UNRWA: Perpetuating the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

MK Sharren Haskel
"A refugee is **someone who has been forced to flee his or her country** because of persecution, war, or violence. A refugee has a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social group."

"Persons 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. **Palestine Refugees, and descendants of Palestine refugee males, including legally adopted children, are eligible to register for UNRWA services.**"
Ongoing Conflicts

Turkey and Cyprus
- 1963-Present
- 625,000
- 2,000 Internally Displaced People Today

Iran
- 1978-Present
- 111,684
- 75,043 Refugees Today

Morocco and South Sahara
- 1975-Present
- 48,000
- 90,000 Internally Displaced People Today

Palestinian Authority
- 1946-Present
- 711,000
- 5.3 million Refugees Today
Palestinian Refugees 1948-2017

Why is this number increasing?

1948

711,000

Refugees from the War of Independence

2017

5.3 million

Total refugees today according to UNRWA

Why?
Reason for Increasing Number of Refugees

- While UNHCR helps integrate refugees, UNRWA fosters “permanent status” of Palestinian refugees.
- Refugee status maintained even in Palestinian autonomy.

Diagram:

- UNHCR: Resettlement → Citizenship → Conflict
- UNRWA: Refugee status → Conflict?
## Comparing UNHCR and UNRWA

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Responsible For</th>
<th>All non-Palestinian refugees, IDPs</th>
<th>Palestinian refugees and their descendants</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of people servicing</td>
<td>65.6 million</td>
<td>5.3 million</td>
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<tr>
<td>Annual Budget</td>
<td>$7.7 billion</td>
<td>$1.2 billion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of Employees</td>
<td>~5,000</td>
<td>~30,000</td>
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UNHCR vs. UNRWA Refugee Camps

UNHCR Camp in Syria

UNRWA Camp in Gaza
Benefits Offered by UNHCR

UNHCR camps are temporary efforts to resettle and create better futures for refugees

Temporary Shelter  Immediate Health Care  Educational Services for Re-integration
Benefits Offered by UNRWA

UNRWA camps are permanent structures internalizing and perpetuating refugee status

- **Permanent Home**
- **Long-Term Health Care:** Owns 143 Health Facilities
- **Full Education System:** Operates 674 Schools
Perpetuating the conflict

Descendants retain refugee status and the number keeps rising

Education system teaches violence and hatred of Jews

70% of Gaza population are refugees

UNRWA finances families’ welfare, health, and education

Members of Hamas get jobs in UNRWA facilities
We support human rights and refugee organizations.

We do not support terrorist organizations and terror activities disguised as human rights efforts.
Hamas is a Terrorist Organization

1. Mission statement calls for destruction of Israel
2. Responsible for hundreds of terror attacks and thousands of deaths
3. Uses violence to control own civilians
UNRWA Leaders Connected to Hamas

“I am sure that there are Hamas members on the UNRWA payroll, and I don’t see that as a crime”
–UNRWA leader Peter Hansen, 2004

Muhammad al-Jamassi

- Chairman of the UNRWA engineering department in the Gaza Strip through 2017
- Senior activist in Hamas since at least 2007
- Worked in Hamas Public Relations Bureau
UNRWA Leaders Connected to Hamas

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―UNRWA leader Peter Hansen, 2004

Suhail al-Hindi

● Chairman of UNRWA staff union and principal of UNRWA elementary school through 2017

● Senior Hamas activist--UNRWA known since 2004

● Considers opposition to including the Holocaust in textbooks among “greatest achievements”
UNRWA Leaders Connected to Hamas

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–UNRWA leader Peter Hansen, 2004

'Issa' Abd al-Hadi al-Batran

- A Teacher at UNRWA's Gaza school for years.
- Senior activist in The Al-Qassam Brigades, military wing of Hamas.
UNRWA Facilities Used for Terror

- 2009, 2014: Hamas using Shifa Hospital for headquarters, weapon storage
- 2014: Nearly 600 rockets launched close to schools, hospitals and other civilian facilities
- 2017: Two Hamas terror tunnels found beneath UNRWA schools
An Education System That Demonizes and Delegitimizes Israel

- 674 schools
- Budget of $735,748,000 (54% of total)
- 2017 textbooks deny any Jewish historical or religious connection to land of Israel
- Textbooks and assignments foster anti-semitism and anti-Israel sentiments
Indoctrination in UNRWA Textbooks

“I have sworn! I shall sacrifice my blood [...] I shall remove the usurper [...] and exterminate the foreigners’ scattered remains”

(Our Beautiful Language, Grade 3, Part 2 (2017) p. 64)

“The number of martyrs during the first Intifada (the Stone Intifada) reached 2,026. The number of martyrs during the Al-Aqsa Intifada reached 5,050. The number of martyrs during the two Intifadas is ______"


“In the winds’ storm and the weapon’s fire [...] I shall die as a Fidai¹ until I return”


¹Fidai- “self-sacrificing person”

"Savage Zionist gangs that came from a foreign world full of hostility and hatred to Arabs and Palestinians invaded it [the land] without permission..."

(Arabic Language, Grade 9, Part 1 (2017) p. 23)

"Jerusalem is an Arab city built by our Arab forefathers thousands of years ago. Jerusalem is a holy city for Muslims and Christians [...] and the city still succumbs to the yoke of Zionist occupation"

(Social Studies, Grade 7, Part 1 (2017) p. 60)

“The martyrs are more honorable than us all”

(Arabic Language, Grade 6, Part 2 (2017) p. 34)
An Education System That Demonizes Jews and Israel

Mortasim Hussein, UNRWA student
Shuafat, Jerusalem

Everyone needs to attack the Jews
UNRWA Schools Radicalize Students

"UNRWA UPRISING" DAVID BEDEIN

We are taught how to defend our land, how to recapture the land.

GAZA CLASHES
NEW VIDEO PURPORTEDLY SHOWS UN INFLUENCE

FOX NEWS ALERT
Challenges with UNRWA

1. Motivates refugees to stay refugees
2. Textbooks demonise Jews and glorify terrorism
3. Trains future terrorists instead of peaceful citizens
4. Enables Hamas to allocate budget to violence
Solving the Problem

Unacceptable that a UN branch is essentially run by PA--this must change

This leaves us with three options

1. Reposition UNRWA under the UNHCR
2. Officially place UNRWA under Palestinian Authority jurisdiction
3. Reform UNRWA
Solving the Problem

Unacceptable that a UN branch is essentially run by PA--this must change

This leaves us with three options

1 - Reposition UNRWA under the UNHCR

- Adopt UNHCR rules
- Adopt UNHCR budget
- UNRWA joins Middle East division for refugees
Solving the Problem

Unacceptable that a UN branch is essentially run by PA--this must change

This leaves us with three options

2 - Officially place UNRWA under Palestinian Authority jurisdiction

- Not part of UN
- No funding from UN
Solving the Problem

Unacceptable that a UN branch is essentially run by PA--this must change

This leaves us with three options

3 - Reform UNRWA

- Increase transparency
- International workers
- Completely distance from and boycott Hamas
- Ensure budget and equipment used for correct purpose
- Place Palestinians under UNHCR
- New definition of refugees
- Supervise educational program