

UNRWA: CLAIMS VERSUS FACTS

February 2025



- UNRWA has long faced misinformation and disinformation campaigns, including about its staff and operations. This has intensified since the war in the Gaza Strip began on 7 October 2023.
- This document outlines UNRWA's positions based on facts, data, and firsthand information. It covers some of the most frequent claims and allegations made against the Agency in the media and on social media by different individuals, organisations, public and private entities.

Background

- On 17 January 2024, the UNRWA Commissioner-General announced his intention to commission an independent review to identify and assess the adequacy and implementation of the Agency's mechanisms and procedures to adhere to the humanitarian principle of neutrality. On 5 February 2024, the UN Secretary-General appointed a Review Group, headed by Catherine Colonna, former French Minister of Foreign Affairs, to "assess whether the Agency is doing everything within its power to ensure neutrality and to respond to allegations of serious breaches when they are made."
- On 26 January 2024, in response to allegations received verbally from Israeli officials regarding the alleged involvement of 12 UNRWA staff in the 7 October attack against Israel, and upon ascertaining that the individuals were indeed UNRWA staff members, the UNRWA Commissioner-General decided to immediately terminate the appointments of these staff "in the interest of the Agency," in accordance with applicable staff regulations, in order to protect its ability to deliver humanitarian assistance. This decision was communicated through a [statement](#).
- At the request of the UN Secretary-General, the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS), the highest investigative body in the United Nations, launched an investigation into these specific allegations.
- On 22 April 2024, the UNRWA Commissioner-General issued a [statement](#) welcoming the findings of the independent review of the Agency, also known as the "Colonna Report". He noted that the report confirmed that UNRWA has established - over many years - policies, mechanisms and procedures to ensure compliance with the humanitarian principle of neutrality; that the Agency has systems in place to address allegations of neutrality breaches, including through disciplinary sanctions; and that between 2022 and 2024, UNRWA reviewed all external allegations and opened investigations when evidence of misconduct was present. He underscored that UNRWA is firmly dedicated to applying UN values and humanitarian principles. Also on 22 April, the spokesperson of the UN Secretary-General issued a [statement](#) welcoming these findings.
- On 26 April 2024, the spokesperson of the UN Secretary-General issued a [statement](#) announcing that a total of 19 UNRWA staff had been investigated by OIOS - the 12 about whom UNRWA had been informed in January 2024, and seven more about whom information was received from the Government of Israel in March and April 2024.

- On 5 August 2024, the spokesperson of the UN Secretary-General issued another [statement](#) announcing that OIOS had completed its investigation into the 19 staff members. In one case, no evidence was obtained to support the allegations, while in nine other cases, the evidence was insufficient to support claims of involvement. In the remaining nine cases, the evidence obtained by OIOS - if authenticated and corroborated - might indicate that the staff members may have been involved, and their employment was terminated in the interest of UNRWA.
- On 5 August 2024, the UNRWA Commissioner-General also issued a [statement](#) acknowledging the completion of the OIOS investigation. He underscored that the Agency's priority is to continue lifesaving and critical services for Palestine Refugees in the Gaza Strip and across the region. He also stated that UNRWA is committed to upholding the fundamental principles and values of the United Nations, including the humanitarian principle of neutrality, and to ensure that all its staff abide by this principle. He noted that the Independent Review of UNRWA had concluded that the Agency “possesses a more developed approach to neutrality than other similar UN or NGO entities.” Finally, he reiterated UNRWA's condemnation of the 7 October attacks and the Agency's call for the immediate and unconditional return of all hostages held in Gaza.



The Claim: Citing alleged intelligence estimates, several media have relayed claims that around 10 per cent of all UNRWA staff in Gaza, or about 1,200 people, have links to Hamas or the Palestinian Islamic Jihad.



The Facts: UNRWA has not received any information, let alone any evidence, from the Israeli Authorities or any other Member State about the above claim. UNRWA became aware of this claim first from international media and later from a press briefing by an Israeli government official.

Like any other UN organisation, UNRWA carries out detailed reference checks on any staff the Agency recruits. In addition, UNRWA shares the names, employee numbers, and functions of all staff members every year in all five areas of operations with the host authorities (Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, and the Palestinian Authority) and, for the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip, with the State of Israel as the occupying power. This means that at all times, host states and the State of Israel are fully informed and aware of the details of all staff members working for UNRWA. Other UN Member States also receive these lists upon request. UNRWA has been doing that for nearly two decades.

The names of the individuals against whom allegations were made in January, March and April

2024 had all been shared multiple times with the State of Israel and other Member States. Prior to January 2024, UNRWA did not receive any indication from the relevant authorities of any involvement of its staff in armed or militant groups. In addition, the Agency screens its staff on a biannual basis against the UN Security Council Consolidated Sanctions List.



The Claim: Israeli officials have stated that “UNRWA's problem is not just ‘a few bad apples’ involved in the October 7 massacre,” and that the “institution as a whole is a haven for Hamas’ radical ideology.”



The Facts: UNRWA takes seriously its responsibility to ensure that its operations and staff adhere to UN values and core humanitarian principles. From January 2022 until November 2024, the Agency was subjected to a sustained campaign of more than 250 complaints, mainly from external NGOs, alleging neutrality breaches against individuals reported as UNRWA personnel. Only **0.66 per cent** of UNRWA personnel out of 30,000 staff across all UNRWA fields of operations were identified as being implicated in breach of neutrality allegations throughout the period specified above.

The small percentage of staff involved in these breaches therefore emphasizes that the overwhelming majority of UNRWA's highly

dedicated staff adhere to the principles to which they commit when they join the Agency. There is no substance supporting a blanket description of “the institution as a whole” being “totally infiltrated.”

In addition, staff members receive regular reminders and take mandatory training to ensure they understand and abide by the UN Standards of Conduct for the International Civil Service. These include that any political activity must be consistent with, and not reflect adversely upon, the independence and impartiality required by serving the United Nations, and that support for violence and hatred in any form runs counter to UN values and is unacceptable.



The Claim: Several media have relayed claims that Israel has documented deepening ties between UNRWA and Hamas, the de facto authorities in the Gaza Strip, since 2007.



The Facts: As elsewhere around the world, the UN works in complex environments, including in areas under the control of a de facto government or armed groups. The United Nations engages with all parties to facilitate the delivery of services and humanitarian assistance – that’s a standard. In the Gaza Strip, UNRWA’s engagement with the de facto authorities takes place solely at an operational level with the exclusive purpose of delivering humanitarian aid and services, and ensuring the safety of our staff.

During the war in the Gaza Strip, UNRWA’s activities needed to be coordinated and “deconflicted” with all relevant parties to enable the implementation of the Agency’s humanitarian mandate. UNRWA was, as a result, in contact with the Israeli authorities and when needed with the de facto authorities to inform them about the Agency’s movements and operations. Since the ban endorsed by the Israeli Parliament (the Knesset) came into effect on 30 January 2025, contact between UNRWA and the Israeli Authorities has stopped.

On claims that ties between UNRWA and Hamas may have deepened, it has been extremely difficult for the Agency to operate in Gaza since Hamas took over in 2007:

- UNRWA has had to push back constantly on Hamas threats against its management.

- Hamas has repeatedly and publicly accused UNRWA, especially its senior management, of colluding with the Israeli occupation.
- For many years, Hamas has strongly opposed UNRWA’s education programme. It has challenged the Agency’s commitment to gender equality (in our schools and among our staff) and adherence to the humanitarian principle of neutrality, which requires humanitarian actors not to take sides in hostilities, or engage in controversies of a political, racial, religious, or ideological nature. In 2023, Hamas demanded that the Agency withdraw its ethics guidelines for staff.
- Hamas even disapproved of the “Summer Fun Weeks” programme run by UNRWA, which engaged boys and girls together in art, games, music and sports.



The Claim: Aid from UNRWA keeps getting diverted by Hamas.



The Facts: UNRWA is not aware of and has received no specific allegations regarding any systemic diversion of aid it brings into and distributes in Gaza by Hamas or other armed groups. Should it be revealed to be the case, UNRWA will strongly condemn any diversion of humanitarian supplies and immediately inform its donors and other partners to determine appropriate next steps.

Across the world’s conflict zones, the UN works in complex environments, including in areas under the control of de facto governments or armed groups, to deliver humanitarian aid, and has extensive experience in delivering aid in accordance with humanitarian principles, including neutrality, impartiality, and operational independence, and mitigating the risk of diversion of aid.

UNRWA’s distribution of aid is implemented through a robust system of oversight and checks:

- UNRWA uses a direct implementation modality (no intermediaries) which means that the Agency has full control of the supply chain from receiving the goods at the crossing points into Gaza to bringing them to UNRWA warehouses and distribution points, where aid is delivered directly to registered beneficiaries, checked against a pre-established list, and according to needs.

- During the war in Gaza, all movements of aid (including fuel) from point of departure to point of arrival inside Gaza were coordinated with and notified to the parties, including the Israeli authorities, to “deconflict”, or ensure the safe passage of the aid convoy’s movements and ensure safety of humanitarian workers. The convoys are also escorted and monitored by UN security personnel.
- UNRWA takes measures to ensure that it has no financial ties with any individual or organisation on the UN Security Council Consolidated Sanctions List. During periods of escalation, we have emergency screening procedures to ensure the provision of aid in an effective manner, such as rapid screening of new vendors. Subcontractors and implementing partners are also vetted.
- UNRWA operates in five fields: Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, the West Bank including East Jerusalem, and Gaza. It shares full lists of staff members, including functions, names, and IDs, with all the host authorities and, for the West Bank and Gaza, with the State of Israel, every year. This has been a standard practice for nearly two decades.



The Claim: Hamas has stored weapons in UNRWA schools and dug tunnels under UNRWA buildings, but the Agency has done little to stop this.



The Facts: Since the mid-2000s, during conflicts in Gaza, there have been instances when armed actors from both sides have violated the neutrality of UNRWA sites, which are protected by international law. They have, for example, entered UNRWA buildings or used them for military purposes. UNRWA has systematically condemned such violations of UN premises. See an example [here](#) from 2014 of UNRWA condemning the placement of rockets inside its schools.

Every time that UNRWA has discovered that the neutrality of its facilities has been compromised by third parties, including being used by armed groups in Gaza to cache munitions, it has protested to de facto authorities in Gaza, condemning the fact that these weapon components had been stored in a UN facility, in breach of their inviolability under UN Privileges and Immunities.

UNRWA also immediately informed the Palestinian Authority and Israel as well as its main donors.

Moreover, in its annual reports to the UN General Assembly, the UNRWA Commissioner-General has also consistently reported and described any such instances. These reports are shared with all Member States of the United Nations.

When suspected tunnels are discovered under UNRWA facilities, the Agency follows a similar protocol to the one used when it has discovered that its installations were being used to cache munitions. This includes sealing cavities by injecting cement whenever discovered, immediately informing the Palestinian Authority and the State of Israel as well as its main donors and reporting to the UN General Assembly. When cavities under buildings or our grounds have been identified, the Agency has also put out public statements – you can find an example from 2022 [here](#).

Ensuring that its facilities are not utilized for any purpose other than the provision of services by UNRWA to Palestine Refugees is critical for UNRWA’s operations. The Agency dedicates significant resources to regularly assess its facilities, including to ensure neutrality. This means not only ensuring that there is no misuse of its facilities but also that installations are clearly marked as UN facilities, that signs about them being weapons-free areas are present at entrances, and that the internal and external walls are free of any messaging that is political or in any way places the neutrality of the installation into question.

This is done via quarterly assessments by specially trained staff of all of UNRWA’s almost 1,000 facilities across its five fields of operation: Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, the West Bank—including East Jerusalem, and Gaza. These assessments review adherence to neutrality and the level to which UNRWA installations are able to provide safe, inclusive, accessible, and dignified services to Palestine Refugees. During the second and third quarters of 2023 for example, UNRWA assessed 99 per cent of active Agency installations. The assessment of all Gaza installations was completed in September 2023. There is also a system of follow-up in place to ensure that issues identified are addressed in a consistent manner.

Active conflict and insecurity can significantly impact the ability of the Agency to conduct these assessments.

UNRWA also trains all staff regularly on the humanitarian principles, including neutrality, and provides dedicated training to managers of UNRWA installations.



The Claim: Textbooks used in UNRWA schools glorify terrorists and promote hatred of Israel.



The Facts: UNRWA uses host government textbooks, in line with UN best practice for providing quality education in refugee settings.

UNRWA reviews all textbooks used in its schools to identify sections that may not be in line with UN values and UNESCO standards for teaching. UNRWA has no tolerance for hate speech and inciting discrimination, or violence. Independent analysts and international education experts have vouched for the quality and content of the education that UNRWA provides in its schools.

Using host country curriculums in refugee situations is standard for the UN around the world.

It is considered a best practice that helps ensure that students can pursue their education into host country educational systems at any level and more broadly participate in the social and economic life of the host country. This is particularly relevant for UNRWA as our school system ends after grade 9^[1], and students transition to local schools for upper secondary, then university.

UNRWA enriches the curriculum it uses by adding a programme on human rights, conflict resolution and tolerance, unique in the region.

UNRWA teachers are trained to address any controversial content in the classroom, using guidance documents developed by UNRWA. The teachers are required to follow this approach and held accountable. When it comes to the Palestinian Authority textbooks, UNRWA refers systematically to UN positions on issues such as the occupation, borders, the separation barrier, and Jerusalem. UNRWA is not in a position to – nor is it mandated to – reconcile the Israeli and Palestinian narratives.

1] Except in Lebanon

Thousands of self-learning materials produced in-house to support distance learning have also been reviewed through a robust process and uploaded on UNRWA's Digital Learning Platform. Teachers are regularly reminded that only material uploaded on the platform can be used. Meanwhile, UNRWA is progressing with digitisation of its education programme.

In addition, an Education Expert Advisory Group, composed of globally recognised experts representing renowned institutions like UNESCO and the World Bank among others, advises UNRWA on a regular basis on its digitisation transition and curriculum related matters more broadly.

Internationally recognised outside evaluations – including a [2021 World Bank-UNHCR study](#) – demonstrated that UNRWA's educational outcomes are among the best in the region and at the lowest cost per student. UNRWA's students in Gaza, the West Bank, and Jordan "scored an average of a quarter of a standard deviation higher in international assessments than public school children, implying an advantage of almost a year of learning."

Regarding the textbooks produced by the Palestinian Authority, UNRWA's own stance on these materials closely aligns with the [Georg Eckert Institute's findings](#) in a study commissioned by the European Commission and published in 2021.



The Claim: A 2019 U.S. Government Accountability Office report allegedly said that UNRWA has not always implemented measures to address problematic content in school textbooks.



The Facts: The 2019 report reaffirmed UNRWA's unwavering commitment to UN values, and, where there was a need for better implementation, this was done – you can find our statement about this [here](#).

UNRWA undertakes regular and meticulous reviews of all textbooks and learning materials used in its schools to ensure their compatibility with UN values and UNESCO standards and reinforcing tolerance and human rights.



The Claim: Members of a Telegram group of 3,000 UNRWA teachers allegedly supported violence, including in the 7 October attacks against Israel, and there have been similar cases in the past involving UNRWA staff.



The Facts: The claims made by the organisation UN Watch in January 2024 refer to exchanges found on an open Telegram chat that was neither set-up, nor authorised, nor managed by UNRWA. The use of the UN and UNRWA logo on this Telegram group has not been authorised.

Due to the nature of Telegram, it is impossible to verify the allegation that all members of this group are UNRWA employees. The group seems to be formed around job seeking, so it is unlikely that its members are all UNRWA staff (already employed by the Agency).

Previous claims by UN Watch and other organisations about the behaviour of individuals have often misidentified as UNRWA staff the people allegedly involved. For example, in various claims made since 2022, concerning some 130 people, more than half turned out not to be UNRWA personnel.

Of the 30 people named as UNRWA staff in a report about this Telegram group, only 18 could be properly reviewed as the other 12 provided only first names or nicknames. From the 18, it has been confirmed that three do not work for the Agency and six cases have so far been inconclusive, requiring further review. The remaining nine may be active personnel. These cases have been referred to the UNRWA investigation department, in accordance with the Agency's procedures.

UNRWA, like all UN agencies, has a system in place to investigate allegations and disciplinary action is taken in all substantiated cases.



The Claim: Rather than being part of the solution, UNRWA perpetuates the refugee problem, including by reminding Palestine Refugees of their history and telling them their home is in Israel.



The Facts: When the UN General Assembly created UNRWA by passing [resolution 302](#) in 1949, it did not mandate the Agency to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict nor the Palestine Refugee issue or find durable solutions for refugees.

Rather, UNRWA was set up as temporary organisation to carry out "direct relief and works programmes" for Palestine Refugees. In 1952, the UN General Assembly explicitly tasked UNRWA to serve any person whose "normal place of residence was Palestine during the period 1 June 1946 to 15 May 1948 and who lost both home and means of livelihood as a result of the 1948 conflict."

UNRWA has a humanitarian and development mandate, repeatedly renewed by the UN General Assembly, to provide assistance and protection to Palestine Refugees pending a just and lasting solution to their plight. This is done by delivering essential public services, primarily basic education, healthcare, relief and social services, and emergency assistance, including in situations of conflict.

The fact that UNRWA is still in place 75 years later is not the Agency's choice. It is the result of a collective failure by the international community to resolve a political problem.

Protracted refugee situations are the result of the failure to find political solutions to underlying political crises – sometimes leading refugees to retain their status across generations. Meanwhile, the international community has continued to support UNRWA and recognises the role it plays in addressing human development issues and the long-term impacts of conflict.

Palestine Refugees do not get special treatment compared to other refugees. Under international law, refugees and their descendants may retain their status until a durable solution is found to the situation that made the population into refugees in the first place. In this sense, Palestine Refugees are no different from other people in protracted refugee situations. [As stated by the United Nations](#), this principle applies to all refugees and both UNRWA and UNHCR have recognised descendants as refugees on this basis.

The UN General Assembly in 1948 adopted [resolution 194](#) stating that “refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbours should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date, and that compensation should be paid for the property of those choosing not to return and for loss of or damage to property which, under principles of international law or equity, should be made good by the Governments or authorities responsible.”

This is not an UNRWA position. This is a UN and a Member States’ position. UN General Assembly resolution 194 precedes and differs from resolution 302, which established UNRWA and makes no mention of the right of return. UNRWA does not have the mandate for durable solutions, including to return or resettle Palestine Refugees. It is only mandated to provide basic services, including primary healthcare and education.



The Claim: Other UN agencies deliver humanitarian assistance in crisis zones across the globe. They would be better placed to do UNRWA’s job.



The Facts: UNRWA directly manages critical public-like services (schools and health centres) in its five areas of operations, relying on more than 30,000 staff members, most of them Palestine Refugees. **UNRWA’s established infrastructure and its cost-effectiveness – especially as the majority of its staff are part of the UNRWA Area Staff (national) category, with salaries pegged to public sector comparators – have no equivalent elsewhere in the UN. This means that UNRWA Area Staff are paid on average between 40 per cent and 70 per cent less than other UN locally recruited staff.**

In addition, UNRWA responds to emergency situations, such as in Gaza today, using its staff, networks, and knowledge, and its longstanding experience gained over several conflicts and crises. UNRWA has over the years gained the communities’ trust and acceptance. With over 2 million people in dire need of life-saving humanitarian assistance in Gaza, no other agency is able to respond at the scale needed at present. UNRWA currently has around 7,000 staff working across the Gaza Strip, far surpassing the capacity of all other

humanitarian actors. The UN Secretary-General has called UNRWA the backbone of the humanitarian response there. Other UN agencies and international NGOs have recognised the irreplaceable role of UNRWA in Gaza, and publicly announced their support for the Agency.

For example, very often, even if another agency supplies vaccines, it is UNRWA health staff that get these vaccines into the arms of children at UNRWA clinics. So, UNRWA is an essential link in the chain. UNRWA’s main activity is education. Before the war in Gaza, UNRWA ran more [than 700 schools and provided more than half a million boys and girls](#) across its five areas of operations with education. No other UN agency runs schools.

It was hoped that UNRWA local staff would be folded into Palestinian public institutions once a political solution was reached.



The Claim: UNHCR is mandated to resettle refugees and solve refugee issues. It could take over UNRWA’s job.



The Facts: The UN General Assembly established UNRWA in 1949 and UNHCR in 1950, providing them each with distinct mandates to assist and protect refugees. These decisions are enshrined in the UN General Assembly [resolution 302](#) that created UNRWA in 1949 and has been renewed ever since, the [UNHCR Statute](#), which was also adopted by the UN General Assembly, and the [1951 Refugee Convention](#), which is an international treaty. Neither UNRWA nor UNHCR can unilaterally change their mandates.

UNRWA and UNHCR have very distinct functions. UNRWA is a direct service provider. At the core of these services are education and healthcare. UNRWA provides public-like services. UNHCR does not have a mandate over Palestine Refugees. UNRWA does not have a mandate for durable solutions, including return or resettlement, while UNHCR does.



The Claim: Donor money would be better spent supporting governments in the region to assist Palestine Refugees, rather than via UNRWA.

 **The Facts:** UNRWA's mandate was first set out by the UN General Assembly in 1949. UN Member States decide where and how UNRWA should operate.

During regular reviews of its mandate, UN Member States have continued to task UNRWA to provide support to Palestine Refugees throughout its five fields of operation: Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, the West Bank including East Jerusalem, and Gaza. It is tasked with doing so pending a just and lasting solution to the plight of Palestine Refugees.

In addition, UNRWA runs essential public services for Palestine Refugees, such as schools and clinics. It does this with more than 30,000 staff members, most of whom are Palestinian, and whose pay scale is aligned to that of the local civil services where they work.



The Claim: UNRWA does not take reports against it seriously.

 **The Facts:** UNRWA has zero tolerance for hate speech, discrimination, or incitement to violence as well as any action that could be viewed as taking sides in conflict. Adherence to UN values and upholding humanitarian principles, including neutrality, represents a fundamental pillar of UNRWA's value system and is critical for the Agency to be able to operate. The Agency systematically reviews all allegations of misconduct, including breaching UN values and humanitarian principles and launches investigations into any credible allegation, applying disciplinary measures where misconduct has been established up to and including separation.

Please refer to the 'Background' section above for details of the very swift steps taken by UNRWA concerning the allegations that staff members were involved in the 7 October horrific attacks on Israel.



The Claim: The former head of UNRWA's staff union in Gaza, Suhail al-Hindi, was fired in 2017 after Israel found out that he had been elected to Hamas' top political leadership.



The Facts: In 2017, UNRWA verified a media report according to which Suhail al-Hindi, the former head of UNRWA's local staff union in Gaza had been elected to the political office of Hamas. Following that media report, UNRWA immediately suspended him and subsequently dismissed him after verifying the facts. None of this was because "Israel found out" – UNRWA acted directly.

Under the rules of UNRWA – and those of the wider UN – participation in any political activity must be consistent with, and may not reflect adversely upon, the independence and impartiality of our status. This includes a prohibition on standing as a candidate or holding any public office. This is why UNRWA immediately suspended al-Hindi and subsequently dismissed him after verifying the reports. UNRWA also dismissed another staff member whose name appeared in the list of those newly elected to Hamas political office in Gaza.

UNRWA prohibits any type of involvement of staff in a militant or armed group. As a representative of the UN, any involvement in a group that promotes discrimination or violence violates the principle of neutrality and gravely jeopardizes UNRWA's ability to provide services and protection to refugees.



The Claim: In a video posted in November 2024 on social media platforms by Israeli embassies, a 14-year-old boy described as an "UNRWA student" is shown making hateful remarks, along with the claim that his alleged views are the result of an UNRWA education.



The Facts: The boy in the video is **not** an UNRWA student. The embassies' social media accounts credit the video to the organisation UN Watch, which has a history of making unsubstantiated allegations against UNRWA. The deceptive claim that the boy is an UNRWA student should be enough to undermine the credibility of this content. The video is not new and was originally sourced from an activist whose work has been widely debunked for prompting children in dubious circumstances, twisting their responses, and using selective editing.



The Claim: In July 2024, the Government of Israel provided UNRWA with a list of 100 names allegedly members of the military wing of Palestinian armed groups, including Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad, claiming the U.N remains silent and UNRWA did nothing about it.



The Facts: The UNRWA Commissioner-General immediately responded to this letter, requesting further information and evidence to substantiate these claims. The Government of Israel is yet to respond to his letter. The above-mentioned correspondence can be provided upon request.

These unsubstantiated allegations continue to be used to undermine the Agency and its work, as part of a wider disinformation campaign against UNRWA.

For nearly two decades, UNRWA has been providing lists of staff working in the occupied Palestinian territory (the West Bank including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip) to the Government of Israel. UNRWA has never received any reaction to the content of these lists.



The Claim: UNRWA has blood on its hands. On 7 October 2023, an UNRWA worker kidnapped a hostage from southern Israel to Gaza. To date, there has been no apology, no explanation, no condemnation by the U.N. as to why its employees participated in the horrific 7 October attacks, including by abducting hostages.



The Facts: The outcomes of the OIOS investigations regarding the alleged involvement of 19 UNRWA staff in the 7 October attacks are clear: in one case, no evidence was obtained to support the allegations, while in nine other cases, the evidence was insufficient to support claims of involvement. In the remaining nine cases, the evidence obtained by OIOS - if authenticated and corroborated - might indicate that the staff members may have been involved, and their employment was formally terminated in the interest of UNRWA. The evidence was never authenticated or corroborated.

The UNRWA Commissioner General stated in October 2023, “last week’s attack on Israel was horrendous – devastating images and testimonies continue to come out. The attack and the taking of hostages are a flagrant violation of international humanitarian law”. He has repeatedly condemned the horrific 7 October attacks since.



The Claim: Despite what international bodies claim, UNRWA is neither the largest – nor the most critical – humanitarian agency operating in Gaza. It is responsible for providing less humanitarian aid than other agencies in Gaza.



The Facts: The Israeli Authorities imposed a siege on the Gaza Strip on 7 October 2023. During the war, very little humanitarian supplies were allowed, with a daily average around 60-70 trucks in the last six months of the war. This is a drop in the ocean in comparison to what the State of Israel allowed into Gaza during the blockade before the war. On average, Gaza, which depended on imports from Israel, received 500 trucks of commercial and humanitarian supplies every day. Never during the war have the Israeli Authorities allowed such a number of trucks to enter the Gaza Strip.

Against this picture and despite these challenges, **UNRWA remained the backbone of the humanitarian response.**

Here are a few examples:

- Since the war began, UNRWA provided over 7.4 million medical consultations, with a daily average of up to 17,000 consultations.
- UNRWA distributed food assistance to around 2 million people during the war.
- UNRWA provided shelter to hundreds of thousands of displaced people in UN facilities during the war.
- UNRWA gave 18,000 boys and girls learning activities since the summer of 2024.
- UNRWA receives, stores, and distributes all fuel that enters the Gaza Strip for humanitarian purposes.
- Since the war began, UNRWA provided around 730,000 people, including over half a million children, with psychological support to help with shocks and trauma.

- During the war, UNRWA coordinated high risk movements with the Israeli authorities for the deconfliction of aid missions inside the Gaza Strip and hosted dozens of humanitarian agencies and the inter-agency coordination mechanism in its facilities in Khan Younis.

No other UN agency can do such work by their own acknowledgement. **No other humanitarian organisation in Gaza has the know-how, the infrastructure, the reach or the community trust that UNRWA has.**

UNRWA's personnel and services are critical to the success of the ceasefire. Only UNRWA has the capacity and infrastructure to respond to the required upscale in aid deliveries across the Gaza Strip, to bring children back to learning, and to provide primary healthcare services to people in need across Gaza.



The Claim: If the international community truly cared about the people of Gaza, it would support moves to install alternative agencies to replace UNRWA's activities in Gaza.



The Facts: Currently, there are over 660,000 boys and girls who are out of school for the second year in a row. Before the war, UNRWA provided learning to half of them, in the UNRWA's schools. What will be the fate of these children? **The longer children stay out of school, the higher the risk they become a lost generation.** It becomes more difficult for them to catch up on their education losses and they are likely to fall prey to exploitation. This includes child labour, early marriage and recruitment by armed groups. This is a ticking bomb in Israel's backyard. It is a win-win to have children back into school, including for Israel's security and stability. **No other agency than UNRWA can provide education at scale in Gaza.**



The Claim: Hostages were held in UNRWA shelters during the war.

Claims that hostages have been held in UNRWA premises, even if previously vacated during the war, are extremely serious. UNRWA has no way to find out based on the current information available from media and open sources reports only. Those who have such information or more information on this allegation are encouraged to pass it on formally to UNRWA or other parts of the United Nations. UNRWA continues to call for independent investigations into claims of misuse of UNRWA premises by Palestinian armed groups, including Hamas, and all other allegations that keep coming against the Agency.



The Claim: UNRWA facilities in the West Bank are exposed as terror hubs as Palestinian armed groups used the Jenin health centre to hide weapons.



The Facts: UNRWA refutes in the strongest terms the allegation that its facilities in the West Bank constitute "terror hubs", an assertion made on 31 January 2025 by a spokesperson for the Israeli Forces in relation to the Jenin Camp Health Centre. UNRWA has not been able to maintain full control of this facility since at least 17 December. Israeli counterparts were informed accordingly. The occupation of the Health Centre by Palestinian armed actors was condemned on record by UNRWA on 20 December 2024, calling for them to vacate the premises.

The weapons depicted in the Israeli Forces video filmed inside the Health Centre are abandoned ordnance associated with these Palestinian armed actors. UNRWA has been unable to safely remove this ordnance owing to ongoing violent clashes in Jenin Camp.

Almost without pause since early December 2024, Jenin Camp and the surrounding areas have been subject to large-scale, protracted operations by both Palestinian and Israeli Forces. During this time, humanitarian access to the camp has been hindered. UNRWA has been unable to operate critical health and education services. Thousands of residents have been displaced from the camp, which has been rendered nearly uninhabitable.

This presence of Israeli Forces personnel inside the Jenin Camp Health Centre is at least the fourth unauthorised entry by the Israeli Forces since October 2023. Unauthorised entry by any party into humanitarian installations constitutes a violation of the privileges and immunities of the United Nations. In previous instances, UNRWA has been able both to protest and inform of such entries through civil-military coordination channels, and to subsequently document any violations in full.

With the implementation of the Knesset laws against UNRWA on 30 January 2025, the Agency has been forced to withdraw under protest all international staff in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. The Agency is no longer able to maintain any contact with Israeli authorities under the terms of Knesset legislation. This incident serves as a reminder of how dangerous this state of affairs is.

UNRWA rejects attempts at disinformation that undermine the critical work of the Agency in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. UNRWA is committed to staying and delivering humanitarian assistance for Palestine Refugees across the occupied Palestinian territories, and to upholding the humanitarian principles.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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