How Western governments are funding the persecution of Jews

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Spiked

<https://www.spiked-online.com/2025/02/03/how-western-governments-are-funding-the-persecution-of-jews/>

The British government helped to fund the persecution of a British Jew. That’s the takeaway from [Emily Damari’s revelation](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cj91ygv803xo) that she was held in an UNRWA facility for some of the hellish time she spent in Hamas captivity. Keir Starmer’s Labour government [pumps millions of pounds](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-humanitarian-support-for-gaza-as-ceasefire-allows-operations-to-scale-up) into UNRWA. Money that will be used, in part, for the upkeep of UNRWA’s buildings. Buildings like the one in which Ms Damari was held by the neo-fascist militia of Hamas. It may have been indirect, it may have been unwitting, but British government money, *our* money, went to an organisation whose facilities were used to tyrannise a British Jew. And we need to talk about that.

Emily Damari is the [young British-Israeli woman](https://www.spiked-online.com/2025/01/20/her-name-is-emily-damari/) who was abducted from her home in the Kfar Aza kibbutz during the Hamas-led pogrom of 7 October 2023. She was held hostage for 471 days, finally being freed on 19 January as part of the ceasefire deal between Israel and Hamas. In a phone call with Starmer [on Friday](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/politics/keir-starmer-hamas-prime-minister-israeli-british-b1208435.html), she revealed that for some of the 15 months she spent in the captivity of that army of anti-Semites, she was held on premises belonging to UNRWA (the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East). We don’t know how Starmer responded, but hopefully he said something like: ‘What?! The aid agency I just gave millions to?’

For that, almost unbelievably, is what happened. Three days before his chat with Ms Damari, three days before being informed that this citizen of the country he leads was held by racist terrorists in an UNRWA facility, Starmer’s government [awarded an additional £17million](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-humanitarian-support-for-gaza-as-ceasefire-allows-operations-to-scale-up) for the Palestinian territories, much of it to UNRWA. Anneliese Dodds, Starmer’s minister for development, gushed about the ‘vital role’ UNRWA plays in Gaza and haughtily instructed Israel to back off and let it play that role. One of the roles it seems to have played, wittingly or otherwise, is the provision of facilities for Hamas, including for the purposes of criminally depriving a British Jew of her liberty. How ‘vital’ is that?

It’s hard to overstate the seriousness of all this. British taxpayers helped to fortify buildings in which Hamas committed war crimes. British taxpayers helped to fund one of the dens of anti-Semitism in which our fellow citizen was held captive for the ‘crime’ of being a Jew in Israel. Where is the outrage? Where are the pained editorials in the liberal press? It is a testament to the moral indifference of Britain’s cultural elite that we can discover a British woman was held hostage in UNRWA facilities days after our government handed UNRWA yet more money and no one bats an eyelid.

If Starmer was shocked by Ms Damari’s revelation, he has no right to be. For everyone who has been paying attention knows that UNRWA has been thoroughly compromised by its intimate links with Hamas. [Other hostages](https://usun.usmission.gov/remarks-at-a-un-security-council-briefing-on-the-situation-in-the-middle-east-44/) have likewise said they were held in UNRWA buildings. It’s possible some of these hostages were seized by UNRWA’s own employees during the orgy of barbarism that was the 7 October pogrom: at least nine UNRWA staff members are suspected of having taken part in that fascistic atrocity. ‘I’m inside, I’m inside with the Jews’, an [UNRWA-employed teacher](https://www.idf.il/en/mini-sites/the-unrwa-hamas-connection/unrwa-s-involvement-on-october-7/) reportedly said as he invaded Israel on that day of bloodshed.

Intelligence experts believe that up to [10 per cent of UNRWA’s staff](https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/at-least-12-u-n-agency-employees-involved-in-oct-7-attacks-intelligence-reports-say-a7de8f36?mod=hp_lead_pos1) in Gaza ‘have links’ to Islamist militants. A study of a Telegram channel consisting of 3,000 UNRWA-employed teachers found [thousands of messages](https://unwatch.org/unrwa-terrorgram/) praising Hamas’s pogrom and racially insulting Jews. There have been numerous accounts of Hamas [storing its weaponry](https://nypost.com/2024/10/15/world-news/idf-raids-unrwa-clinic-in-gaza-used-to-store-hamas-weapons-officials-say/) in UNRWA facilities and even using such facilities as bases from which to [wage war on the IDF](https://www.idf.il/en/mini-sites/the-unrwa-hamas-connection/exploitation-of-unrwa-schools/terrorists-shoot-at-idf-troops-from-unrwa-school/). ‘Stop funding Israel!’, the activist class cries. A better demand might be ‘Stop funding Hamas!’ – stop pumping money into a UN aid agency that has provided moral and even physical cover for Hamas’s existential war on the Jewish State.

UNRWA’s bond with Hamas runs deeper than occasionally sharing staff members and facilities. More fundamentally, UNRWA plays a key role in delegitimising Israel and thus intensifying the animosity against it. Its [ideological insistence](https://unwatch.org/item-7/claim/claim-5-palestinian-refugees-have-a-right-of-return/) that the vast majority of Palestinians are ‘refugees’, and must be granted ‘the right to return’, expressly calls into question the continued existence of the Jewish State. And its schools, as numerous investigations have found, [promote extreme anti-Israel views](https://www.timesofisrael.com/report-finds-incitement-antisemitism-still-prevalent-in-unrwa-classrooms/). They ‘glorify terrorism, encourage martyrdom, demonise Israelis and incite anti-Semitism’. Through both its promotion of the idea that Israel is a usurper nation in the Middle East and its Israelophobic education system, UNRWA actively inflames anti-Israel animus in Gaza and beyond.

Last week, a [new Israeli law](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/jan/30/unrwa-staff-forced-to-leave-israel-after-ban-comes-into-effect) came into effect banning the operation of UNRWA in Israel and potentially limiting its activities in Gaza and the West Bank. Some [Western governments](https://www.gov.ie/en/press-release/e2c3d-statement-by-the-tanaiste-israeli-legislation-on-unrwa/#:~:text=Ireland%20continues%20to%20stand%20behind,the%20implementation%20of%20this%20legislation.), predictably, have clutched their pearls in outrage. Let’s get real. Which sovereign nation would tolerate on its borders a so-called aid agency whose members had raped and murdered its citizens and whose facilities had been used for the purposes of making war and holding hostages? Not many, I would wager. So why should Israel?

When it first emerged that some UNRWA employees had taken part in the atrocities of 7 October, the [Biden administration](https://www.reuters.com/fact-check/us-unrwa-funding-already-halted-2024-not-by-trump-2025-order-2025-01-28/) and Britain’s then Conservative government suspended funding. To many of us, this made sense: why would aid money be sent to an organisation whose staff had taken part in the worst butchery of Jews since the Holocaust? And yet the online left frothed and raged. They took to social media to plead with people to make direct donations to UNRWA. Britain’s Labour government, shortly after taking power in July last year, restarted UNRWA’s funding. One wonders if Emily Damari – a Brit, a Jew, a 28-year-old woman, a Spurs fan – was languishing in an UNRWA facility as Britain’s faux progressives were singing UNRWA’s praises.

Think about what this all means. Leftists raised money for an organisation whose staff members murdered Jews. The British government funds an organisation whose facilities were used to hold a Briton captive. [European governments](https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/danon-backs-eu-lawmakers-call-for-disbanding-unrwa-after-ex-hostage-says-she-was-held-in-un-facilities-in-gaza/) fund an agency that foments hate for the world’s only Jewish nation. Gaza is in ruins right now and getting aid there is essential. But there must be a way to do that without boosting the fortunes of the anti-Semitic militants who started this infernal war. The liberation of Gaza from both the iron fist of Hamas and the patrician governance of UNRWA is the best thing that could happen to Palestinians.