UNRWA serves as Hamas subsidiary, undermining hopes of peace

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On Oct. 7—the day Hamas terrorists ruthlessly slaughtered 1,200 innocent Israelis and took hostage 240 others—Ranoosh Salah, a staff member of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) posted on social media that it was ‘an unforgettable glorious morning.’

That an UNRWA employee would proclaim such support for Hamas’s massacre should come as no surprise. After all, the U.N. agency has unbreakable ties to Hamas, particularly in the Gaza Strip, where many UNRWA personnel are also Hamas members or supporters. In fact, some Gazans report that UNRWA is effectively a $1 billion branch of the Hamas organization.

For this reason, Israel must dismantle and expel UNRWA from the Strip, just as it will Hamas.

Indisputably, both UNRWA and Hamas share the same goal: the destruction of the Jewish state of Israel. Both cling to the decades-old belief that all Palestinian ‘refugees’ must return to a ‘homeland’ they never owned or controlled, including what is now Israel.

Of course, this would result in the disappearance of Israel’s Jewish majority, and with it, the Jewish state itself. Rather than help Palestinians progress to peace and independence, as UNRWA was intended to do, the agency has perpetuated the Palestinians’ refugee status for 75 years now.

But UNRWA’s misdeeds go far beyond just maintaining Palestinians’ statelessness. Since Hamas took over Gaza in 2007, the U.N. agency has basically become a subsidiary of the Islamist terrorist group—to the extent that the two are almost indistinguishable.

UNRWA schools have become indoctrination centers, where Palestinian children are fed a steady diet of antisemitism and Islamic fundamentalism. They are encouraged to hate and kill Jews, even if it means dying themselves, for according to Hamas’s ideology, martyrdom is the highest honor one can aspire to.

UNRWA facilities serve as part of Hamas’s terrorist infrastructure. The same schools in which Palestinians are taught to slaughter Jews also serve as terrorist bases, used to store weapons or launch rockets into Israel.

In reality, this U.N. agency is part and parcel of Hamas’s control and terrorism apparatus in Gaza. Yet, astoundingly, the Biden administration, along with the rest of the West, continues to fund UNRWA—meaning that the American taxpayer is directly subsidizing terrorism.

Recently, information has surfaced that Israel plans to dismantle UNRWA as part of its effort to destroy Hamas in Gaza. What better time, then, for the United States to defund this monstrosity definitively, as it once did in 2018?

Whereas UNRWA was created to find a just solution to the Palestinian refugee problem, it has instead perpetuated and aggravated it. In contrast to the historical handling of all other refugee groups, UNRWA designates *descendants* of Palestinians who left Israel in 1948 as refugees, which allows the Palestinians today to claim some six million ‘refugees’ worldwide, including citizens of other nations.

UNRWA does not offer these ‘refugee’ clients any solution to their statelessness except decades of futile war with Israel and a mythical ‘right of return’ to a state some 98% of them have never set foot in.

For decades, UNRWA has been used by Arab leaders to leverage the Palestinian refugee issue against Israel. Most Arab states refuse to give citizenship to Palestinians, or rights of any kind, making UNRWA responsible for meeting Palestinians’ basic needs, thereby rendering them perpetual refugees.

Since Hamas took control of Gaza in 2007, it and UNRWA have become intertwined, nearly indistinguishable. Many UNRWA staff are affiliated with Hamas. In fact, according to Kobi Michael, a senior researcher at Tel Aviv’s Institute for National Security Studies (INSS), all Gaza’s UNRWA employees are vetted by the terrorist group.

Some UNRWA employees have even become high-ranking members of Hamas. For example, Suhail al-Hindi, a school principal and chairperson of the UNRWA Gaza workers’ union, became a member of the Hamas politburo.

According to a report by the Institute for Monitoring Peace and Cultural Tolerance in School Education (IMPACT-se), UNRWA staff members, including teachers and educational staff, expressed support for the Oct. 7 massacre on social media.

UNRWA claims it screens prospective employees for links to terrorists, but since the United Nations does not consider Hamas a terrorist group, its members are not excluded from employment. UNRWA spokeswoman Tamara Alrifai even admitted to *Foreign Policy* in 2021 that UNRWA takes action only when its employees are found to hold actual political positions in Hamas.

UNRWA is responsible for educating Gaza’s children to hate and kill Jews. The organization uses textbooks issued by the Palestinian Authority, which, according to numerous studies, as well as the United States, European Union and U.N. Anti-Racism Committee, are steeped in antisemitism and support for terrorism.

No surprise, then, that at least 118 participants in the Oct. 7 massacre graduated from UNRWA schools, according to IMPACT-se. One of the Oct. 7 hostages released by Hamas during the November ceasefire told Israel’s *Channel 13* reporter Almog Boker that he was held captive by an UNRWA teacher, who barely fed him and denied him medical treatment.

UNRWA is part of Hamas’s vast terrorist infrastructure. The terrorist group frequently uses UNRWA facilities and civilians who take refuge in them as human shields—a war crime. What’s more, parts of the terrorist group’s underground tunnel network are located under UNRWA schools, and UNRWA buildings are used to store weapons and launch rockets at Israel.

In a recent interview, a Gazan captive admitted to Israeli officials that UNRWA is effectively a fully-controlled subsidiary of Hamas—which means every dollar contributed to the U.N. agency by the United States and European Union goes directly into Hamas hands.

Despite all the evidence linking UNRWA to Hamas, however, the U.N. agency is still handsomely financed by U.S. taxpayers. Since coming to office in 2021, President Biden has financed UNRWA to the tune of at least $730 million. Tragically, his administration continues to defend the organization. Recently, U.S. National Security Council spokesman John Kirby told reporters, ‘You can’t hold them [UNRWA] accountable for the depredations of Hamas.’ Who is he kidding?

UNRWA must meet the same fate that awaits Hamas in Gaza. It must cease to exist so that it can no longer oppress the Palestinians or attack Israel again.