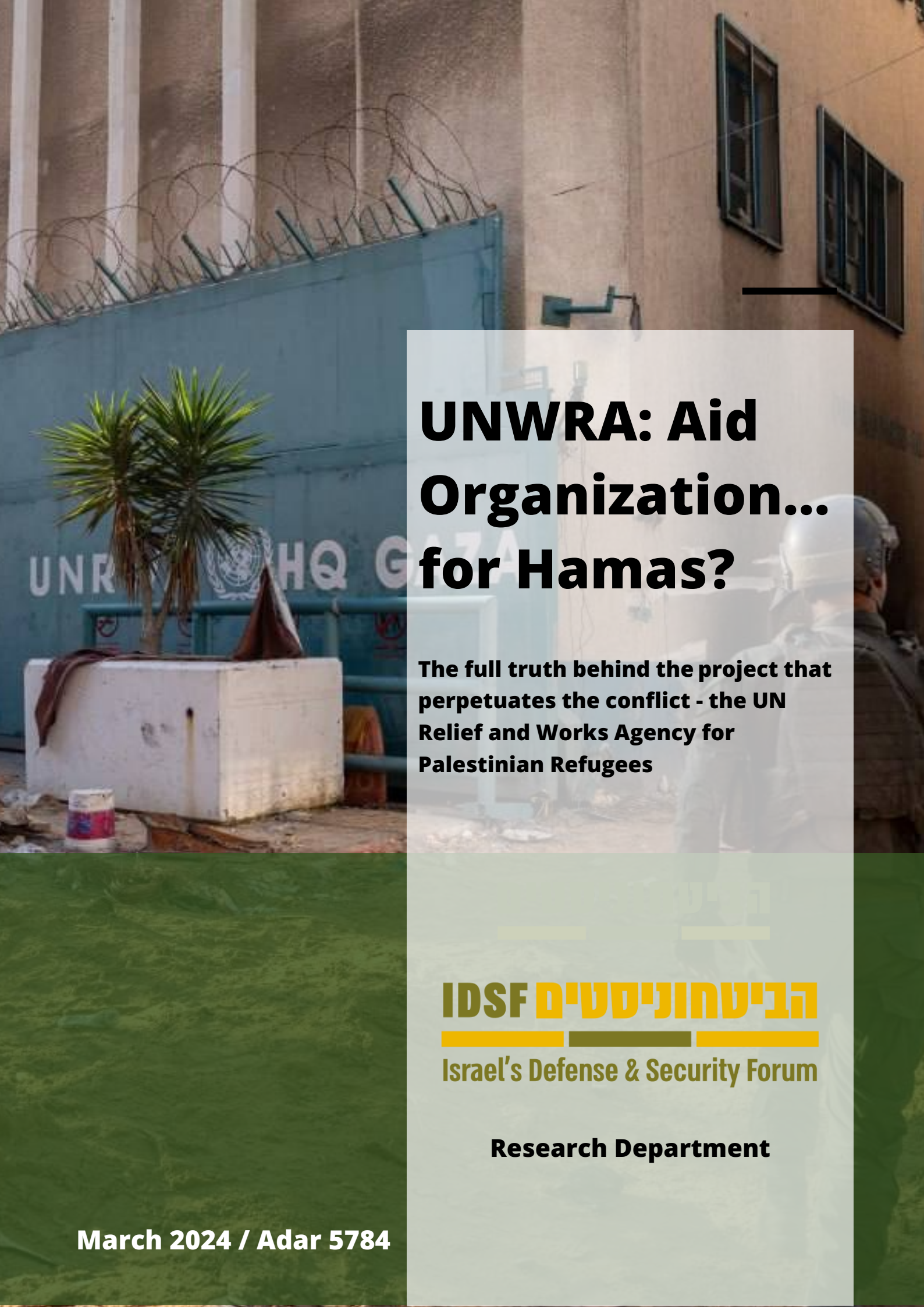




UNWRA: Aid Organization... for Hamas?

The full truth behind the project that perpetuates the conflict - the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees

הביטחוניסטים IDSF

Israel's Defense & Security Forum

Research Department

March 2024 / Adar 5784

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IDSF – Israel's Defense and Security Forum, Habithonistim is a movement with more than 35,000 senior officers, commanders and combatants in the reserves and civilians who are former members of all the security forces. It was founded in order to defend the state of Israel's security needs in a way that will enable it to exist and prosper for generations to come.

Our policy is clear: We are committed to Israel's right to safe borders, the borders of the land of Israel; we believe that Israel's security needs head the national priorities; and we believe that Israel does not have the privilege of losing any war. The IDF must act freely in the entire area in order to fulfill its responsibility and to defend Israel.

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Cover picture: An IDF soldier in the UNRWA HQ in the Rimal neighborhood of Gaza, under which a giant Hamas tunnel was discovered, also containing Hamas servers connected to UNRWA servers | February 2024 | Source: https://t.me/newsil_tme

About the Research Department

The Research Department of the Israel Defense and Security Forum aims to be a leading, relevant and dynamic voice in the public debate in Israel that through actionable research provides the public and the decision makers with the tools necessary to cope with the developing political-defense situation, while implanting the principles and values of the national security of the state of Israel so that it will flourish for generations as the nation state of the Jewish people.

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UNRWA - Aid Organization, To Hamas?



UNRWA HQ GAZA

Established

1949

Official objective

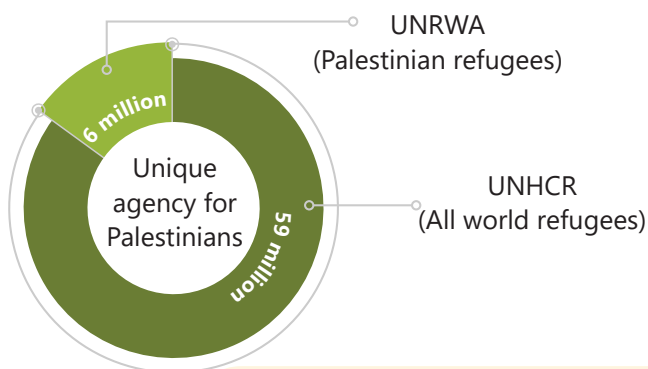
Relief and welfare to Palestinian refugees

In practice

The agency is used by Hamas as a combat vessel against Israel

Recommendation

General dismantlement of UNRWA | Transferring eligible Palestinian refugees under the general UNHCR and canceling refugee status for permanent residents worldwide | Immediate closure of all UNRWA offices in Israel | Replacing UNRWA's humanitarian aid mechanism in Gaza to one supervised by the IDF



18 countries

Temporarily suspended UNRWA funding following reports on its employees' involvement in terrorism



Budget

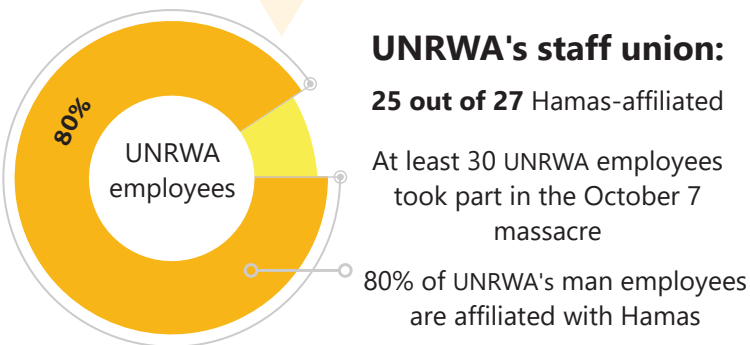
\$1 billion



30,000

Employees

“UNRWA has taken no steps at all to prevent members of terrorist organizations such as Hamas from joining its staff. UNRWA has no preemployment security checks” James Lindsay, UNRWA's former legal advisor



Involvement in terrorism: Iron Swords



UNRWA teachers held hostages



Shooting at IDF soldiers from UNRWA facilities



Hamas tunnel underneath UNRWA's Gaza HQ



Ammunition found in UNRWA bags

Eternalization of the conflict

Palestinian refugee	Regular refugee
Inherited refugee status	No refugee status for descendants
Refugee status remains in any event	Permanent residence in a new country > Refugee status canceled
Under UNRWA	Under UNHCR

Executive Summary

Intro

- On October 28, 2024, the Israeli Knesset passed **two laws that prohibit any interaction with UNRWA** (“United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees”) or **anyone on its behalf** on any “state authority, including entities and other individuals who lawfully holds a public office”,¹ and **prohibit any UNRWA activity, including the direct or indirect activity of delegations and services in Israel’s sovereign territory.**² The legislation does not preclude criminal proceedings vis-à-vis UNRWA employees, including those relevant to the October 7 massacre, the Iron Swords War or any other proceeding as stipulated by the 2016 Counter Terrorism Law.
- These laws come against the backdrop of **the exposure of the involvement in the October 7 massacre and in terrorism by UNRWA and its employees, its eternalization of the conflict and the Palestinians’ refugee status, and the fact that it operates under definitions and conditions that are distinct from the UN’s other refugee welfare entities** (UNHCR, UNKRA). UNRWA employees took part in the raid on Israeli territory and the massacre and horrors that took place on October 7, including taking Israeli hostages; concealed weapons in their homes and in structures pertaining to the agency – such as schools; and constituted an integral part of Hamas’ tunnel infrastructure.
- If the international community is interested in **promoting a real, lasting arrangement to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the US and the EU need to promptly reject UNRWA and its activity.** Next, appropriate alternatives to the agency must be found. Specifically, **Palestinian refugees can be entrusted by other international organizations that look after all refugees in the world, rather than their own distinct organization, chiefly UNHCR** (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees). In the Gaza Strip, Israel itself must take control over vital humanitarian aid, removing it from UNRWA’s responsibility, which in practice ends up in Hamas’ hands and preserves its regime. This, in order to facilitate the humanitarian aid mechanism during the interim period until a long-range arrangement for Gaza is concluded.

[25_Isr_5106948.pdf](#)¹

[25_Isr_5106937.pdf](#)²

General background

- **UNRWA operates separately from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).** Thus, the Palestinians are the only group of refugees in the world that have their own dedicated agency to attend to their needs.
- **UNRWA reports on its activity in two main areas –**
 1. **Educational**, in which 60% of its budget is invested. It runs more than 700 schools in Palestinian refugee camps in various countries and in places such as East Jerusalem. **The school books are approved by the Palestinian Authority and are under UN supervision.**
 2. **Humanitarian**, in which it assists Palestinian refugees in 59 refugee camps throughout the Middle East, where about a third of all the refugees registered in the organization live.
- **Funding:** In 2022 the organization's budget was **nearly \$1.055 billion USD**, which were donated by 20 different countries. The countries that traditionally donate the largest sums of money are the **USA (\$344 million USD)**, **Germany (\$202 million USD)**, the **European Union (\$114 million USD)** and **Sweden (\$61 million USD)**.
 - According to data from UN Watch, **18 countries suspended their donations to UNRWA following the report on the involvement of some of the agency's employees in the October 7 massacre.** On the other hand, there are a number of countries that continue to provide donations.
 - It appears that most of the donor countries **have no oversight mechanism** to monitor the purposes their aid money is used for.

Findings about UNRWA involvement in terror

- **The union:** In the elections for the UNRWA staff union that took place in 2012, **out of 27 places, 25 candidates of the list identified with the Hamas terrorist organization were elected.** Between 2012 and 2017, the UNRWA staff union was headed by Suhail al-Hindi, a senior Hamas member who served as a member of its political bureau.
- **Use by terrorist organizations of UNRWA infrastructures:** For years UN reports have exposed military use of UNRWA assets in the Gaza Strip by Hamas and the Islamic Jihad. The IDF discovered, in course of the Israel-Hamas War, that **Hamas equipment was found in UNRWA bags**; UN equipment was found in UNRWA buildings from which Hamas fired at IDF forces; documentation of **firing at IDF forces from inside UN buildings**; and the most incriminating - **the vast terror tunnel that was dug under the main UNRWA headquarters in Gaza City, the entrance shaft of which being from an UNRWA school.**
- **UNRWA employees took part in the October 7 massacre and subsequently helped Hamas in its war effort:**
 - According to the Israeli defense establishment, **at least 440 terrorists of the Hamas military wing are also employed in parallel in UNRWA; 2,000 more are Hamas operatives who are not in the military wing; and some 7,000 have a first-degree family member who is a Hamas terrorist.** In total, **9,500 of 12,000 UNRWA employees are linked to Hamas.**
 - According to the Minister of Defense, **at least 30 UNRWA employees in the Gaza Strip took part in the massacre;**
 - According to the Wall Street Journal, **some 23% of the men employed by UNRWA have links with Hamas**, and 49% of all the employees in the organization have a relative with links to the terrorist organizations in the Gaza Strip;

- **At least two UNRWA teachers held hostages in their homes.**

Education for terror by UNRWA

- An extensive report by IMPACT-se provides details of **the education for antisemitism and violence against Jews, glorification of the principle of jihad and praise for the martyrs and the goal of wiping out Israel.** The report contains details of **118 Hamas operatives who were educated in UNRWA schools; photographs from UNRWA textbooks** in the schools in the Gaza Strip and in Judea and Samaria, which teach the children that **the Jews control money, the media and world politics; and suicide attackers are portrayed as heroes** while the Jews living in the state of Israel are destined to be wiped off the face of the earth.

Perpetuating the conflict

- **UNRWA's mission is to perpetuate the conflict, not to resolve it.** Unlike other refugees in the world, **Palestinian refugee status is not revoked even when they settle in another country and receive its citizenship.** This way **the number of UNRWA refugees has grown six-fold.** The estimated number of 750,000 at the end of the War of Independence, **has by now bloated to 6 million Palestinian refugees,** among them some 2.4 million in Jordan, 1.6 million in the Gaza Strip, some 900,000 in Judea and Samaria.

Refugee status in the world	Refugee status in UNRWA
Revoked if they receive citizenship in another country	Remains even if they receive citizenship in another country
Revoked if there is reasonable suspicion of war crimes	Does not change if they carried out war crimes
Given with regardless of the time period	Given to anyone who was in the land of Israel between 1946–1948

Recommendations for the Israeli government

1. Adopt an approach that supports **immediate, total disbanding of UNRWA and withdrawing recognition of it as an organization,** in the Gaza Strip and in Judea and Samaria, including preventing its activity there.
2. **Transfer responsibility** for all schools, clinics and UNRWA institutions in the Gaza Strip to the **United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).**
3. **Replace the mechanism for distributing the humanitarian aid** by UNRWA in the Gaza Strip with another mechanism to be administered by the IDF as part of its temporary military rule in the Gaza Strip.
4. **Immediately close all UNRWA institutions in Israel,** and transfer the responsibility for all its responsibilities to the government ministries.
5. **Revoke all tax benefits for UNRWA and its activity in Israel.**
6. **Issue an official government report on the UNRWA involvement in terrorism** – Currently, there is no centralized place in Israel that collects and correlates all the official information on UNRWA's practices. Bits of information are collected and kept in various locations and partial knowledge is published by the IDF. There is a need for an orderly government policy that can be presented to foreign governments and institutions for their review.

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General background

UNRWA, in its full name the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, is the UN agency, which was founded on December 8, 1949, after the War of Independence, according to UN General Assembly Resolution 302³, with the aim of providing welfare and aid for the Palestinian refugees. It operates throughout the Middle East wherever there are Palestinian refugee camps – the Gaza Strip, Judea and Samaria, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, etc. At first, in late 1948 the UNRPR organization was established to help the needy refugees, and a year later the organization was dismantled and replaced by UNRWA.

UNRWA operates subject to the UN General Assembly, and separately from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees - UNHCR which is authorized to attend to the needs of refugees in the rest of the world. The decision to establish UNRWA separately, as an agency that looks after Palestinians only, was made following **pressure from Arab countries** that realized that the expectation was that they would absorb the Palestinian refugees – something they were unwilling to do, **and acted to include the word Palestine in the proposed agency's name so as to consolidate the claim for the right to return**, in order to prevent permanent settlement of Palestinians inside their territory.

According to this method, **the Palestinians are the only group of refugees in the world that are looked after by their own dedicated agency.** The Palestinians base the right to return on UN Resolution 194⁴ and specifically on section 11,

which speaks of the return of the Palestinian refugees, but under certain conditions. This section is open to interpretation. It has been the basis for many arguments that have taken place over the years about the solution it proposes for the refugee problem. In any case, after the Six Day War, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 242⁵ that called to find a “just solution to the problem of the Palestinian refugees, without mentioning Resolution 194.

UNRWA does not have a clear legal status, **as it is technically considered to be a temporary organization**, which was supposed to be disbanded a few years after it was established and following improvements in the quality of life of the refugees. As this did not happen, the recommendations on the part of the UNRWA commissioners to the UN over the years have been to extend the mandate for its operation, **and every three years UNRWA's mandate is renewed.** This did not take place, among other reasons, because, as is demonstrated in this paper, **UNRWA is inherently designed to perpetuate the conflict instead of seeking to end it.**

As of 2023, the organization's services are provided by some 30,000 employees. The last elections for the UNRWA staff union took place in 2012, and **out of 27 seats,⁶ 25 candidates of the list identified with the Hamas terrorist organization were elected.** Between 2012 and 2017, the UNRWA staff union was headed by Suheil al-Hindi,⁷ a senior Hamas member who in 2017 was elected as a member of the Hamas political bureau.

³ <https://www.unrwa.org/content/general-assembly-resolution-302>

⁴ <https://web.archive.org/web/20070828175019/http://domino.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/0/c758572b78d1cd0085256bcf0077e51a?OpenDocument>

⁵ https://he.wikisource.org/wiki/%D7%94%D7%97%D7%9C%D7%98%D7%94_242_%D7%A9%D7%9C_%D7%9E%D7%95%D7%A2%D7%A6%D7%AA_%D7%94%D7%91%D7%99%D7%98%D7%97%D7%95%D7%9F_%D7%A9%D7%9C_%D7%94%D7%90%D7%95%D7%92%D7%9D

⁶ <https://www.timesofisrael.com/pro-hamas-bloc-wins-control-of-unrwa-in-gaza/>

⁷ <https://www.terrorism-info.org.il/en/21160/>

UNRWA operates, according to its reports, in two main areas –

1. **Education**, in which 60% of its budget is invested. It operates more than 700 schools in Palestinian refugee camps. The school books are approved by the Palestinian Authority.
2. **Humanitarian**, in which it assists Palestinian refugees in 59 refugee camps in the Middle East, where about a third of all the refugees registered in the organization live. In times of crisis and wars the agency delivers food to the needy.

Apart from this, UNRWA works to help Palestinian business owners through “micro finance” – providing financial services to people of limited means, which focuses on giving loans and short-term investments to refugee camp residents.

Over the years, Israel has refrained from taking measures against UNWRA. It has left UNRWA's operations in Judea, Samaria, Gaza, and even in Jerusalem undisturbed and it has gone so far as to ignore education and incitement to terrorism.

The October 7 massacre and the war that followed, obliged Israel to change course. Among other developments, the Knesset passed an UNRWA Law, canceling UNRWA's activities inside Israel and forbidding any contact with the agency. On the other hand, as of this writing, Israel continues to de facto permit UNRWA to

operate in Gaza and to manage humanitarian aid there, and has provided no alternative to UNRWA's activity in the Gaza Strip.

Thus, the UN and the international community have remained dependent on the agency, despite accumulating evidence that its workers are criminal accomplices to Hamas, and that the agency is thus committed to perpetuating the conflict (see below). In an attempt to pressure Israel not to cancel UNRWA activity, UN Secretary General António Guterres harshly denounced Israel's measures against the agency and stressed that “There is no alternative to UNRWA.” Senior UNRWA⁸ officials envisioned a bleak future, and the director of operations, Sam Rose, declared that closing down UNWRA activity in three months “is impossible and unrealistic without causing further untold suffering to the Palestinian people... UNRWA could collapse, with severe implications for schools and hospitals.” US Secretary of State⁹ Antony Blinken did express concern over UNRWA's involvement in the October 7 massacre¹⁰, but he too saw the agency's role as “indispensable”.¹¹

Thus, Israel has been forced to deal with the international community's limited flexibility regarding new solutions, while at the same time it must present a program that can substitute for the existing system.¹²

Findings about UNRWA involvement in terrorism

This chapter examines the links between UNRWA and terror infrastructures, in particular those of the Hamas terrorist organization. We will focus on the use of UNRWA infrastructures for terrorism; on UNRWA employees who took

part in the events of October 7 and provided Hamas with assistance afterwards; and on education to terror that takes place in UNRWA institutions.

⁸ <https://unric.org/en/guterres-no-alternative-to-indispensable-unrwa/>

⁹ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/nov/13/unrwa-shutdown-by-israel-would-add-to-gaza-suffering-says-top-official>

¹⁰ <https://www.state.gov/statement-on-unrwa-allegations/>

¹¹ <https://www.jpost.com/international/article-784293>

¹² For more, see IDSf and JCFA, “Gaza Security and Recovery Plan”, which suggests replacing UNRWA with an Israeli humanitarian administration.

Information on the issue of the use of UNRWA facilities and infrastructures by the Palestinian terrorist organizations is not new, although this subject came to the fore due to the war, following the extensive evidence IDF forces found and exposed in the Gaza Strip.

Use of UNRWA infrastructures by terrorist organizations

Over the years much evidence has accumulated on the fact that UNRWA facilities are used by the terrorist organizations in the Gaza Strip, particularly Hamas that rules over it. These facilities are used for terrorist purposes with the knowledge, acquiescence and active involvement of UNRWA officials. **This method is part of the Hamas strategy of warfare from civilian facilities**, with double knowledge: civilian facilities, particularly international aid facilities, **are given a degree of immunity against military attack as opposed to purely military facilities**; and attacks by the IDF, even if these take place according to the rules of war, **portray Israel in a negative light in world public opinion** and increase the Palestinian narrative of victimization.¹³

Already in 2009, UNRWA reported¹⁴ **a violent takeover by the Hamas police in the Gaza Strip of humanitarian equipment** that arrived at the Gaza Strip, which had been designated for helping refugees.

UNRWA's former legal advisor, James Lindsay, exposed in a report¹⁵ in 2009 that **"UNRWA has taken very few steps to detect and eliminate terrorists from the ranks of its staff or its beneficiaries, and no steps at all to prevent members of terrorist organizations such as Hamas from joining its staff. UNRWA has no preemployment security checks and does not monitor off-time activities to ensure compliance with the organization's anti-terrorist rules."**

In April 2015, after the 2014 Gaza War (Operation Protective Edge), **a report¹⁶ drafted by the UN, the organization under which UNRWA operates, exposed use by Hamas and Islamic Jihad of UNRWA schools** in the Gaza Strip, and noted that they used them during the war and hid weapons inside them while children were in the buildings.

In June 2017 and October 2018, the UNRWA spokesperson revealed¹⁷ that the organization's employees found sections of tunnels that were dug by Hamas and passed under and near the organization's schools. The UNRWA spokesperson condemned the use of UNRWA facilities for military purposes, and noted that the organization's employees tried to block the tunnels that were found.

Since the beginning of the land maneuver in Gaza in the Gaza war that broke out on October 7, 2023, the IDF has exposed¹⁸ huge quantities of equipment, assets and means of UNRWA in the service of Hamas – before and during the

¹³ For further details of the Hamas method of using civilian facilities such as schools, hospitals and mosques see the Israel Defense and Security Forum, Research Department, "Strategic Evaluation for Israel 2022"

¹⁴ <https://www.nytimes.com/2009/02/04/world/africa/04iht-mideast.4.19933553.html>

¹⁵ https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B__vpNpiu4cUM2QzNjI3MjctODMwMy00ODdlLTk0MWEtZmRhODZhZjcwMjhm/vie w?hl=en&resourcekey=0-hfqLM3SPRurm0wJd4vngdg

¹⁶ <https://unwatch.org/confirmed-un-admits-palestinians-stored-rockets-in-unrwa-schools-and-highly-likely-used-school-premises-to-launch-attacks/>

¹⁷ <https://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/press-releases/unrwa-condemns-neutrality-violation-gaza-strongest-possible-terms>

¹⁸ <https://www.idf.il/en/mini-sites/hamas-israel-war-24/war-on-hamas-2023-resources/ammunition-found-inside-unrwa-bags/>, <https://www.idf.il/en/mini-sites/idf-press-releases-regarding-the-hamas-israel-war/january-24-pr/weapons-and-explosives-located-in-unrwa-bags/>, <https://www.idf.il/en/mini-sites/idf-press-releases-regarding-the-hamas-israel-war/december-23-pr/terrorist-fires-from-a-school-explosive-devices-located-in-unrwa-bags-the-operations-of-the-nahal-brigade-in-northern-gaza/>

war. A number of examples of findings made by IDF forces in the Gaza War are attached:

- Multiple cases of Hamas equipment found concealed in UNRWA bags.¹⁹
- UN equipment found in houses from which Hamas fired at IDF forces.²⁰
- Documentation of firing at IDF forces from inside UN buildings.²¹
- In July 2024, the task forces of the 3rd Brigade, the 8th Armored Brigade, and the Commando Brigade raided a Hamas operational compound located inside UNRWA headquarters. Targeted raids in the area revealed various types of war material, magazines, Hamas marine commando equipment, vests, weapons, and documents and technical intelligence.²²
- In October 2024, the 162nd Division raided a UNRWA clinic after terrorists took control of it and converted it into an armory and hideout.²³

The most egregious abuse is of course **the vast terrorist tunnel²⁴ that was dug under the main UNRWA HQ in Gaza City, the entrance shaft of which was from one of the organization's schools.** The tunnel housed a server farm, which was disconnected before the IDF arrived. In the organization's headquarters the IDF found an electrical connection into the tunnel, large stockpiles of weapons and intelligence documents used by Hamas.

To sum up, there is ample conclusive proof of the fact that **Hamas and Islamic Jihad have for many years used UNRWA infrastructures and equipment that UNRWA receives in the Gaza strip,** while cynically commandeering international humanitarian aid for its own use.

UNRWA employees who took part in the October 7 massacre and subsequently aided Hamas in the war

Many UNRWA employees have personal links to the terrorist organizations, and some of them also took part in the events of October 7:

- According to the defense forces, **at least 440 terrorists of the Hamas military wing are also employed by UNRWA; 2,000 more are Hamas operatives** who are not part of the military wing; **and some 7,000 have a first-degree family member who is a Hamas terrorist.** In total, **9,500 of 12,000 UNRWA employees are linked to Hamas.**²⁵
- According to the Minister of Defense, **at least 12 UNRWA employees in the Gaza Strip took part in the events of October 7.** The Israeli Minister of Defense exposed²⁶ their full details and maintained²⁷ that Israel has information that **at least 30 UNRWA employees took part in the October 7 massacre.**

¹⁹ <https://www.idf.il/en/mini-sites/idf-press-releases-regarding-the-hamas-israel-war/february-24-pr/inside-unrwa-facilities-weapons-and-underground-hamas-intelligence-asset>, <https://www.idf.il/en/mini-sites/idf-press-releases-regarding-the-hamas-israel-war/january-24-pr/weapons-and-explosives-located-in-unrwa-bags/>

²⁰ <https://www.idf.il/en/mini-sites/idf-press-releases-regarding-the-hamas-israel-war/february-24-pr/un-vest-and-weapons-located-in-a-bedroom-by-commando-forces/>

²¹ <https://www.idf.il/en/mini-sites/hamas-israel-war-24/war-on-hamas-2023-resources/hamas-shot-at-idf-troops-from-an-unrwa-school/>

²² <https://www.israelhayom.co.il/news/defense/article/16110056>

²³ <https://www.maariv.co.il/news/military/article-1140491>

²⁴ <https://www.idf.il/en/mini-sites/idf-press-releases-regarding-the-hamas-israel-war/february-24-pr/inside-unrwa-facilities-weapons-and-underground-hamas-intelligence-asset/>

²⁵ <https://www.maariv.co.il/news/military/Article-1078388>

²⁶ <https://img.mako.co.il/2024/02/16/FFFFFFFFFFFFFFFFFFFF.pdf?Partner=interlink>

²⁷ https://www.mako.co.il/news-military/2024_q1/Article-ee5d793eca2bd81027.htm

- On June 24, 2024, victims of the October 7 disaster filed a lawsuit at a US federal court against UNRWA and its employees. The lawsuit included evidence of how UNRWA led a billion-dollar money-laundering operation.²⁸
- In response to the above lawsuit, 19 of the agency's employees were investigated during August. **The UN admitted that 9 of them had taken part in the massacre** and they were dismissed from the agency. Against the 10 other employees, the evidence was termed insufficient. The case was closed and the 10 resumed their jobs.
- According to the Wall Street Journal,²⁹ **some 23% of the men employed by UNRWA have links with Hamas, and 49% of all the employees in the organization have a relative with links to the terrorist organizations in the Gaza Strip.**
- Appendix C contains a recording, exposed by the IDF spokesperson, of an UNRWA teacher boasting of the crimes committed in the course of the massacre on October 7.

In addition, a hearing that took place in the USA exposed³⁰ a Telegram group of 3,000 **teachers and educators in UNRWA schools, which celebrated and rejoiced over the events of October 7**, celebrating the massacre of innocent civilians. 130 teachers from the group praised the massacre in public.

At least two teachers employed in UNRWA held hostages in their homes after October 7.³¹

UNRWA educates for terrorism

UNRWA takes part in education for terrorism in Palestinian society. A comprehensive report³² by IMPACT-se provides details over 123 pages regarding **the education for antisemitism and violence against Jews, glorification of the concept of jihad and praise for martyrs and for the wiping out Israel.**

The report presents names and details of **118 Hamas operatives who were educated in UNRWA schools** in Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip.

In East Jerusalem, UNRWA operates³³ some seven schools that provide education services for some 3,000 Palestinian schoolchildren from East Jerusalem in areas that are under the responsibility of the Jerusalem municipality.

The report contains **photographs from UNRWA textbooks** in the schools in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, which teach the children that **the Jews control world finance, the media and world politics. Suicide attackers are portrayed as heroes**, and the fate of the Jews who live in Israel is to be wiped off the face of the earth.

Appendix A contains examples of incitement content in school books, on the part of UNRWA teachers and in interviews with UNRWA students.

²⁸ www.israelhayom.co.il/news/geopolitics/article/15963781

²⁹ <https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/at-least-12-u-n-agency-employees-involved-in-oct-7-attacks-intelligence-reports-say-a7de8f36>

³⁰ <https://www.israelhayom.co.il/news/geopolitics/article/15187643>

³¹ <https://www.inn.co.il/news/621803>

³² <https://www.impact-se.org/wp-content/uploads/UNRWA-Education-Textbooks-and-Terror-Nov-2023.pdf>

³³ <https://www.timesofisrael.com/report-israel-to-shut-unrwa-schools-in-east-jerusalem/>

Perpetuating the conflict

This chapter focuses on a key, deeply-rooted problematic aspect of UNRWA: unlike the aim of the general UN commissioner for refugees, which is to **solve the problems of refugee status** through resettling refugees and ending their refugee status or improving the conditions in their countries of origin in order to enable them to return to their homes, UNRWA's conduct and the unique definitions that it has adopted teach one thing: **UNRWA's aim is to perpetuate the conflict**. This means that **UNRWA will do nothing to reduce the number of Palestinian refugees from year to year: quite the opposite**.

The chapter will examine how UNRWA has adopted the Palestinian narrative; the contrasts between how the Palestinian refugee is defined and how the refugee is defined in other places around the world and UNRWA's role in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

First, it is to be reiterated that **UNRWA is the only UN welfare agency dedicated to refugees of a specific origin**. The Palestinian refugees are the only ones in the world looked after by a special agency and not by the general United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

When the state of Israel was founded, different numbers of Arabs who left the territory of Israel due to its founding and the War of Independence were recorded, but the official number determined by UNRWA when it was founded was **approximately 750,000 people**. Today, according to UNRWA, there are **approximately 6 million Palestinian refugees worldwide**, including some 2.4 million in Jordan, some 1.6

million in the Gaza strip, some 900,000 in Judea and Samaria, etc. **See Appendix B**, for an explanation of the numbers of the refugees worldwide according to UNRWA data and their distribution, is not consistent with the internationally-recognized refugee status.

These numbers are controversial, and there are many studies³⁴ and testimonies from the Middle Eastern countries that present completely different numbers, testifying to **possible inflation of the numbers by UNRWA**. For example, in Lebanon, UNRWA reports some 480,000 Palestinian refugees living there, while the official Lebanese census for 2017 reports only 172,000.

The refugee status according to UNRWA³⁵ **contradicts the status of other refugees around the world** in a number of main criteria:

- Palestinian refugees are the only ones **whose entitlement to refugee status is passed down over an unlimited number of generations**. According to this definition, the descendants of the "original" Palestinian refugees of 1948 will be Palestinian refugees in perpetuity.
- Refugee status is also maintained if **the refugee has settled in another country, has received citizenship and has a permanent residence there**. For example, in Jordan, only some 360,000 out of the more than 2 million Palestinians living in the country, live in refugee camps. The rest **live in permanent accommodation**. The refugee camps themselves, in Judea and Samaria, Gaza and Arab countries – **have**

³⁴ <https://www.jordantimes.com/news/region/lebanon-conducts-first-ever-census-palestinian-refugees>, <https://www.inss.org.il/publication/palestinian-refugees-facts-figures-significance/>

³⁵ <https://www.unrwa.org/palestine-refugees>

transformed from temporary accommodation to permanent housing. There are many examples of Palestinians who have settled in Europe, the USA and South American countries, become citizens and have become wealthy and influential in their adoptive countries, such as Congress member Rashida Tlaib, the rich real estate baron Mohamed Hadid and his daughters the influencers Bella and Gigi Hadid, and perhaps also the Queen of Jordan, Rania, who was born in Kuwait to parents of Palestinian origin.

- The Palestinian refugee status will also remain for those **who have committed war crimes or crimes against humanity**, unlike any non-Palestinian refugee, who would lose his refugee status in the event he is convicted of war crimes.³⁶

- UNRWA refugee status is defined as “someone whose regular place of residence between 1946 and 1948 was Palestine.” This definition is intended to give refugee status also to the many Arab migrant workers from the wider Middle East, who came to work in Palestine in that time period but where Palestine was not their natural place of residence.
- This is in contrast to the status³⁷ of other refugees around the world, for whom **permanent residence in another country, receiving citizenship, the change of generations, commission of war crimes, etc., revoke their entitlement to refugee status**, due to the intention to solve the problem and not to perpetuate it and maintain the refugee status-quo.

Funding

According to UNRWA's data in 2022³⁸ the organization's budget totaled **nearly \$1.055 billion USD**, donated by 20 different countries. The countries that traditionally donate the largest sums of money are the **USA, which donated \$344 million USD in 2022; Germany – \$202 million USD; the European Union – \$114 million USD; Sweden – \$61 million USD.**

According to the data of UN Watch,³⁹ **18 countries temporarily suspended their donations to UNRWA following the report on the involvement of some of the agency's**

employees in the massacre on October 7, including the USA, Germany, Canada, France and others, as well as the European Union. On the other hand, there are a number of countries such as Belgium, Spain, Saudi Arabia, Norway, Turkey, Ireland and others, which continue to provide donations. Of the 18 countries that suspended their donations, only the US and New Zealand have left the suspension in force, while the others have resumed the flow of funding.

In a letter⁴⁰ dated February 16, 2024, sent by members of the Committee on Oversight and

³⁶ <https://freemovement.org.uk/briefing-can-criminals-be-denied-refugee-status/>

³⁷ <https://www.unhcr.org/about-unhcr/who-we-protect/refugees>

³⁸ https://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/top_20_donors_2022_overall_ranking.pdf

³⁹ <https://unwatch.org/updated-list-of-countries-suspending-unwra-funding/>

⁴⁰ <https://oversight.house.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/State-UNRWA-Renewal-Doc-Request.pdf>

Accountability of the US House of Representatives to Secretary of State Antony Blinken regarding the Biden administration's decision in 2021 to resume US funding to UNRWA after the Trump administration had decided to freeze it, **they asked for all the information and documents that relate to the oversight and security mechanisms of the administration that were intended to prevent transfer of US aid money from UNRWA to Hamas and to terrorist activities.**

The bottom line is that it appears that most of the donor countries do not have sufficiently

close supervision mechanisms to examine where the aid money they donate goes to, from the moment UNRWA receives it. **Without the aid money from the US, which accounts for about a third of its budget, UNRWA would be unable to continue to exist for long.** However, it is noted that although the Americans announced the end of the aid this only has a declarative significance since the USA had already transferred all the full amount of its aid for 2024 before it announced it was ending it.

Recommendations

Recommendations for the Israeli government

1. Adopt an approach that supports **general and immediate disbanding and withdrawal of recognition of UNRWA**, in the Gaza Strip and in Judea and Samaria – to prevent UNRWA's activity in the Gaza Strip; to prevent any attempt to reorganize UNRWA in the Gaza Strip, including clinics, schools etc. In Judea and Samaria – to prevent the issue of work permits, permits to import merchandise etc., by UNRWA.
2. **Transfer responsibility** for all schools, clinics and UNRWA institutions in the Gaza Strip to the **United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)**, while working with the authorized entities in this organization to address issues such as medicine, education etc. It is emphasized: the refugee status of the residents of the Gaza Strip has to end in the framework of the harmonizing Palestinian refugee status with the general world definition, together with the status of "refugee camps" that must be changed to permanent settlements.
3. **Replace the mechanism for distributing the UNRWA humanitarian aid in the Gaza Strip with another mechanism run by the IDF as part of a temporary military administration in the Gaza Strip**, due to the fact that UNRWA aid also reaches Hamas and not only the civilian population.
4. **Immediately close all UNRWA institutions in Israel**, and transfer the responsibility for all the fields they handled to the government ministries, if necessary. For example, the UNRWA HQ in Givat Dafna in Jerusalem; the

UNRWA offices in Sheikh Jarrah in East Jerusalem, etc.

5. From a regulatory standpoint – **revoke all tax benefits for UNRWA and its activity in Israel**.
6. **Continue intense and effective diplomatic-advocacy activity** with the aim of permanently ending the transfer of donations to UNRWA from as many countries as possible.
7. **Issue an official government report on UNRWA involvement in terror**, including examples of use of UNRWA facilities, involvement of its employees in terrorism, education to antisemitism and anti-Zionism in UNRWA institutions and the organization's method of perpetuating the conflict. Currently, there is no centralized place in Israel that collects and correlates all the official information on UNRWA's practices. Bits of information are collected and kept in various locations and partial knowledge is published by the IDF. There is a need for an orderly government policy that can be presented to foreign governments and institutions for their review.

It should be noted that on October 30, 2024, the Knesset passed the UNRWA Law, aimed at prohibiting all activities by the agency within Israel. Under this law, the agency is barred from maintaining any representation, its offices must be closed, and it is prohibited from providing services or conducting any operations within Israeli territory.⁴¹

⁴¹ https://fs.knesset.gov.il/25/law/25_Isr_5106937.pdf

Recommendations for the international community

1. **Terminate financing and announce the total disbanding of UNRWA.**
2. Warn the host countries to prepare for the organization's disbanding and for its implications.
3. Transfer the authority and fields of responsibility from UNRWA to the

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

4. **In the future** – change the definition of the Palestinian refugee and harmonize it with the general definition of a refugee as it is applied worldwide, and to settle the remaining refugees in order to end the Palestinian refugee problem, and thus significantly increase the chances of resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Appendices

Appendix A: Excerpts from UNRWA textbooks

Source: UNRWA Education: Textbooks and Terror, Impact-se Institute, November 2023, <https://www.impact-se.org/wp-content/uploads/UNRWA-Education-Textbooks-and-Terror-Nov-2023.pdf>

A table from a textbook about the “massacres” of Palestinians by the Zionists:

جدول (٢): مصفوفة مستويات الأداء:			
المحك/ مستوى الأداء	جيد (٣)	مرضي (٢)	غير مرضي (١)
تعداد أسماء شخصيات عربية وفلسطينية دافعت عن فلسطين.	ذكر أسماء قيادين دافعوا عن فلسطين بشكل دقيق وصحيح.	معظم المعلومات التي قدمها عن القادة صحيحة.	معظم المعلومات التي قدمها عن مفهوم الالتزام غير صحيحة.
تفسير أسباب سقوط المدن والقرى الفلسطينية بيد العصابات الصهيونية.	المعلومات التي قدمها عن سبب سقوط المدن والقرى دقيقة وصحيحة.	معظم المعلومات التي قدمها عن سبب سقوط القرى صحيحة.	معظم المعلومات التي قدمها عن سبب سقوط المدن والقرى غير صحيحة.
توضيح هدف العصابات الصهيونية من ارتكاب المجازر.	ربط بين ارتكاب المجازر الصهيونية والفكر الديني اليهودي بشكل دقيق.	ربط بين فكر العصابات الصهيونية وارتكابها للمجازر بشكل صحيح.	حدّد هدف العصابات الصهيونية من ارتكاب المجازر بشكل صحيح.

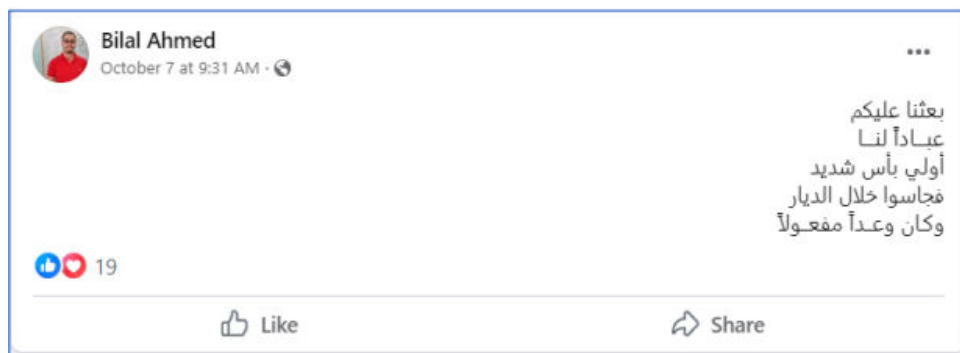
A section from a textbook teaching that the Zionists are the modern-day terrorists and their fate will be to vanish from the face of the earth:

٧- أن يقف على أبرز الدروس والعبر المستفادة من الدرس، مثل:
 - نحن أصحاب الأرض التي عمرناها منذ فجر التاريخ.
 - بينا شاهد على حضارة فلسطين وأهلها.
 - الصّهيانية إرهابيّو العصر الحديث مصيرهم إلى زوال.
 - حقّ العودة لا عودة عنه.

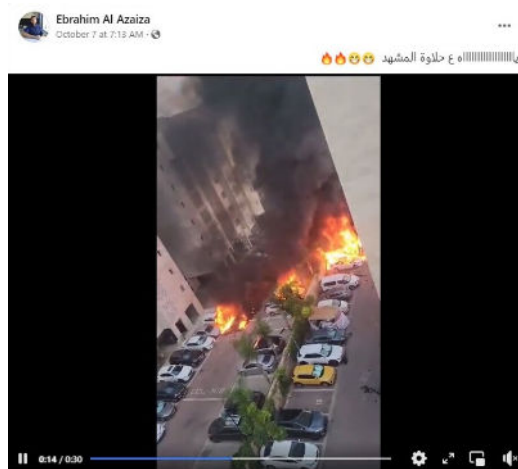
A section from a textbook portraying Dalal Mughrabi as a national hero. Mughrabi led a group of terrorists in a terror attack on Israel's Coastal Highway in which 35 Israelis were murdered:



Posts published by Bilal Ahmed, an English teacher in Gaza who works in UNRWA, with verses from the Quran praising the October 7 attack:



A post in Facebook of Ibrahim Al-Aziza, who identifies himself in Facebook and LinkedIn as a teacher working for UNRWA in the Gaza Strip, celebrating following a video showing damage from a rocket attack on a city in Israel:



Excerpt from a textbook alleging Jews sexually harassed a Muslim woman and made fun of her. Afterwards, a Muslim kills one of the Jews who did this, and in reaction the Jews hit beat and killed him:

جلست امرأة مسلمة إلى صائغ يهودي في سوق بني قنيقاع، فعقد الصائغ طرف ثوبها إلى ظهرها وهي لا تشعر، فلما قامت انكشفت سوائها، فضحك اليهود منها، فصاحت، فوثب رجل من المسلمين على الصائغ فقتله، وهجم اليهود على المسلم فقتلوه.

An article containing a video of students in an UNRWA school in East Jerusalem talking about what they are taught in school about the Jews, **saying that they are prepared to be martyrs, will defeat Israel in battle and that stabbing and car-ramming Jews brings honor to Palestinians:**

<https://www.cfnepr.com/-/תלמידים-בבית-סל-אונר-א-במזרח-ירושלים-מדברים-דקירת-יהודים-כבוד-797סטינים.html>

UNRWA's summer camps are managed by Hamas and serve as a hothouse for raising a new generation on a diet of indoctrination for antisemitism and jihad against Israel. In the “Battle of the Sword” camp (the Arab name of “Operation Guardian of the Walls”) in Summer 2021, some of which took place in Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) bases, the children were educated “to die as martyrs for Allah”, to “carry out terror attacks to liberate the homeland” and to “liberate Palestine and cleanse it of the Jews.” The training included training on the use of weapons, practicing soldier hostage-taking, urban combat and burning of Israeli flags. Hamas sponsored these camps and its senior members visited them to convey a message of UNRWA control over the younger generation and of UNRWA programs.⁴²



⁴² Center for Near East Policy Research, UNRWA's Child Soldiers, <https://www.cfnepr.com/205640> סרטים/

Appendix B: UNRWA's numbers supporting perpetuation of the conflict

A table⁴³ from UNRWA's website with data on the number of registered refugees by category. As can be seen, **some 600,000 registered refugees are also not refugees according to UNRWA**, but are “Non-refugee wives,” “Non-refugee descendants” or “adopted descendants.” In addition, **there is no data on the number of the “original refugees,”** of whom as noted there were some 750,000 following the War of Independence. **The number of refugees has multiplied by 8**, from 750,000 to 6,000,000, although the overwhelming majority of the original refugees are no longer alive.



UNRWA
الأونروا

UNRWA Registered Population Dashboard

Year

2023

Quarter

2

Field

הכל

Registration Status

הכל

Sex

הכל

Age Group

הכל

Family Size

הכל

Registration Status of Registered Persons per Field

Registration Status	Gaza	Jordan	Lebanon	Syria	West Bank	סך הכל
Registered Refugees	1,577,522	2,379,681	490,687	584,140	904,756	5,936,786
Non Refugee Wives	48,186	85,468	28,898	50,563	75,780	288,895
Non Refugee Descendants	109,622	32,415	24,488	10,869	4,031	181,425
Non Refugee Husbands	40,981	24,335	18,588	33,092	45,541	162,537
Frontier Villagers	12	38,108	5	8	89,838	127,971
Jerusalem Poor	2	1,972			8,638	10,612
Gaza Poor	7,657	578			41	8,276
Compromise Cases			1,406			1,406
Adopted Descendants	46	71		7	12	136
סך הכל	1,784,028	2,562,628	564,072	678,679	1,128,637	6,718,044

Age and Sex of Registered Persons per Field

Age and Sex	Gaza	Jordan	Lebanon	Syria	West Bank	סך הכל
0-17	724,885	610,457	122,108	178,183	292,321	1,927,954
18-59	899,093	1,564,556	329,976	403,048	666,794	3,863,467
60+	160,050	387,615	111,988	97,448	169,522	926,623
סך הכל	1,784,028	2,562,628	564,072	678,679	1,128,637	6,718,044

Size of Registered Families per Field

Family Size	Gaza	Jordan	Lebanon	Syria	West Bank	סך הכל
1	39012	55188	13010	31437	30625	169271
2	51184	78090	29592	50821	77617	287304
3	44953	68370	22341	23998	31487	191149
4	53339	84044	28608	31712	35343	233046
5	54725	88979	25623	28877	35098	233301
6	51515	81174	16396	18692	31764	199541
7	40355	55856	7671	8434	22449	134765
8	26320	31711	3181	3359	12574	77144
9	14334	15460	1244	1340	6096	38474
10-14	13695	13961	895	1019	4958	34528
15-19	669	708	20	31	222	1650
20-24	81	70	1	1	17	170
25-29	13	13	1	2	9	38
30-34		3			1	4
סך הכל	390190	573606	148583	199707	288257	1600329

⁴³ <https://www.unrwa.org/what-we-do/relief-and-social-services/unrwa-registered-population-dashboard>

Appendix C: Evidence of use of UNRWA facilities by Hamas in the past

Left: Three terrorists firing mortars towards Israel from the UNRWA school in Beit Hanoun (IDF Spokesperson's Unit, October 31, 2007).⁴⁴

Right: A France 24 reporter documents the firing of a rocket adjacent to a UN facility (August 5, 2014)⁴⁵



Rockets being fired by Hamas, some 20 meters from an UNRWA school during Operation Cast Lead (2008–2009)⁴⁶



⁴⁴ <https://www.gov.il/en/Departments/General/terrorists-fire-mortars-from-unrwa-boys-school-in-gaza>

⁴⁵ <https://www.ynet.co.il/articles/0,7340,L-4555365,00.html>

⁴⁶ https://www.terrorism-info.org.il/Data/articles/Art_20680/E_120_14_384339231.pdf

Documentation of rocket firing between two schools during Operation Cast Lead, January 2009 (IDF Spokesperson's Unit).



Documentation of rockets being fired from UNRWA schools during Operation Cast Lead, January 2009 (IDF Spokesperson's Unit).



IDF forces expose munitions that were used to booby-trap UNRWA schools in the Gaza Strip during Operation Cast Lead.

January 11, 2009 (IDF Spokesperson's Unit)



A Hamas military facility next to an UNRWA school is identified during Operation Cast Lead in the Shuja'iyya Jedida neighborhood



Appendix D: Evidence of UNRWA involvement on October 7 and in the Swords of Iron war

The UNRWA HQ in Gaza, where a Hamas terror tunnel was discovered. Hamas servers there were also connected to the UNRWA server network | Source: https://t.me/newsil_tme



The Ministry of Defense disclosed the details of 12 UNRWA employees who were directly involved in the October 7 massacre. Below are some selected slides | Source: Ministry of Defense, published: <https://img.mako.co.il/2024/02/16/FFFFFFFFFFFFFFFF.pdf>

UNRWA Employee and Hamas Operative Faisal Ali Mussalem Al-Naami



Personal Details

Name: Faisal Ali Mussalem Al-Naami
ID: 900641721
DOB: 16/08/1978
Place of Residence: Nusirat

Current Position in UNRWA

Social Worker

Terror Activity

Membership in Terror Org: Hamas
Position in Org: operative in the comms and combat support branch in the Nusirat battalion
Involvement in the 7/10 Massacre: Identified (VISINT) in Israeli territory, was involved in kidnapping a soldier from Beerli, coordinated the transfer of weapons and trucks



UNRWA Employee and Hamas Operative Rami Mohammad Ramadan Sabbah



Personal Details

Name: Rami Mohammad Ramadan Sabbah
ID: 900969791
DOB: 12/02/1976
Place of Residence: Dir al-Balah
Tel: 972599600251

Current Position in UNRWA

Math Teacher

Terror Activity

Membership in Terror Org: Hamas
Position in Org: Logistical Position in Dir al-Balah Battalion
Involvement in the 7/10 Massacre: Involved in receiving and holding hostages. Was seen photographing a female hostage



UNRWA Employee and Hamas Operative Mohammad Tawfiq Ibrahim El Ghafari



Personal Details

Name: Mohammad Tawfiq Ibrahim El Ghafari
ID: 800015687
DOB: 01/07/1983
Place of Residence: Nuseirat
Tel: 972597747534

Current Position in UNRWA

Arabic Teacher

Terror Activity

Membership in Terror Org: Hamas
Position in Org: Squad Commander in Nuseirat Battalion
Involvement in the 7/10 Massacre:
Received a SMS calling him to report to the meeting point prior to the infiltration, along with logistical preparations

Hamas weapons hidden in UNRWA bags, discovered by Kfir brigade soldiers in the Bani Suheila neighborhood in Khan Younis | January 7, 2024 | Source: IDF Spokesperson's Unit



Additional weapons discovered in UNRWA bags | December 11, 2023 | Source: Almog Boker, @bokeralmog on X



A recording released by the IDF Spokesperson's Unit made by Yusef Zidan Suleiman Al Hawajara, a teacher in an UNRWA elementary school in Gaza, boasting about the kidnapping of Israeli women and carrying out a massacre in the Gaza Envelope settlements | Source: IDF Spokesperson's Unit, <https://www.idf.il/אתרי-יחידות/יומן-המלחמה/כל-הכתבות/הפצות-הקלטות-מפלילות-מחבלים-ארגון-טרור-7.10>
[/שבעה-באוקטובר-מורים-בתי-ספר-אונר-א-חמאס](https://www.idf.il/שבעה-באוקטובר-מורים-בתי-ספר-אונר-א-חמאס)

שיחה שבוצעה על ידי יוסף זידאן סלימאן אלחואג'רי
מועסק באונר"א כמורה בבית ספר יסודי בעזה, מדבר על השתתפותו בטבח 7.10

.....

יוסף זידאן סלימאן אלחואג'רי:
(...) תקשיב, קרעו אותם, ראית, אפילו שברו
את המצלמות ואת השערים. וואו, מה הם עשו.
שמע, עשו פעולת שחרור אינשאללה.



**יוסף זידאן
סלימאן אלחואג'רי**