



The Sabra Report

10% Of UNRWA Workers Have Ties to Terror Groups

Times of Israel, January 29th, 2024

Recap:

At least 12 UNRWA employees were directly involved in the October 7th massacre. 10% of UNRWA's 12,000 Gaza employees are believed to have ties to terror organizations.

The Context:

- ✧ The United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) was established to care for the 700,000 Arabs displaced following Israel's establishment in 1948. The 1951 refugee convention defines a refugee as a person "fleeing conflict and persecution." UNRWA, by contrast, deems a refugee a descendant of all those whose normal place of residence was Palestine between 1946 and 1948 [1]. 30,000 UNRWA employees serve 5.6 million "registered refugees", including those naturalized in other countries. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), which cares for every other refugee group, has 20,000 employees that oversee 108 million refugees globally [2]. The UNHCR has a mandate to resettle refugees whereas UNRWA does not [3].
- ✧ On October 7th, thousands of Hamas-led terrorists burst into Israel from Gaza, slaughtering 1,200 people, and seizing 253 hostages. Two UNRWA teachers held kidnapped Israelis hostage in their homes and 130 teachers publicly praised the massacre [4]. The accusations against UNRWA are the latest in a long line of Israeli complaints, such as allowing anti-Israeli incitement to be taught in its schools as well as UNRWA's close coordination with Hamas.
- ✧ UNRWA's Commissioner General Philippe Lazzarini said he would investigate "what is politically motivated," however the US, UNRWA's largest donor, has already paused its funding as well as over a dozen countries. UNRWA says it's at risk of having to cease operations in Gaza by the end of February if funding doesn't resume [5]. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government does not support the immediate discontinuation of UNRWA saying that "if UNRWA ceases operating on the ground, a humanitarian catastrophe would force Israel to halt its fighting against Hamas [6]."

Conversation Points:

- ✧ How should Palestinian aid be reformed once the war is over?
- ✧ Does UNRWA alleviate or exacerbate the Palestinian refugee problem?
- ✧ Why are Palestinians granted a distinct refugee status compared to other refugee populations?
- ✧ Why weren't the 800,000 Jews kicked out of Arab lands given their own version of UNRWA?

Notes:

1. [Did UN workers participate in the October 7th attacks?](#), The Economist, January 29th, 2024
2. [Make UNRWA go away](#), JNS.org
3. [The demise of the UN's Palestinian agency could spell disaster for millions](#), Nadeen Ebrahim, CNN, January 30th, 2024.
4. Ibid.
5. [We oppose axing UNRWA mid-war, senior Israeli official says amid global funding halt](#), Times of Israel, JACOB MAGID, January 31st, 2024.
6. Ibid.

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