigades' Military Council, and UNRWA graduate who helped oversee the October 7, 2023 attacks on Israel. He joined the Qassam Brigades in 1992 and helped establish the Deir Al-Balah Battalion, which he commanded during the early years of the Second Intifada. He subsequently participated in planning and supervising major military operations between 2004 and 2008. Appointed commander of the Central Brigade in 2008, he held the position for 14 years before assuming command of the Weapons and Combat Services Branch in 2022. In this senior leadership role, he helped develop Hamas's military capabilities and reportedly participated in overseeing the October 7 attacks.

Issam Hamdi Al-Deeb

Gaza | Born: 1995

UNRWA Graduate - Gaza City



Hamas Infantry



Issam Hamdi Atiya Al-Deeb was a Qassam Brigades militant and UNRWA school graduate. He joined Hamas and subsequently the Qassam Brigades in 2015, at age 20. According to Hamas, Al-Deeb had longed from a young age to “take up arms against the enemies of God, the Jews and their allies.” Hamas described him as a “distinguished and dedicated soldier” who never missed an assigned duty.

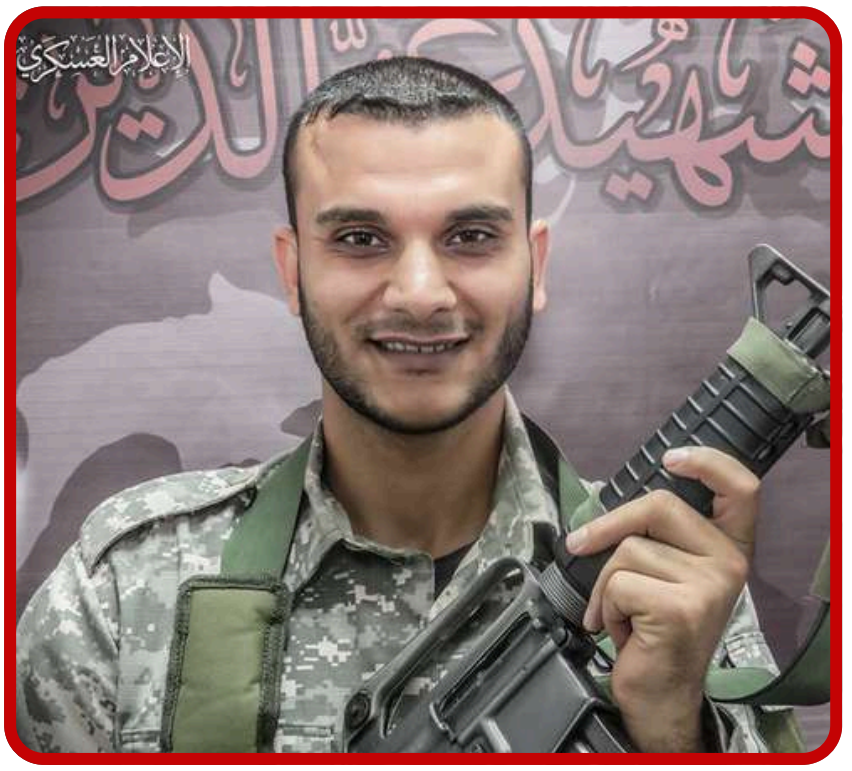
Bahaa Akram Abu Tabak

Gaza | Born: 1989

UNRWA Graduate - Nuseirat Primary



Hamas Company Commander



Bahaa Akram Abu Tabak was a Qassam Brigades commander and UNRWA elementary school graduate. He joined the Qassam Brigades in 2005 and participated in military operations, including ambushes and repelling Israeli incursions into Gaza. He fought during Operation Cast Lead (2008–2009) and Operation Protective Edge (2014), contributed to Hamas tunnel construction, and was appointed commander of a Qassam Brigades company. Abu Tabak also studied military science at a Qassam Brigades-affiliated academy and later served as a lecturer, helping train the next generation of Hamas militants. According to Hamas, he aspired to “take up arms to fight the enemies of God, the Jews and their allies.”

Ali Taysir Al-Hajj Ahmad

Gaza | Born: 1994

UNRWA Graduate - Nuseirat Prep.



Hamas Infantry



Ali Taysir Hamdan Al-Hajj Ahmad was a Qassam Brigades militant and UNRWA school graduate. He pledged allegiance to Hamas at a young age and joined the Qassam Brigades in 2012, undergoing specialized military training. According to his Hamas eulogy, he encouraged fellow militants by reminding them of “the virtue of guarding the frontier and the reward of jihad.”



Pedro Sánchez, Prime Minister of Spain, visits an UNRWA School in Jordan, 3 April 2024.



Spain's total donations to UNRWA:

350 million Euros

2025 donation:
30 million Euros

"The reconstruction of Deir Yassin school will significantly contribute to offer more and better opportunities to El Buss Camp children as well as to its entire community. Education is not only a basic right but, I believe, the basis for conflict prevention and access to labour market."

6th October 2009

Juan Carlos Gafo

Ambassador of Spain to Lebanon

Spanish Ambassador

Juan Carlos Gafo



Inauguration Deir Yassin school
7 October 2009

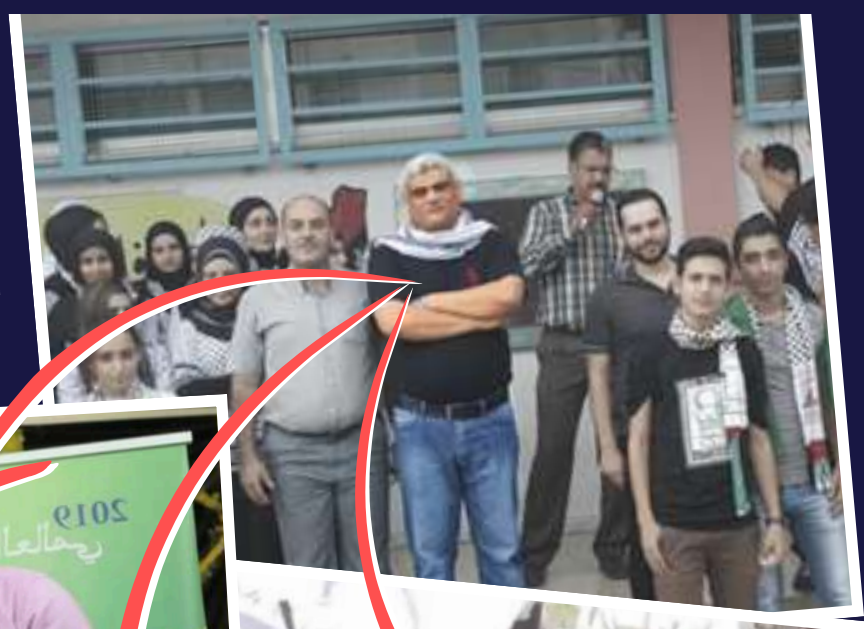


Jihad Taha

Hamas Spokesman

Fateh Sharif

Principal of Deir Yassin School



Sharif was awarded an "appreciation" certificate from UNRWA Lebanon Director Claudio Cordone





Sharif was the leader of Hamas in Lebanon



Sharif with Hamas chief Ismail Haniyeh



The project... builds on Italy's longstanding partnership with UNRWA... Education promotes hope and peace, and Italy remains committed to supporting all Palestine Refugee children in Lebanon.

24th December 2025

Fabrizio Marcelli

Ambassador of Italy to Lebanon



Through our partnership with UNRWA, we hope to help in restoring education.

14th April 2026

Stefano Ravagnan

Ambassador of Italy to Syria



Italy's total donations to UNRWA:
400 million Euros
2025 donation:
4.5 million Euros

Lapo Pistelli visits Al Amal Prep School, 3 September 2013.



Lapo Pistelli

Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs

"The commitment of students to their studies and the professionalism shown by UNRWA educational staff is a strong reflection of this strength."

3rd September 2013



Franco Frattini, Foreign Minister of Italy, visits Beit Lahia UNRWA School, 24 November 2010.

Muhammad Khalid Al-Tawashi

Gaza | Born: 2000

UNRWA Graduate - Deir Al-Balah Elem.

Hamas Cyber Warfare Unit





Muhammad Khalid Omar Al-Tawashi was a Qassam Brigades militant and UNRWA graduate. He was active in the Hamas-affiliated Islamic Bloc during high school and joined Hamas in 2016, followed by the Qassam Brigades in 2017. He regularly performed guard duty along Gaza's eastern border and, despite his young age, was entrusted with commanding a Qassam unit. He participated in military operations, worked in Qassam tunnels, and helped develop military simulation and training programs. He also served in the Brigades' secretive cyber warfare unit.

Izz Al-Din Muhammad Halas

Gaza | Born: 1993

UNRWA Graduate - Shajaiya Elem.

Hamas "Elite" Tunnel Operative





Izz Al-Din Muhammad Halas was a Qassam Brigades militant and UNRWA graduate. He pledged allegiance to the Muslim Brotherhood in 2014 and became involved in Islamic outreach activities. That same year, he joined the Qassam Brigades, where he served for approximately five years in its elite ranks and participated in tunnel excavation and military training. According to his eulogy on the Qassam Brigades website, he was devoted to jihad and regarded as a model of obedience and loyalty.

Juma Abdullah Muhammad Al-Tahla

Jordan | Born: 1962

UNRWA Graduate - Nazzal, Amman



Cyber and Drone Warfare Leader



Juma Abdullah Muhammad Al-Tahla was a senior Hamas commander and UNRWA graduate who played a key role in developing the Qassam Brigades' weapons and electronic warfare capabilities. After serving in the Palestine Liberation Army in Lebanon in 1982, he joined the Qassam Brigades in Syria in 2004, becoming head of military manufacturing and contributing to its drone program. He moved to Gaza in 2011, where he worked to improve the range and accuracy of Hamas rockets and further develop its drones. In 2014, he oversaw the establishment of the Brigades' electronic warfare unit and the "Jerusalem Electronic Army." According to Hamas, Al-Tahla directed cyberattacks against Israeli targets, including a large-scale operation targeting thousands of Israeli military and security systems in May 2019.

Abdul Salam Saad Al-Ajili

Gaza | Born: 1991

UNRWA Graduate - Kh/Younis Elem.



Elite Infantry Commander



Abdul Salam Saad Ismail Al-Ajili was a Qassam Brigades militant and UNRWA graduate. He joined Hamas and subsequently the Qassam Brigades in 2011. According to his eulogy on the Qassam Brigades website, he participated in tunnel excavation and military operations and served in an artillery unit during the 2014 Gaza war. He also commanded an elite Qassam unit within his battalion before being transferred to the tunnels unit.

Muhammad Musa Saleh Al-Zanati

Gaza | Born: 1994

UNRWA Graduate - Kh/Younis Elem.

Hamas Infantry





Muhammad Musa Saleh Al-Zanati graduated from UNRWA schools before joining the Qassam Brigades in 2012, where he completed several military training courses. During Operation Protective Edge in 2014, he was stationed in underground ambush positions east of Khan Yunis. He later served in the Brigades' training and preparation department, helping improve fighters' combat readiness and prepare military materials. According to his eulogy on the Qassam Brigades website, he "longed for martyrdom" and hoped to be "the first to inflict heavy losses on the Zionists."

Ibrahim Ahmed Al-Shanbari

Gaza | Born: 2001

UNRWA Graduate - Kh/Younis Elem.

Hamas Islamic Bloc





Ibrahim Ahmed Khamis Al-Shanbari was a Qassam Brigades militant and UNRWA graduate. According to his eulogy on the Qassam Brigades website, he encouraged others to "follow the path of the blessed martyrs" and was determined to "carry the banner and fight in the cause of God" to liberate what he described as the "usurped homeland from the occupying aggressor."

Adham Mahmoud Al-Masri

Gaza | Born: 2002

UNRWA Graduate - Jabalia Elem. Boys



Hamas Infantry



Adham Mahmoud Al-Masri was a Qassam Brigades militant and UNRWA graduate. He was active in the Hamas-affiliated Islamic Bloc during his school years and reportedly dreamed of “taking up arms to fight the occupation soldiers.” According to his eulogy on the Qassam Brigades website, he joined the Brigades in 2020, underwent military training, and specialized in tunnel excavation and infantry operations. He also volunteered for front-line guard duty.

Ahmed Zaki Abu Hasira

Gaza | Born: 1991

UNRWA Graduate - Al-Shati Elem. Boys

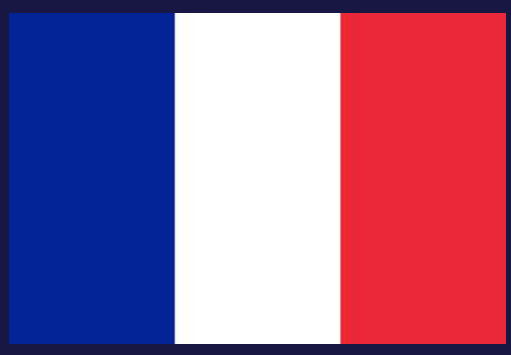


Hamas Infantry



Ahmed Zaki Khamis Abu Hasira was a Qassam Brigades militant and UNRWA graduate. He became involved in the Hamas-affiliated Islamic Bloc during his school years and joined the Muslim Brotherhood in 2009. According to his eulogy on the Qassam Brigades website, he joined the Brigades in 2010 and served for 10 years, participating in military operations in Gaza and tunnel excavation. He was also involved in religious outreach activities and served as a mosque imam from 2019 to 2020.





France's total donations to UNRWA:

500 million Euros

2025 donation: 28 million Euros

"UNRWA schools are an open window to the world and the possibility of a life lived in dignity."

16th July 2019

David Bertolotti

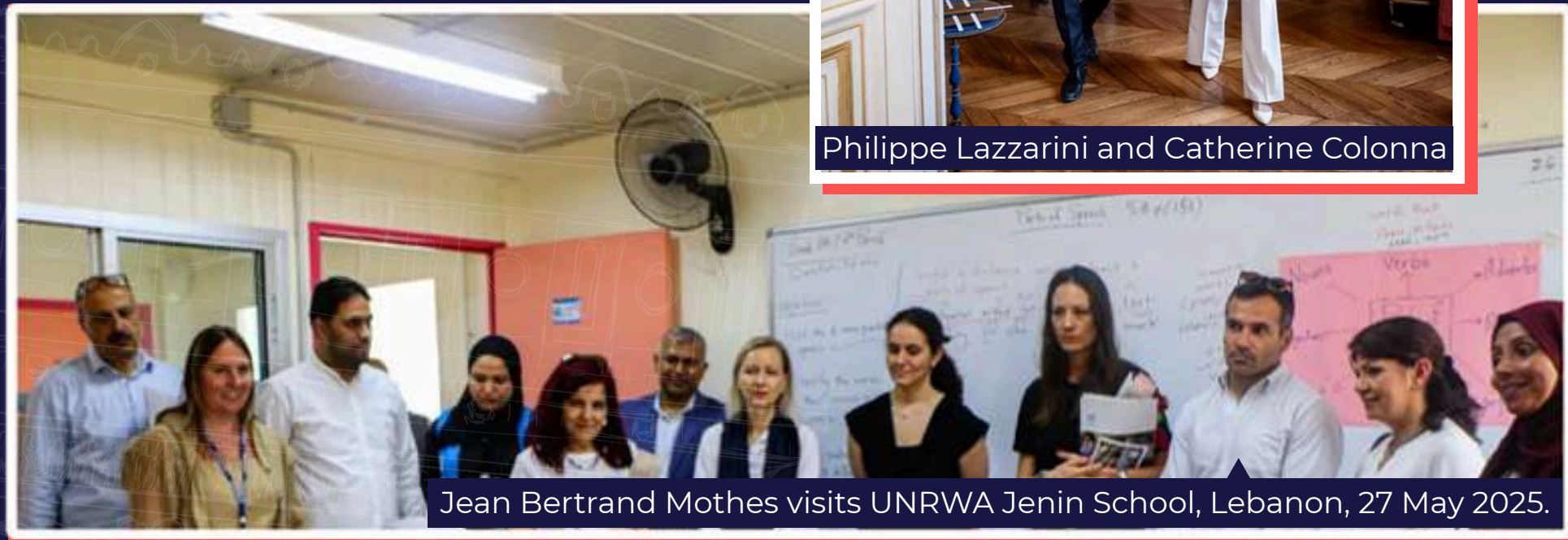
Ambassador of France to Jordan



Anna Grillo, French Ambassador to Lebanon, visits UNRWA Al-Sakhra School, 17 June 2022.



Philippe Lazzarini and Catherine Colonna



Jean Bertrand Mothes visits UNRWA Jenin School, Lebanon, 27 May 2025.

Jean Bertrand Mothes

Director of Agence Française de Développement (AFD) in Lebanon

> ***We are proud to be supporting this important work alongside UNRWA, whose work remains essential in providing education... for Palestine Refugees in Lebanon.***
>
> 27th May 2025

Husam Bakr Al-Hayya

Gaza | Born: 1988

UNRWA Graduate - Jabalia Elem. Boys



Hamas Special Infantry Operative



Husam Bakr Muhammad Al-Hayya graduated from UNRWA schools and became a Hamas operative. Al-Hayya was involved in Hamas activities, including marches, festivals, meetings, and seminars, and "urged his brothers to join the Qassam Brigades." According to his eulogy on the Al-Qassam Brigades website, he completed multiple training courses, took part in advanced ambushes, and carried out special missions, including a prominent role in "preparing and equipping tunnels." Hamas further stated that he encouraged others to join the fight and embrace jihad.

Muhammad Abdul Hamid Al-Shanti

Gaza | Born: 1988

UNRWA Graduate - Beit Hanoun Prep.



Hamas Commander and Explosives Operative



Muhammad Abdul Hamid Muhammad Al-Shanti was a Qassam Brigades commander and UNRWA graduate. He was active in the Hamas-affiliated Islamic Bloc before joining the Qassam Brigades in 2005, where he served for approximately 16 years. According to his eulogy on the Qassam Brigades website, he participated in reconnaissance missions, prepared ambushes, planted explosive devices, and helped excavate Hamas tunnels. He served in the engineering unit, held positions as a unit commander and observation post commander, and later worked in the Brigades' central intelligence analysis unit.

Muhammad Awda Al-Talbani

Gaza | Born: 1990

UNRWA Graduate - Deir Al-Balah Prep

Hamas - Special Military Intelligence





Muhammad Awda Al-Talbani graduated from UNRWA schools before joining the Qassam Brigades in 2008 at a young age. He underwent specialized military training, performed front-line guard duty, and participated in tunnel excavation. Specializing in military intelligence, he was among the first members of the Brigades' military media unit and reportedly participated in numerous Hamas military missions.

Ahmed Muhammad Afana

Gaza | Born: 1988 or 1989

UNRWA Graduate - Gaza

Hamas - Artillery and Ambush Operative





Ahmed Muhammad Abdul Majid Afana was a Qassam Brigades militant and UNRWA primary school graduate. He joined Hamas at a young age and pledged allegiance to the Muslim Brotherhood. According to his eulogy on the Qassam Brigades website, he longed for martyrdom so intensely that he initially refused to marry. During his approximately 12 years in the Brigades, he conducted reconnaissance of Israeli soldiers, participated in military ambushes and tunnel excavation, and carried out "numerous jihadist missions."

Mohammad Ashraf Abed

Gaza | Born: 1999

UNRWA Graduate - Gaza



Hamas - Infantry



Mohammad Ashraf Ali Abed was a Qassam Brigades militant and UNRWA graduate. Despite initially being rejected because of his young age, he joined the Qassam Brigades in 2014, at just 15 years old. A year later, he began working in Hamas's tunnel network and reportedly carried his rifle discreetly as a sign of his readiness for military missions. Abed came from a family of militants, including an uncle who was a commander and member of the Qassam Brigades' General Military Council and who reportedly "instilled in him a love for jihad and sacrifice."

Mustafa Muhammad Farhat

Gaza | Born: 1995

UNRWA Graduate - Gaza



Hamas - Infantry



Mustafa Muhammad Suleiman Farhat was a Qassam Brigades militant and UNRWA graduate. He joined Hamas in 2013 and the Qassam Brigades in early 2017. According to his eulogy on the Qassam Brigades website, he participated in "jihad operations" and was dedicated to "fighting Jews" and the "liberation of the holy land." He was killed in May 2021 during Operation Guardian of the Walls.

Moataz Bassam Al-Nunu

Gaza | Born: 1987

UNRWA Graduate - Gaza



Hamas - Explosives Operative



Moataz Bassam Al-Nunu was a Qassam Brigades militant and UNRWA graduate. He was active in the Hamas-affiliated Islamic Bloc during his school years and joined the Qassam Brigades in 2007, serving for approximately 12 years. According to his eulogy on the Qassam Brigades website, he conducted reconnaissance of Israeli military movements, prepared ambushes, planted explosive devices, and participated in tunnel excavation. He also fought against Israeli ground incursions into Gaza and was nominated for leadership positions, including deputy commander of a Qassam platoon.

Muhammad Ahmed Hajila

Gaza | Born: 1987

UNRWA Graduate - Shajaiya Elem. Boys



Hamas - Infantry



Muhammad Ahmad Hajila was a Qassam Brigades militant and UNRWA graduate. He was active in the Hamas-affiliated Islamic Bloc and joined the Qassam Brigades in early 2006, serving for approximately 14 years. According to his eulogy on the Qassam Brigades website, he participated in tunnel excavation, repelling Israeli ground incursions, and the 2014 assault on the Nahal Oz military outpost during Operation Protective Edge. Hamas described him as having “loved jihad” from a young age and longing to “take up arms against the enemies of God, the Jews and their allies.”





Canada's total donations to UNRWA:
$650 million CAD
2025 donation:
$35 million CAD

Marie-Claude Bibeau

Minister of International Development

Millions of Palestinian refugees across the Middle East have the right to send their children to school. We want to see Palestinian refugee children in classrooms where they can learn universal values of tolerance and respect.

UNRWA Funding Announcement

16th November 2016



Marc Garneau, Canadian Minister of Foreign Affairs, visits Jerash Preparatory Girls' School in Jordan, 2 July 2021.

Foreign Ministers of Canada, Australia, France, Germany, Japan, Republic of Korea and the United Kingdom

Joint Statement

UNRWA has taken steps to address allegations regarding individual employees' support for terrorist organizations and demonstrated its willingness to pursue and implement reform of internal processes in line with the independent review of April 2024, led by Ms. Catherine Colonna, on UNRWA neutrality.

October 26, 2024

Ibrahim Khalil Al-Shantaf

Gaza | Born: 1998

UNRWA Graduate - Gaza

Hamas - Infantry





Ibrahim Khalil Al-Shantaf was a Qassam Brigades militant and UNRWA graduate. He joined the Muslim Brotherhood in 2016 and the Qassam Brigades in 2017. According to his eulogy on the Qassam Brigades website, he “loved jihad” and dreamed of fighting Israeli soldiers. He served in the Brigades’ tunnels unit, excavating tunnels and helping carry out attacks on Israeli military positions. He was killed in a tunnel accident on January 30, 2020.

Adam Yahya Khafaja

Gaza | Born: 1990

UNRWA Graduate - Umariya Prep. Boys

Hamas - Sniper Unit





Adam Yahya Hamad Khafaja was a Qassam Brigades militant and UNRWA graduate. He joined Hamas in 2003 at age 13 and was later arrested by the Palestinian Authority for hanging Hamas flags at Kamal Adwan School. According to his eulogy on the Qassam Brigades website, he assisted the Brigades in monitoring Israel's 2005 withdrawal from Gaza before formally joining in 2006. He participated in tunnel excavation, served in artillery and infantry units, and was described as an accomplished sniper. He later worked in the Brigades' military media department.

Jalal Nasser Abu Ghali

Gaza | Born: 2002

UNRWA Graduate - Gaza



Hamas - Infantry



Jalal Nasser Muhammad Abu Ghali was a Qassam Brigades militant and UNRWA graduate. Born in 2002 into a family of “resistance fighters,” he joined the Qassam Brigades in 2018, at age 15 or 16. He completed several military training courses, specializing in infantry, and was praised by his instructors for his “exceptional skill and courage.”

Ahmed Muhammad Sabah

Gaza | Born: 1992

UNRWA Graduate - Jabalia Prep. Boys



Hamas - Infantry



Ahmed Muhammad Abdul Aziz Sabah was a Qassam Brigades militant and UNRWA graduate. During his school years, he was active in the Hamas-affiliated Islamic Bloc. He joined Hamas in 2008 and the Qassam Brigades’ North Gaza Brigade in 2011. According to his eulogy on the Qassam Brigades website, he aspired to reclaim Palestine from the “occupying Jews” and fight the “usurping Jews, the enemies of God.” He later served in the Brigades’ tunnel-digging unit, excavating passages intended to enable Hamas militants to breach Israeli military positions.

Munib Mahmoud Hamdan

Gaza | Born: 1997

UNRWA Graduate - Gaza



Hamas - Unit Commander



Munib Mahmoud Ahmed Hamdan was a Qassam Brigades commander and UNRWA graduate. He was active in the Hamas-affiliated Islamic Bloc during his university studies and joined the Qassam Brigades at a young age. According to his eulogy on the Qassam Brigades website, he completed specialized military training, participated in tunnel excavation for at least two years, and planted explosive devices along Gaza's eastern border. Less than a year after joining the Brigades, he was appointed commander of a Qassam unit and later reappointed to a command position. He reportedly declined an offer to command another faction, declaring, "I do not want to leave this work until I am martyred in it."

Abdul Aziz Othman Abu Rawa

Gaza | Born: 1996

UNRWA Graduate - Gaza



Hamas - Infantry



Abdul Aziz Othman Abu Rawa was a Qassam Brigades militant and UNRWA graduate. He joined the Muslim Brotherhood before entering the Qassam Brigades in early 2017, reportedly motivated by his growing "fervor for jihad." According to his eulogy on the Qassam Brigades website, he specialized in armored warfare, participated in military ambushes and tunnel excavation, and frequently volunteered for front-line guard duty.

Hussein Ahmed Hawar

Gaza | Born: 1991

UNRWA Graduate - Gaza



Hamas - Reconnaissance Unit



Hussein Ahmed Hawar was an Al-Qassam Brigades militant and UNRWA graduate. Born on November 28, 1991, he was described as “a role model of commitment and discipline,” earning the respect of his classmates, teachers, and friends. Hawar joined Hamas in 2013, participating in mass rallies and events, and joined the Al-Qassam Brigades in 2014, where he completed military training and was stationed on the front lines. He later served in the Qassam Brigades’ reconnaissance and surveillance units along the Gaza–Israel border, where he was responsible for monitoring “enemy” movements. Hawar was active in his mosque and was described as embodying “the values of jihad in the path of God and confronting the enemies of the nation.” Hussein Ahmed Hawar died on September 22, 2021, after contracting COVID-19.

Tariq Ziad Abu Humaidan

Gaza | Born: 1999

UNRWA Graduate - Jabalia Prep. Boys



Hamas - Infantry



Tariq Ziad Mustafa Abu Humaidan was a Qassam Brigades militant and UNRWA graduate. He joined Hamas in early 2017 and became a member of the Muslim Brotherhood in 2018. According to his eulogy on the Qassam Brigades website, he joined the Brigades in early 2021 and was described as committed to his military duties and eager to participate in jihad. Abu Humaidan was killed on May 16, 2021, during the May 2021 conflict between Israel and Hamas (Operation Guardian of the Walls).



Ine Eriksen Søreide, Norwegian Foreign Minister, visits Amman New Camp Preparatory Girls' School, 3 March 2020.



Total Norway donations to UNRWA:

$750 million USD

2025 donation:
$37 million USD

3 June 2021

AL MAYADEEN

UNRWA Deputy Chief Leni Stenseth Expresses Understanding To Sinwar





GAZA — Hamas leader in Gaza Yahya Sinwar met with UNRWA Deputy Commissioner-General Leni Stenseth at his office. He discussed the repercussions of UNRWA after Gaza Director Matthias Schmale's statements to an Israeli channel, in which he gave justifications to the aggression.

Stenseth affirmed her understanding of the recent outrage of all the Palestinian people, expressing her solidarity, and offering her condolences to all the Palestinian people on behalf of the agency.

She indicated that Schmale's statements to the Israeli channel could not be defended in any way.



Leni Stenseth has been Director General of Norway's Foreign Ministry since Sept. 2023. This followed her three-year tenure as UNRWA Deputy Commissioner-General.



Dong Gi Kim visits UNRWA Irbid school in Jordan, 10 May 2023.

South Korea's total donations to UNRWA:
$65 million USD
2025 donation:
$3.76 million USD

Dong Gi Kim
Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to Jordan

I hope this contribution will be used not just to improve the educational environment for many Palestine refugees in Jordan but to help build their bright future.

5th September 2023



Pilwoo Kim, Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to Jordan, visits UNRWA Amman Training Centre in Amman, Jordan, 22 November 2026.



Ireland's total donations to UNRWA:

228 million Euros

2025 donation:
19 million Euros

"Education is one of the fundamental values of life. As a teacher myself, meeting the schoolchildren and getting to witness their enthusiasm for learning was a joy to behold. This is clear evidence of UNRWA's key role in creating opportunities and a future for young Palestinian refugees."

24th April 2024



Micheál Martin visits Talbieh Camp girls' school, 24 April 2024.



James Browne, Minister of State at the Department of Justice, visits UNRWA Amman New Camp school, 15 March 2023.

Micheál Martin

Tánaiste (Deputy Prime Minister) and Minister for Foreign Affairs



The Netherlands' total donations to UNRWA:

520 million Euros

2025 donation:
15 million Euros



Barbara Joziasse visits Zarqa Preparatory Girls' School, 28 February 2018.

Barbara Joziasse

Dutch Ambassador to Jordan

"We are honored to contribute to the maintenance and rehabilitation of 82 UNRWA schools, provide for school materials as well as teachers' salaries. I take this opportunity to extend my appreciation to the UNRWA-office for all the efforts exerted at providing a dignified life to the people who have been entrusted to them."

28th February 2018

UN Watch

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office@unwatch.org | www.unwatch.org