Against the Tide: The Case for Funding UNRWA

By Jonathan T. Helton

***Resolved: The United States federal government should substantially reform its foreign aid.***

UNRWA (United Nations Relief & Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees) is an agency owned by the United Nations that takes donations from multiple countries and uses them to provide aid to Palestinians displaced by the Israeli-Palestinian conflicts of 1948 and 1967, and their descendants. Pres. Trump in 2018 announced over 80% cut in the annual US donation, and since the US is the largest donor, this is putting UNRWA into a financial crisis. This case is phrased in terms of a simple Harms/Solvency case. Without the US funding, bad things will happen to the Palestinian refugees, and restoring the funding solves.

As the case evolves during the round, it may also appear in terms of "comparative disadvantage." Negatives will argue that UNRWA is bad, but AFF will win if they prove that UNRWA is better than nothing, and better than all alternatives that the Status Quo could come up with.

The security of Israel is sure to be debated in some rounds, and it presents a curious set of facts. Israel doesn't donate anything to UNRWA (it would be viewed sort of like RJ Reynolds donating money to fight lung cancer), but Israelis often have opinions about the good or bad of UNRWA. Sometimes the same person will have different opinions depending on whether they are speaking publicly or privately.

Publicly, Israeli government officials denounce UNRWA and blame it for prolonging the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. After all, if you keep giving out free food and housing and medical care to a large and growing group of people and their descendants forever into the future, when would these people ever have any incentive to solve the problem? The day a peace settlement is achieved, all the free stuff evaporates and they have to work for a living like everyone else. Without UNRWA, Palestinians would have to create their own economy, move, live or work in neighboring Arab countries, or solve the Arab-Israeli conflict so that they could have a permanent settlement and no longer be refugees.

Privately, Israelis will admit that they (Israelis) are better off and more secure with UNRWA than without it. The day UNRWA stops working, and 5 million people are told they have no more food, schools and medical care, you'd better be in a deep bomb shelter to avoid what follows. The Middle East will probably explode. Note that in our version here of the 1AC, both of the Plan advocates are Israelis, and one of them is the Prime Minister.

The NEG will likely point to issues with UNRWA, that Trump’s cut was insignificant, and that Israel wants the cuts. Your job as AFF is to point out that neither side presents a perfect world and that the NEG isn’t running a counterplan – unless they are. With that in mind, the NEG must defend the status quo. Trump's cuts were supposed to provoke "reform" in UNRWA, but they set no targets or goals, so no one knows what exactly they are supposed to reform. Whatever problems UNRWA has, life without it (or with it crippled by budget crisis) will be worse.

Against the Tide: The Case for Funding UNRWA 4

OBSERVATION 1. DEFINITIONS 4

Substantial 4

Foreign Aid 4

OBSERVATION 2. INHERENCY. The Trump administration has recently cut a program – known as UNRWA – that gives Palestinians medical and educational care. 4

FACT 1. U.N.R.W.A. 4

We'll pronounce it as "un-raw" for ease of reference. 4

FACT 2. Funding cut 4

The U.S. is one of the largest donors to UNRWA, and Trump is doing massive cuts 4

FACT 3. Cash Crisis 5

Lack of US funding puts UNRWA in crisis 5

OBSERVATION 3. HARMS 5

HARM 1. Public Health Crisis 5

A. The Link: UNRWA is the only public health agency in the Gaza Strip, and its services are critical 5

B. The Impact: Sickness and death. 5

HARM 2. Peace Process Derailed 6

A. Link: UNRWA cuts undermine efforts for a 2-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict 6

B. Impact: Terrorism and extremism. Without the 2-state solution, terror and extremism will escalate 6

HARM 3. Palestinian violence and regional instability 6

HARM 4. Starvation 6

OBSERVATION 4. The PLAN, to be enacted by Congress & the President 6

OBSERVATION 5. SOLVENCY 7

A. UNRWA is the only way to solve for food, health care and violence among the refugees 7

B. Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu agrees: Stopping UNRWA cuts is key to preventing humanitarian disaster 7

2A Evidence: UNRWA 8

BACKGROUND 8

What UNRWA does and who it serves 8

INHERENCY 8

U.S. is largest UNRWA donor 8

US cuts are the biggest financial crisis in UNRWA history 8

A/T "Other countries replace US money" – Not enough, still have big funding gap 8

$290 million shortfall 9

Iceland gave $1 million 9

Belgium gave $23 million 9

50% cut for “unspecified reforms” 9

Geographical limitations on spending 9

MINOR REPAIR / COUNTERPLAN RESPONSES 10

A/T “Reform UNRWA or Wait for funding pressure reforms to work” – Israel opposes using aid cuts to pressure reform because it won't work 10

A/T “UNHCR instead” – Not a viable solution 10

A/T “UNHCR instead” – UNRWA’s uniqueness saves money. Using any other agency would double the cost 10

SOLVENCY / ADVOCACY 11

Dept of Education budget is $70 billion/year. (1% cut = $700 million) 11

102 members of the US House of Representatives advocate the AFF plan 11

Israeli Foreign Ministry and Israeli defense officials oppose UNRWA cut 11

HARMS / SIGNIFICANCE 11

General Harm / Quantification Backup 11

UNRWA serves 5 million people 11

UNRWA's budget is $1.2 billion to $1.3 billion and assists 5.3 million refugees in 4 countries + 2 Palestinian territories 12

50% of children below poverty line in Palestinian territories 12

UNRWA is key to food, schools and dignity of Palestinians, and threatens regional security as we face risk of radicalization 12

Millions of lives at risk from US aid cuts, and regional stability will be at risk 12

Ambassador Richard Murphy says: UNRWA provides 80% of basic needs in Gaza, unrest could follow cuts 13

Harm 1 – Public Health Risk 13

Disease outbreak in Gaza is serious threat and they don’t have the means to avoid it 13

Gaza hospitals are in crisis. Any disease outbreak could easily spread into Israel 13

UNRWA successfully provides cost-effective health care 14

Harm 2 – Derails Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process 14

UNRWA cuts hurt efforts to solve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, increasing destructive extremism 14

Harm 3 – Violence & Regional Instability 14

Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu admits: UNRWA is needed in Gaza and West Bank to avoid destabilization of the security situation 14

Impact of terrorism: Destruction of productive resources 15

UNRWA promotes comparative stability 15

Cuts undermine stability 15

Cost-effectiveness: Preemption is better than response 15

Without UNRWA's services, things will explode 16

Extra Optional Harm/Advantage: Jordanian (in)stability 16

Link: Jordan has two million refugees 16

Internal link: US Palestinian aid cuts heighten instability in Jordan 16

Link: U.S. loses an ally 16

Impact: Jordan is an important Middle Eastern ally – helps us fight terrorists 16

DISADVANTAGE RESPONSES 17

A/T “UNRWA supports terrorism” – Current law solves 17

A/T “UNRWA supports terrorism” – Fringe empirics 17

A/T "UNRWA Education promotes anti-Semitism / terrorism" – But it's the lesser of two evils. Non-UNRWA schools are even worse 17

A/T “Corruption” – U.S. officials are satisfied 18

Works Cited 19

Against the Tide: The Case for Funding UNRWA

The birth of the Jewish state of Israel in 1948 created a homeland for an historically persecuted people. But the conflict over that event, and subsequent wars that followed, left millions of Palestinians without a homeland themselves. Human suffering, regardless of religion or ethnicity, creates a moral calling we answer today by affirming that: The United States federal government should substantially reform its foreign aid.

OBSERVATION 1. DEFINITIONS

Substantial

Merriam Webster Online Dict. copyright 2018 <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/substantial>

"important, essential"

Foreign Aid

Britannica copyright 2018 <https://www.britannica.com/topic/foreign-aid>

**Foreign aid**, the international transfer of [capital](https://www.britannica.com/topic/capital-economics), goods, or services from a country or [international organization](https://www.britannica.com/topic/international-organization) for the benefit of the recipient country or its population.

OBSERVATION 2. INHERENCY. The Trump administration has recently cut a program – known as UNRWA – that gives Palestinians medical and educational care.

FACT 1. U.N.R.W.A.

We'll pronounce it as "un-raw" for ease of reference.

Rosie Perper 2018 (Journalist for Business Insider) 17 January 2018 “The US suspended $65 million in aid to the Palestinian aid group UNRWA — and it could affect millions of lives” <http://www.businessinsider.com/us-65-million-in-aid-cuts-to-palestinian-refugee-group-unwra-will-affect-millions-2018-1>

UNRWA, or the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees is a special aid unit created by the United Nations after the end of the Israeli-Arab war in 1948. Israel declared Independence and gained recognition from several international bodies that year, but displaced roughly 750,000 Palestinians living in the disputed land. The United Nations created the unit in 1949 to provide assistance and development opportunities to the influx of Palestinian refugees created as a by-product of Israel's creation. The aid benefits extend to refugees expelled from their homes in 1948, as well as their descendants, a clause unique to UNRWA.

FACT 2. Funding cut

The U.S. is one of the largest donors to UNRWA, and Trump is doing massive cuts

Deutsche Welle 2018 (Deutsche Welle is Germany’s international broadcaster. We convey a comprehensive image of Germany, report events and developments, incorporate German and other perspectives in a journalistically independent manner.) 30 January 2018 “Germany and other donors speed up funding for Palestinians after US aid cut” <http://www.dw.com/en/germany-and-other-donors-speed-up-funding-for-palestinians-after-us-aid-cut/a-42373586>

The agency had a budget of over $1 billion last year, with the US contributing one-third of the total. In mid-January, the Trump administration announced that it would only give $60 million this year, coming up far below last year's $360 million.

FACT 3. Cash Crisis

Lack of US funding puts UNRWA in crisis

NEW YORK TIMES 2018. (journalists Satoshi Sugiyama and [Rick Gladstone](https://www.nytimes.com/by/rick-gladstone) ) Head of U.N. Agency for Palestinian Refugees Warns of Cuts <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/06/25/world/middleeast/unrwa-palestinians-budget.html>

The United Nations agency that helps the 5.4 million Palestinians classified as refugees could start running out of money next month because of a $250 million shortfall, largely because of American aid cuts, its top official said Monday. The official, Pierre Krähenbühl, commissioner general of the [United Nations Relief and Works Agency](https://www.unrwa.org/), said the financial crisis was the worst the agency had faced since its creation in 1949, after the founding of the state of Israel.

OBSERVATION 3. HARMS

HARM 1. Public Health Crisis

A. The Link: UNRWA is the only public health agency in the Gaza Strip, and its services are critical

Shira Efron 2018 (associate policy researcher at the nonprofit, nonpartisan RAND Corporation, a special advisor on Israel with RAND's Center for Middle East Public Policy and a professor at the Pardee RAND Graduate School.) 5 March 2018 “Gaza on the Brink” <https://www.usnews.com/opinion/world-report/articles/2018-03-05/cutting-unrwa-funding-could-put-gaza-on-the-brink-and-backfire-at-israel>

This is where UNRWA comes in. Having been active there for almost 70 years, the organization does not have a substitute in the Gaza Strip. In addition to education and employment, it provides critical services and assistance in the areas of food, water, sanitation, hygiene and health. It operates 22 primary health clinics, employs over 1,000 health staff and serves over four million annual patient visits. Given the heightened risk of epidemic and the dire status of Gaza's hospitals, maintaining UNRWA's public health services today is crucial.

B. The Impact: Sickness and death.

Alastair Ager, Mohamad Alameddine, Sophie Witter, Fouad M Fouad, Karin Diaconu, Zeina Jamal, & Graham Lough 2018 (Ager, Witter, Diaconu & Lough: Institute for Global Health & Development, Queen Margaret University, Alameddine, Fouad, and Jamal: Faculty of Health Science, American Univ. of Beirut, Lebanon. This work is informed by ongoing research funded by Elrha's Research for Health in Humanitarian Crises Programme.) 31 March 2018 “In support of UNRWA appeal for health and dignity of Palestinian refugees” <https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(18)30568-3/fulltext>

Any shortfall in funding for UNRWA will directly affect population health. On the basis of preliminary quantitative systems models developed for our research, we estimate that a funding shortfall leading to a 20% reduction in service coverage (due to reductions in primary care staffing levels and availability of medical devices and medicine) would result in an annual increase of at least 250 maternal deaths and over 2000 additional neonatal deaths across the population served by UNRWA. Prevention and control of non-communicable diseases will also be impaired, leading to increased complication and hospitalisation rates and adding to the rise of catastrophic health expenditures.

HARM 2. Peace Process Derailed

A. Link: UNRWA cuts undermine efforts for a 2-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict

Letter from 102 members of the US House of Representatives 2018 (written by Rep. Peter Welch, congressman from Vermont, signed by 101 others) 8 Feb 2018 "102 House Members Urge President to Continue U.S. Assistance to Palestinians" <https://welch.house.gov/media-center/press-releases/102-house-members-urge-president-continue-us-assistance-palestinians>

“As strong supporters of the United States’ commitment to the security of the State of Israel and the safety and dignity of Israelis and Palestinians alike, we write to urge you to continue vital US contributions to the United Nations Relief Works Agency (UNRWA) and bilateral assistance to the Palestinians,” wrote the legislators. “Continuing to freeze this aid will harm American interests by exacerbating the threats facing both peoples and reducing the United States’ ability to help the Israelis and Palestinians reach a two-state solution.”

B. Impact: Terrorism and extremism. Without the 2-state solution, terror and extremism will escalate

United Nations press release 2015. " Two-State Solution Only Viable Way to Resolve Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, Secretary-General Tells International Meeting as It Opens in Moscow" 1 July 2015 <https://www.un.org/press/en/2015/gapal1336.doc.htm>

As a vicious tide of terror and extremism swept the Middle East, the international community must stay focused on resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the two-State solution as the only viable way to make that happen, United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said in his message to the United Nations International Meeting in Support of Israeli-Palestinian Peace, which opened this morning in Moscow.

HARM 3. Palestinian violence and regional instability

A letter to President Trump, signed by 102 members of the U.S. House of Representatives 2018 (Spearheaded by Rep. Peter Welch) 8 February 2018 “102 House Members Urge President to Continue U.S. Assistance to Palestinians” <https://welch.house.gov/media-center/press-releases/102-house-members-urge-president-continue-us-assistance-palestinians>

The Israeli Government deems UNRWA’s work providing basic services and education to Palestinian refugees so consequential for Israeli security that it has [reportedly](https://www.timesofisrael.com/netanyahu-urging-americans-not-to-cut-funding-for-unrwa-tv-report/) weighed in with your administration in support of maintaining US contributions to the agency, despite frequent criticism of it. Former Israel Defense Forces (IDF) Spokesperson Lieutenant Colonel (ret.) Peter Lerner wrote this month, “By weakening UNWRA and, consequentially, the Palestinian population even further, without a real administrative alternative, I believe that Palestinians will be even more susceptible to extremism and violence. This will not contribute to security or stability in the region.”

HARM 4. Starvation

NEW YORK TIMES 2018 (journalist David M. Halbfinger) 17 Jan 2018 U.S. Funding Cut Reignites Debate on Palestinian Refugee Agency <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/01/17/world/middleeast/palestinian-refugee-agency-unrwa.html?action=click&module=RelatedCoverage&pgtype=Article&region=Footer>

In the Khan Younis refugee camp in Gaza, Mahmoud Ferwana, 59, huddled beneath a flimsy nylon-and-sheet-metal roof while rain drenched the rest of his squalid home’s sandy floor. He earns money collecting broken stones; his children scavenge for copper. But none of it amounts to a living. The United Nations Relief and Works Agency is what reliably puts food in their mouths. If that aid were to stop, Mr. Ferwana said on Wednesday, “I and my children will die.” That aid, to Mr. Ferwana and more than five million other Palestinians living in refugee camps across the Middle East, is now endangered by what the agency’s leaders are calling the worst financial crisis in its seven-decade history.

OBSERVATION 4. The PLAN, to be enacted by Congress & the President

1. Fund UNRWA at a minimum of $360 million per year.

2. Funding from general federal revenues and up to 1% cut in the Dept. of Education.   
4. Enforcement through normal means, penalties for fraud or abuse the same as under existing law.  
5. Plan takes effect 7 days after an Affirmative ballot.  
And all Affirmative speeches may clarify.

OBSERVATION 5. SOLVENCY

A. UNRWA is the only way to solve for food, health care and violence among the refugees

NEW YORK TIMES 2018. (journalist David Halbfinger) 17 Jan 2018 U.S. Funding Cut Reignites Debate on Palestinian Refugee Agency <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/01/17/world/middleeast/palestinian-refugee-agency-unrwa.html?action=click&module=RelatedCoverage&pgtype=Article&region=Footer>

A similar question is being asked by some Israelis. “The perpetuation of Unrwa is not the dream of any peace-loving person in Israel,” said Yossi Beilin, a longtime Israeli politician who helped initiate the Oslo process. “But it really deals with the most important matters — food, health, education, for every family. “Only an ignorant person, like President Trump, who doesn’t understand the whole story, could say, ‘Tomorrow there is no Unrwa,’ because tomorrow, we will have to pay the price — either by violence if it erupts, or because of the need to help them. Who else will do that?”

B. Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu agrees: Stopping UNRWA cuts is key to preventing humanitarian disaster

The Times of Israel 2018 (Jerusalem-based online newspaper founded in 2012) 4 January 2018 “Netanyahu urging Americans not to cut funding for UNRWA — TV report” [Brackets in original] <https://www.timesofisrael.com/netanyahu-urging-americans-not-to-cut-funding-for-unrwa-tv-report/>

Concerned that a threatened cut in US funding for the UN’s Palestinian refugee agency UNRWA could lead to a humanitarian disaster in Gaza, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is privately urging the Trump Administration not to implement the threat, a TV report claimed Thursday. “Behind the scenes, the prime minister is now in contact with the Americans in order to prevent the massive cut [in US funding for UNRWA] — to prevent it, you heard right,” the Hadashot news report claimed.

2A Evidence: UNRWA

BACKGROUND

What UNRWA does and who it serves

Megan Specia 2018 (Megan Specia is a story editor on the International Desk of The New York Times, specializing in digital storytelling and breaking news.) 3 January 2018 “What Is Unrwa and What Would It Mean if Trump Cuts Its Funding?” <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/01/03/world/middleeast/what-is-unrwa-and-what-would-it-mean-if-trump-cuts-its-funding.html>

Unrwa mainly provides services and funding for those registered as Palestinian refugees in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria. (The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees is responsible for Palestinian refugees outside Unrwa’s areas of operation.) Nearly the entire population of the Gaza Strip receives aid from Unrwa. The agency acts almost as a de facto government there, responsible for the majority of schools, health care facilities and some public services.

INHERENCY

U.S. is largest UNRWA donor

Reuters news service 2018 ( journalist Stephanie Nebehay) 30 January 2018 “U.N. Palestinian aid agency gets cash injection after Trump cuts” <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-palestinians-aid/u-n-palestinian-aid-agency-gets-cash-injection-after-trump-cuts-idUSKBN1FJ2JO>

UNRWA is supported almost entirely by voluntary contributions from states and the United States is the largest contributor. U.S. President Donald Trump has questioned the value of such funding, and the U.S. State Department said UNRWA needed to make unspecified reforms.

US cuts are the biggest financial crisis in UNRWA history

CNN 2018 (journalist Tamara Qiblawi)17 January 2018 “UN Palestinian aid agency says US cuts spark worst-ever financial crisis” <https://www.cnn.com/2018/01/17/middleeast/un-palestinian-aid-agency-funding-cuts-intl/index.html>

The UN agency tasked with assisting Palestinian refugees says the Trump administration's decision to cut funds to the organization has sparked its largest-ever financial crisis. The decision drew condemnation from Palestinians, praise from Israel, and expressions of deep concern from UN officials and refugee groups. It came two weeks after US President Donald Trump raised the prospect of cutting US aid to Palestinians in a series of tweets. The United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) will launch a global fundraising campaign to fill in budget gaps left behind by the US administration's decision to withhold $65 million, roughly half of the amount it was due to receive from the US this month. "It's the most serious financial crisis in UNRWA's 70-year history," said UNRWA spokesman Christopher Gunness.

A/T "Other countries replace US money" – Not enough, still have big funding gap

Christina Maza 2018 (award-winning journalist; previously worked as a reporter for the Phnom Penh Post in Cambodia, and as a reporting fellow covering energy and cybersecurity for the Christian Science Monitor in Washington) 30 March 2018 “TRUMP'S REFUGEE FUNDING CUT COULD CAUSE AN 'EXPLOSIVE SITUATION' IN THE MIDDLE EAST, U.N. OFFICIALS SAY” <http://www.newsweek.com/trumps-refugees-funding-cut-could-cause-explosive-situation-middle-east-un-906215>

In response to the U.S. funding cut, other players have stepped up to the plate and provided UNRWA with more support than usual. Saudi Arabia, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates have all donated $50 million to UNRWA's budget, officials said Monday.[Canada started giving UNRWA's money again](https://www.jpost.com/Israel-News/Politics-And-Diplomacy/After-six-years-Canada-resumes-funding-for-UNRWA-473000) for the first time in six years, pledging $25 million. [Belgium](https://www.jpost.com/International/Belgium-Netherlands-to-supplement-UNRWA-funds-cut-by-US-539324), India, Mexico, New Zealand, the Netherlands and Korea also have increased donations. Nevertheless, the funding gap is still substantial.

$290 million shortfall

Chloé Benoist 2018 (French journalist who has been based in the Middle East since 2011, and is currently working in the West Bank) 19 March 2018 “Sixty-eight years of temporary aid – the curious case of UNRWA” <https://www.equaltimes.org/sixty-eight-years-of-temporary-aid?lang=en#.WyqAdqdKg2x>

The recurring budgetary problems since the 1970s have left UNRWA in a perpetual quest for funds, as Gunness indicates that the organisation was already US$150 million in deficit prior to Trump’s announcement. As of early February, the organisation’s deficit stood at $290 million – although some countries such as Iceland and Belgium have since pledged to increase their donations to the agency.

Iceland gave $1 million

UNRWA 2018 (UNRWA is a United Nations agency mandated to provide assistance and protection to some 5.4 million Palestine refugees) 7 February 2018 “UNRWA and Iceland Sign First Ever Multi-Year Agreement in the Total Value of US$ 1 Million” <https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/unrwa-and-iceland-sign-first-ever-multi-year-agreement-total>

Today, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and Iceland signed a multi-year framework agreement that will see Iceland contribute ISK 25 million (approximately US$ 250,000) per year to support UNRWA human development work over the period between 2018 and 2021 for a total of US$ 1 million.

Belgium gave $23 million

Al Jazeera News 2018 (Al Jazeera Media Network has more than 3,000 highly experienced staff from over 70 nationalities18 January 2018 “Belgium pledges $23m to UNRWA after US aid cut” <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/01/belgium-pledges-23m-unrwa-aid-cut-180118081044623.html>

[Belgium](https://www.aljazeera.com/topics/country/belgium.html) has pledged to donate 19m euro ($23m) to UNRWA, the UN's aid organisation for Palestinian refugees, after the US government announced it would slash its funding to the agency by half.

50% cut for “unspecified reforms”

Rosie Perper 2018 (Journalist for Business Insider) 22 January 2018 “A UN aid group alleges the US won't allow its money to go toward helping refugees in Syria and Lebanon” <http://www.businessinsider.com/unrwa-us-aid-for-refugees-in-syria-and-lebanon-2018-1>

Last week, the US announced it would [cut its aid to UNRWA by half](http://www.businessinsider.com/us-65-million-in-aid-cuts-to-palestinian-refugee-group-unwra-will-affect-millions-2018-1), and pledged $60 million to the group. The US State Department said it was withholding another $65 million from the group until it made "unspecified reforms."

Geographical limitations on spending

Jim Zanotti 2018 (Specialist in Middle Eastern Affairs for the Congressional Research Service) 18 May 2018“U.S. Foreign Aid to the Palestinians” <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/RS22967.pdf>

The Administration, for the first time, placed a geographical limitation on a contribution to UNRWA, stating that the $60 million could only be used for eligible Palestine refugees registered with UNRWA in Gaza, Jordan, and the West Bank (Lebanon and Syria were not mentioned).

MINOR REPAIR / COUNTERPLAN RESPONSES

A/T “Reform UNRWA or Wait for funding pressure reforms to work” – Israel opposes using aid cuts to pressure reform because it won't work

Steven J. Rosen 2015 (Director of the Washington Project of the Middle East Forum. From 1982 to 2005, he was a senior official of the pro-Israel lobby AIPAC, the American Israel Public Affairs Committee.) 15 March 2015“Why Has the U.S. Congress Done So Little About UNRWA” <https://www.meforum.org/articles/2015/why-has-the-u-s-congress-done-so-little-about-unr#_ftn10>

The U.S. Congress can try to influence UNRWA through "soft power," by holding hearings, issuing sense-of-Congress resolutions, and making individual statements— shining a light on UNRWA's shortcomings to embarrass the agency and call attention to its faults. On occasion, this process of shaming UNRWA has had some effect, but overall soft power has not been enough to remedy its deep-seated problems. The more effective lever that Congress could use to influence UNRWA, its "hard power," is the threat to reduce or suspend United States financial assistance if Congressional conditions are not met. Conditioning aid does work, albeit imperfectly, in the one piece of UNRWA reform legislation that was enacted into law, Section 301(c) of the Foreign Assistance Act, prohibiting aid if the agency supports terror in any way. But, with the exception of Section 301(c), this most effective form of pressure—conditioning aid—is exactly what Israel quietly opposes. That is the main reason that most of the UNRWA reform initiatives described in the Appendix did not have the support they needed and therefore died without enactment.

A/T “UNHCR instead” – Not a viable solution

Shira Efron 2018 (associate policy researcher at the nonprofit, nonpartisan RAND Corporation, a special advisor on Israel with RAND's Center for Middle East Public Policy and a professor at the Pardee RAND Graduate School.) 5 March 2018 “Gaza on the Brink” <https://www.usnews.com/opinion/world-report/articles/2018-03-05/cutting-unrwa-funding-could-put-gaza-on-the-brink-and-backfire-at-israel>

First, transferring responsibility from UNRWA to UNHCR is not a feasible proposition, not in the short-run. The agencies work under distinct mandates, different operational and legal definitions, areas of operation, and operational realities, and any change in their definition would require long-term planning. While UNRWA could be reformed, a change in its mandate would require a decision by UN member states. Moreover, it is not clear at all that UNHCR would address the Palestinian refugee problem in a different way than UNRWA. In its handbooks UNHCR [indicates](http://www.unhcr.org/publ/PUBL/3bfe68d32.pdf)that it favors "enabling a refugee to exercise the right to return home in safety and with dignity," and [explains](http://www.unhcr.org/4d93528a9.pdf) that dependents of refugees are granted refugee status as well, making this is a hereditary issue just like UNRWA.

A/T “UNHCR instead” – UNRWA’s uniqueness saves money. Using any other agency would double the cost

Shira Efron 2018 (associate policy researcher at the nonprofit, nonpartisan RAND Corporation, a special advisor on Israel with RAND's Center for Middle East Public Policy and a professor at the Pardee RAND Graduate School.) 5 March 2018 “Gaza on the Brink” <https://www.usnews.com/opinion/world-report/articles/2018-03-05/cutting-unrwa-funding-could-put-gaza-on-the-brink-and-backfire-at-israel>

While theoretically, a comprehensive plan to integrate the two UN's refugee relief services could work in countries such as Lebanon and Jordan, where UNHCR is present and serves millions of refugees in parallel to UNRWA, this is not a viable present option in Gaza. In the Strip, UNRWA fulfills not only the role of UNHCR but also that other international organizations such as the World Health Organization and the World Food Programme fulfill in other contexts. They also do it for a fraction of the price. If UNHCR, WHO, WFP and others were to be tasked to fill the gap in UNRWA's absence, the bill would at least double. Although problematic, UNRWA's clinics and network are thus best equipped to deliver minimal services and lower the risk of disease outbreak there.

SOLVENCY / ADVOCACY

Dept of Education budget is $70 billion/year. (1% cut = $700 million)

EDUCATION WEEK 2018. (journalist Andrew Ujifusa) 22 March 2018 " Congress Wants a Record High for Education Spending. But That's Only on Paper" <http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/campaign-k-12/2018/03/congress_wants_a_record_high_for_education_funding_but_only_paper_trump_cut.html>

The omnibus federal spending bill released Wednesday would increase the U.S. Department of Education's discretionary budget by $2.6 billion over current enacted levels, bringing the budget up to $70.9 billion for fiscal 2018. It's the first time in its history that the department's discretionary budget has topped $70 billion, if you leave out the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (also known as the federal stimulus). Contrast that with Trump's request to cut the department's budget by over 13 percent for fiscal 2018, which would have been the single-biggest cut by percentage in the department's history.

102 members of the US House of Representatives advocate the AFF plan

Rep. Peter Welch 2018 (congressman from Vermont) 8 Feb 2018 "102 House Members Urge President to Continue U.S. Assistance to Palestinians" <https://welch.house.gov/media-center/press-releases/102-house-members-urge-president-continue-us-assistance-palestinians>

Today, Rep. Peter Welch (D-Vt.) and Rep. David Price (D-N.C.), joined by 100 House colleagues, sent a [letter](https://welch.house.gov/sites/welch.house.gov/files/FINAL%20Ltr%20to%20Trump%20re.%20Palestinian%20Aid.pdf) to President Trump urging him to continue United States funding for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) and bilateral assistance to the Palestinians. The letter follows a recent Trump Administration decision to cut U.S. contributions to UNRWA by 83%, an organization which provides critical life-saving services to Palestinian refugees in the region.

Israeli Foreign Ministry and Israeli defense officials oppose UNRWA cut

The Times of Israel 2018 (The Times of Israel is a Jerusalem-based online newspaper founded in 2012 to document developments in Israel, the Middle East and around the Jewish world.) 4 January 2018 “Netanyahu urging Americans not to cut funding for UNRWA — TV report” <https://www.timesofisrael.com/netanyahu-urging-americans-not-to-cut-funding-for-unrwa-tv-report/> (brackets added)

The Foreign Ministry, the report added, flatly opposes the idea of cutting UNRWA’s funding. “Professional sources in the Foreign Ministry are ‘determinedly opposed’ to ending aid to UNRWA,” it said, quoting these sources as arguing that a cut would “make matters worse” and could lead to a “humanitarian catastrophe, especially in Gaza.” IDF [Israel Defense Force] sources, the report further said, “also think it will hurt, not help.”

HARMS / SIGNIFICANCE

General Harm / Quantification Backup

UNRWA serves 5 million people

Colum Lynch and Emily Tamkin 2017 (Lynch is Foreign Policy’s award-winning U.N.-based senior diplomatic reporter. Tamkin is a staff writer at Foreign Policy covering ambassadorial and diplomatic affairs in Washington) 24 August 2017 “U.S Vows to Fund a U.N. Agency For Palestinian Refugees Israeli Leader Wants Shuttered” <http://foreignpolicy.com/2017/08/24/u-s-vows-to-fund-a-u-n-agency-for-palestinian-refugees-israeli-leader-wants-shuttered/>

UNRWA was established nearly seventy years ago, after the 1948 Arab-Israeli war, to aid the more than 700,000 Palestinians displaced by the conflict. Today, it provides food, education and other services to for more than 5 million Palestinian refugees in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria, including a corps of more than 30,000 school teachers who serve more than half a million children.

UNRWA's budget is $1.2 billion to $1.3 billion and assists 5.3 million refugees in 4 countries + 2 Palestinian territories

United Nations Regional Information Centre 2018 (UNRIC works with all stake holders in Europe - the European Union institutions, governments, all segments of the civil society and of course the media.) 1 February 2018 “The hope that UNRWA has kept alive is at risk” <https://www.unric.org/en/latest-un-buzz/30952-the-hope-that-unrwa-has-kept-alive-is-at-risk->

The annual budget of UNRWA, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, is  $1.2- 1.3 billion. UNRWA is responsible for the provision of assistance and protection of 5.3 million Palestine refugees in Lebanon, Syria, Jordan Lebanon, the West bank and the Gaza strip.

50% of children below poverty line in Palestinian territories

A letter to President Trump, signed by 102 members of the U.S. House of Representatives 2018 (by Rep. Peter Welch, D-Vermont) 8 Feb 2018 “102 House Members Urge President to Continue U.S. Assistance to Palestinians” <https://welch.house.gov/media-center/press-releases/102-house-members-urge-president-continue-us-assistance-palestinians>

Alongside robust and expanding US aid to Israel, Congress has regularly appropriated funds to help bolster Palestinian quality of life and governance, both bilaterally and through contributions to UNRWA, and security in the region. This assistance also helps to improve the lives of millions of children in the Palestinian territories, where more than 50 percent of children live below the poverty line.

UNRWA is key to food, schools and dignity of Palestinians, and threatens regional security as we face risk of radicalization

Rosie Perper 2018 (Journalist for Business Insider) 17 January 2018 “The US suspended $65 million in aid to the Palestinian aid group UNRWA — and it could affect millions of lives” <http://www.businessinsider.com/us-65-million-in-aid-cuts-to-palestinian-refugee-group-unwra-will-affect-millions-2018-1> (ellipses in original)

According to UNRWA Commissioner-General Pierre Krähenbühl, the US' aid cuts to UNRWA is likely to jeopardize the education and security of the millions of Palestinian refugees that benefit from aid programs. "At stake is the access of 525,000 boys and girls in 700 UNRWA schools, and their future ... the human security of millions of Palestine refugees, in need of emergency food assistance and other support in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, and the West Bank and Gaza Strip ... and the dignity of an entire community," Krähenbühl told Business Insider in a statement. Krähenbühl added that the US' decision will also impact the security of the region at large, at a time when "the Middle East faces multiple risks and threats, notably that of further radicalization."

Millions of lives at risk from US aid cuts, and regional stability will be at risk

Scott Anderson 2018 (director of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) in the West Bank and previous deputy director of UNRWA in Gaza.) 2 February 2018 “The Unintended Consequences of Trump’s Palestinian Budget Cuts” <http://foreignpolicy.com/2018/02/02/the-unintended-consequences-of-trumps-palestinian-budget-cuts/>

If the U.S. government fails to follow through on the generous support it has always provided to the Palestinian refugees we serve, not only will our operations be at stake, but millions of lives will also be in danger — and the very stability of an already volatile region will be at risk.

Ambassador Richard Murphy says: UNRWA provides 80% of basic needs in Gaza, unrest could follow cuts

Christina Maza 2018 (award-winning journalist who has reported from countries such as Cambodia, Kyrgyzstan, India, Lithuania, Serbia, and Turkey; quoting Ambassador Richard Murphy, a retired career diplomat who spent decades working on the Middle East) 30 March 2018 “TRUMP'S REFUGEE FUNDING CUT COULD CAUSE AN 'EXPLOSIVE SITUATION' IN THE MIDDLE EAST, U.N. OFFICIALS SAY” [Brackets in original] <http://www.newsweek.com/trumps-refugees-funding-cut-could-cause-explosive-situation-middle-east-un-906215>

“A lack of a permanent political solution [to the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians] is what makes UNRWA necessary,” ambassador Murphy said. “Gaza is 80 percent dependent on UNRWA for its basic needs. The place will be unlivable by 2020, and that’s very soon. The level of tension and frustration this is building towards could lead to further unrest.”

Harm 1 – Public Health Risk

Disease outbreak in Gaza is serious threat and they don’t have the means to avoid it

Shira Efron 2018 (associate policy researcher at the nonprofit, nonpartisan RAND Corporation, a special advisor on Israel with RAND's Center for Middle East Public Policy and a professor at the Pardee RAND Graduate School.) 5 March 2018 “Gaza on the Brink” <https://www.usnews.com/opinion/world-report/articles/2018-03-05/cutting-unrwa-funding-could-put-gaza-on-the-brink-and-backfire-at-israel>

In addition to [dangerous chemical contamination](http://file.scirp.org/pdf/JWARP_2013012511054871.pdf), the risk of biological diseases, and specifically of a [cholera outbreak](http://www.jpost.com/Arab-Israeli-Conflict/Gaza-sewage-crisis-is-a-ticking-timebomb-for-Israel-448335), is real. Gaza has perfect storm conditions for this scenario – population density, mass gatherings, low access to safe water and poor sanitation. Addressing a cholera epidemic in real-time requires a rapid response and treatment plan, which includes rehydration, access to clean water, safe food and hygiene practices in homes, refugee camps and hospitals. Such options are currently not viable in Gaza.

Gaza hospitals are in crisis. Any disease outbreak could easily spread into Israel

Shira Efron 2018 (associate policy researcher at the nonprofit, nonpartisan RAND Corporation, a special advisor on Israel with RAND's Center for Middle East Public Policy and a professor at the Pardee RAND Graduate School.) 5 March 2018 “Gaza on the Brink” <https://www.usnews.com/opinion/world-report/articles/2018-03-05/cutting-unrwa-funding-could-put-gaza-on-the-brink-and-backfire-at-israel>

To cope with the current electricity and water crises hospitals have recently [reduced cleaning and sterilizing](https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-impact-internal-palestinian-divide-gaza-strip-june-2017) of medical facilities. Having not been paid their salaries in months, the 835 cleaning workers at the Gaza Strip's hospitals are on strike, meaning that garbage is piling up and treatments are delayed. Gaza's hospitals run on generators [vulnerable](https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2018/02/gaza-hospital-workers-salaries-qatar-grant.html) to a limited fuel supply and an estimated 36 percent of essential medicines and 32 percent of medical supplies are [missing](https://www.ochaopt.org/content/monthly-humanitarian-bulletin-july-2017). In addition, the complex political situation and the lack of direct communication between all the parties involved could hinder any effective communication needed to deliver emergency aid, medicine and electricity. Israel has developed sophisticated technology to defend itself from [rockets](https://www.cnn.com/2014/07/09/world/meast/israel-palestinians-iron-dome/index.html) and [tunnels](https://www.npr.org/sections/parallels/2018/01/24/579180146/israel-speeds-up-underground-border-wall-to-block-gaza-tunnels), but it cannot block the spread of a disease into its territory.

UNRWA successfully provides cost-effective health care

Alastair Ager, Mohamad Alameddine, Sophie Witter, Fouad M Fouad, Karin Diaconu, Zeina Jamal, & Graham Lough 2018 (Ager, Witter, Diaconu & Lough: Institute for Global Health & Development, Queen Margaret University, Alameddine, Fouad, and Jamal: Faculty of Health Science, American Univ. of Beirut, Lebanon. This work is informed by ongoing research funded by Elrha's Research for Health in Humanitarian Crises Programme.) 31 March 2018 “In support of UNRWA appeal for health and dignity of Palestinian refugees” <https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(18)30568-3/fulltext>

UNRWA offers a well designed, cost-effective, integrated package of primary health care with a strong focus on prevention. Despite spending only US$31·22 per capita per year on health, UNRWA secures good health outcomes for the population it covers.The organisation provides comprehensive reproductive, maternal, and child care (reductions in maternal mortality and morbidity are notable) and ensures successful communicable and non-communicable disease management via immunisation programmes (99·9% agency-wide coverage for diphtheria and tetanus vaccination among targeted youth) and screening campaigns (targeted screening for diabetes, hypertension, and cancer).

Harm 2 – Derails Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process

UNRWA cuts hurt efforts to solve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, increasing destructive extremism

A letter to President Trump, signed by 102 members of the U.S. House of Representatives 2018 (Spearheaded by Rep. Peter Welch) 8 February 2018 “102 House Members Urge President to Continue U.S. Assistance to Palestinians” <https://welch.house.gov/media-center/press-releases/102-house-members-urge-president-continue-us-assistance-palestinians>

The deterioration in the near-term prospects for progress toward a negotiated peaceful resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict would render a cut-off of US assistance all the more dangerous. Deliberately exacerbating the hardship of the Palestinian people and reducing the ability of their government to function would only contribute to the benefit of those who reject engagement. Extremist and anti-Israel groups would be all too eager to fill in the vacuum, deepening their hold in the region and expanding their destructive influence on the prospects for a peaceful resolution of the conflict.

Harm 3 – Violence & Regional Instability

Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu admits: UNRWA is needed in Gaza and West Bank to avoid destabilization of the security situation

Barak Ravid 2018 (Diplomatic correspondent for Israel's Channel 10 news) 8 March 2018 “Netanyahu wants to transfer part of UNRWA funding to Jordan” <https://www.axios.com/netanyahu-wants-to-transfer-part-of-unrwa-funding-to-jordan-1520536468-431459ab-afa2-4b03-87ae-19c126b76e14.html>

Israeli officials say that there is one part of UNRWA operations that Netanyahu wants to continue — the humanitarian services to Palestinian refugees in Gaza and the West Bank. Netanyahu told Trump administration officials he doesn’t want the U.S funding cuts to UNRWA to negatively affect those services. Netanyahu's position was based on that of the IDF and other Israeli security agencies, which state that there is no alternative at the moment to UNRWA in the West Bank and Gaza. Israeli security officials say UNRWA provides 1 million meals to Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza and no other organization can do that today. They're concerned that UNRWA's collapse might lead to a vacuum and destabilization of the security situation.

Impact of terrorism: Destruction of productive resources

Sean Ross 2016 (Sean Ross is Director of Business Development at Financial Poise™, an education and training website for investors, attorneys, accountants, and business owners/executives. He also operates an independent business consulting and writing practice. Mr. Ross earned degrees in Economics and Political Economy from Regis University, where he specialized in monetary policy and theory. Sean previously worked as a bankruptcy specialist, consultant, broker and financial advisor.) 21 August 2016 “Top 5 Ways Terrorism Impacts the Economy”<https://www.investopedia.com/articles/markets/080216/top-5-ways-terrorism-impacts-economy.asp>

The impact of terrorism and war is always negative for the economy, and physical destruction is a large reason why. Productive resources that might have generated valuable goods and services are destroyed, while other resources are almost invariably diverted from other productive uses to bolster the military and defense. None of this creates wealth or adds to the standard of living, even though military spending is often erroneously cited as a stimulant; this is the "[broken window fallacy](https://www.investopedia.com/ask/answers/08/broken-window-fallacy.asp)" sometimes mentioned by economists.

UNRWA promotes comparative stability

Steven J. Rosen 2015 (Steven J. Rosen is Director of the Washington Project of the Middle East Forum. From 1982 to 2005, he was a senior official of the pro-Israel lobby AIPAC, the American Israel Public Affairs Committee.) 15 March 2015“Why Has the U.S. Congress Done So Little About UNRWA” <https://www.meforum.org/articles/2015/why-has-the-u-s-congress-done-so-little-about-unr#_ftn10>

This seemingly adversarial relationship between UNRWA and Israel obscures a deeper reality well known to those most directly involved on the ground. Deeply flawed as the agency is, Israel depends on UNRWA as an element promoting stability in the West Bank and Gaza, a vital strategic objective for the Jewish State.

Cuts undermine stability

A letter to President Trump, signed by 102 members of the U.S. House of Representatives 2018 (Spearheaded by Rep. Peter Welch) 8 February 2018 “102 House Members Urge President to Continue U.S. Assistance to Palestinians” <https://welch.house.gov/media-center/press-releases/102-house-members-urge-president-continue-us-assistance-palestinians>

Similarly, US-funded projects to help meet the essential needs of the Palestinian people and strengthen institutions of Palestinian civil society help fight instability and corruption. This vital US assistance provides for the maintenance of security and stability for Israelis and Palestinians against attacks by extremist forces. As one Israeli security official said speaking on the condition of anonymity this month, “Cutting funding would not bring anything good to the situation. Doing this would end up making the Palestinian leadership even weaker.”

Cost-effectiveness: Preemption is better than response

Scott Anderson 2018 (director of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) in the West Bank and previous deputy director of UNRWA in Gaza.) 2 February 2018 “The Unintended Consequences of Trump’s Palestinian Budget Cuts” <http://foreignpolicy.com/2018/02/02/the-unintended-consequences-of-trumps-palestinian-budget-cuts/>

When I was 19, I left the farm I grew up on in Iowa to serve in the U.S. Army, which I did proudly for 21 years. Soon after I left the military, I decided to continue public service — this time with the United Nations. For the last decade, I have worked in Gaza and the West Bank as a member of the U. N. Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), which provides humanitarian and human development services to the refugees of Palestine. In both the military and in the Middle East, I have seen firsthand how instability can harm societies and cultures. It is much more cost-efficient to preempt instability than to have to address it once the situation is deteriorating; it also saves lives.

Without UNRWA's services, things will explode

Colum Lynch and Emily Tamkin 2017 (Lynch is Foreign Policy’s award-winning U.N.-based senior diplomatic reporter. Emily Tamkin is a staff writer at Foreign Policy covering ambassadorial and diplomatic affairs in Washington) 24 August 2017 “U.S Vows to Fund a U.N. Agency For Palestinian Refugees Israeli Leader Wants Shuttered” <http://foreignpolicy.com/2017/08/24/u-s-vows-to-fund-a-u-n-agency-for-palestinian-refugees-israeli-leader-wants-shuttered/>

Hady Amr, the former State Department official, said while he wouldn’t dismiss the calls for the agency’s closure as mere “bluster,” Israel also needs UNRWA. “It provides critical services,” he said, “without which the West Bank and Gaza would explode.”

Extra Optional Harm/Advantage: Jordanian (in)stability

Link: Jordan has two million refugees

Megan Specia 2018 (story editor on the International Desk of The New York Times.) 3 January 2018 “What Is Unrwa and What Would It Mean if Trump Cuts Its Funding?” <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/01/03/world/middleeast/what-is-unrwa-and-what-would-it-mean-if-trump-cuts-its-funding.html>

In Jordan, which hosts more than two million registered Palestinian refugees, hosts the largest number of people who are provided aid by Unrwa.

Internal link: US Palestinian aid cuts heighten instability in Jordan

Associated Press 2018 16 January 2018 “What's at stake if Trump cuts funding to Palestinians?” <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/palestinian-refugees-donald-trump-funding-unrwa-un-middle-east/>

U.S. aid cuts could heighten the threat of instability in Jordan, which is grappling with a worsening economy hurt by the spillover from conflict in neighboring Syria and Iraq. More than one-third of Jordan's young people are without jobs, turning them into potential targets for recruitment by extremists.

Link: U.S. loses an ally

Ted R. Bromund 2015 (Senior Research Fellow in Anglo-American Relations. Ted Bromund studies Anglo-American relations, U.S. relations with Europe and the EU, and the U.S.’s leadership role in the world.) 10 February 2015 “In the Middle East, let's support our friends” <https://www.heritage.org/global-politics/commentary/the-middle-east-lets-support-our-friends>

This is a case of back him or sack him. In 2011, we tried sacking them. We bombed Mohammar Gaddafi out of power in Libya, and cheered the overthrow of Hosni Mubarak in Egypt. Libya is now a chaotic disaster, and Egypt is more autocratic than ever. Jordan is not perfect, but it's been an ally, and if it fell, we'd miss it. Those are the right reasons to back it now.

Impact: Jordan is an important Middle Eastern ally – helps us fight terrorists

Ted R. Bromund 2015 (Ted R. Bromund is a Senior Research Fellow in Anglo-American Relations. Ted Bromund studies Anglo-American relations, U.S. relations with Europe and the EU, and the U.S.’s leadership role in the world.) 10 February 2015 “In the Middle East, let's support our friends” <https://www.heritage.org/global-politics/commentary/the-middle-east-lets-support-our-friends>

And it's a longtime U.S. ally. We've armed Jordan since the 1960s. We concluded a free-trade agreement with it in 2001, an unmistakable sign of our support. When a U.S. airstrike killed the terrorist leader Abu Musab al-Zarqawi in Iraq in 2006, we were reportedly acting on information provided by Jordan.

DISADVANTAGE RESPONSES

A/T “UNRWA supports terrorism” – Current law solves

Jim Zanotti 2018 (Specialist in Middle Eastern Affairs for the Congressional Research Service) 18 May 2018“U.S. Foreign Aid to the Palestinians” [Brackets in original text] <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/RS22967.pdf>

Some Members of Congress raise concerns that U.S. contributions to UNRWA might be used to support terrorists. Section 301(c) of the 1961 Foreign Assistance Act (P.L. 87-195), as amended, says that “No contributions by the United States shall be made to [UNRWA] except on the condition that [UNRWA] take[s] all possible measures to assure that no part of the United States contribution shall be used to furnish assistance to any refugee who is receiving military training as a member of the so-called Palestine Liberation Army or any other guerrilla type organization or who has engaged in any act of terrorism.”

A/T “UNRWA supports terrorism” – Fringe empirics

Jim Zanotti 2018 (Specialist in Middle Eastern Affairs for the Congressional Research Service) 18 May 2018“U.S. Foreign Aid to the Palestinians” <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/RS22967.pdf>

To date, no arm of the U.S. government has found UNRWA to be out of compliance with Section 301(c). For 2010 and each year thereafter, the State Department and UNRWA have had a nonbinding “Framework for Cooperation” in place. Each of the documents has agreed that, along with the compliance reports UNRWA submits to State biannually, State would use enumerated criteria as a way to evaluate UNRWA’s compliance with Section 301(c).61

A/T "UNRWA Education promotes anti-Semitism / terrorism" – But it's the lesser of two evils. Non-UNRWA schools are even worse

Baruch Spiegel 2012 (retired brigadier general in the Israel Defense Forces and former deputy head of the office of the Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories, who served as a senior consultant for several Israeli ministers of defense and as special advisor for regional affairs for President Shimon Peres) Middle East Quarterly Fall 2012 Volume 19: Number 1 September 2012 “Jerusalem's Surprisingly Good Relations with UNRWA” <https://www.meforum.org/articles/2012/jerusalem-s-surprisingly-good-relations-with-unrwa#_ftn4>

One sphere of extensive cooperation has been in the area of education where UNRWA claims to serve the educational needs of 213,000 Gazan children and 52,633 pupils in the West Bank. Despite COGAT's recent permission to launch 110 new construction sites, including schools and health clinics, UNRWA still lamented: "Years of underfunding have left the education system in Gaza overstretched, with 94 percent of schools operating on a double-shift basis, hosting one 'school' of students in the morning and a different group in the afternoon." However, Israel is not involved in UNRWA's internal technical issues. In addition, the agency is seeking to implement a "Special Children, Special Needs" program to provide dedicated teams of pediatricians, nurses, and counselors to address medical problems, psychosocial issues, and socioeconomic challenges of the estimated 13,000 special-needs children; it also announced a project to promote basic human rights, teaching "nonviolence … conflict resolution and … the importance of tolerance." The Israeli government supports these educational programs because it is strongly averse to the other alternative: Palestinian children attending Hamas schools in both Gaza and the West Banks. Jerusalem believes that, for all of Hamas' penetration of the UNRWA school system, children educated in UNRWA's schools are indoctrinated to a lesser extent with anti-Israel and anti-Semitic hatred than those attending Hamas' own schools,  which appear to be little more than hotbeds for terrorism and violence.

A/T “Corruption” – U.S. officials are satisfied

Tamara Qiblawi 2018 (Journalist for CNN) 17 January 2018 “UN Palestinian aid agency says US cuts spark worst-ever financial crisis” <https://www.cnn.com/2018/01/17/middleeast/un-palestinian-aid-agency-funding-cuts-intl/index.html>

Asked whether the US had signaled any desire for reform to the UN agency, UNRWA spokesperson Christopher Gunness said: "The US government has consistently commended UNRWA's high impact, transparency and accountability."

He said that in the latest meetings UNRWA chief Pierre Krähenbühl held in Washington last November, "every senior US official he met expressed respect for UNRWA's role and for the robustness of its management."

Works Cited

1. A letter to President Trump, signed by 102 members of the U.S. House of Representatives 2018 (Spearheaded by Rep. Peter Welch) 8 February 2018 “102 House Members Urge President to Continue U.S. Assistance to Palestinians” https://welch.house.gov/media-center/press-releases/102-house-members-urge-president-continue-us-assistance-palestinians
2. Al Jazeera News 2018 (Al Jazeera Media Network has more than 3,000 highly experienced staff from over 70 nationalities, making our newsrooms the most diverse in the world.) 18 January 2018 “Belgium pledges $23m to UNRWA after US aid cut” https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/01/belgium-pledges-23m-unrwa-aid-cut-180118081044623.html
3. Alastair Ager, Mohamad Alameddine, Sophie Witter, Fouad M Fouad, Karin Diaconu, Zeina Jamal, & Graham Lough 2018 (Ager, Witter, Diaconu & Lough: Institute for Global Health & Development, Queen Margaret University, Alameddine, Fouad, and Jamal: Faculty of Health Science, American University of Beirut, Beirut, Lebanon. This work is informed by ongoing research funded by Elrha's Research for Health in Humanitarian Crises (R2HC) Programme. The R2HC programme aims to improve health outcomes by strengthening the evidence base for public health interventions in humanitarian crises. The R2HC programme is funded equally by the Wellcome Trust and the UK Department for International Development, with Elrha overseeing the programme's execution and management. AA is Deputy Chief Scientific Adviser to the UK Department for International Development. We declare no other competing interests.) 31 March 2018 “In support of UNRWA appeal for health and dignity of Palestinian refugees” https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(18)30568-3/fulltext
4. Barak Ravid 2018 (Diplomatic correspondent for Israel's Channel 10 news) 8 March 2018 “Netanyahu wants to transfer part of UNRWA funding to Jordan” https://www.axios.com/netanyahu-wants-to-transfer-part-of-unrwa-funding-to-jordan-1520536468-431459ab-afa2-4b03-87ae-19c126b76e14.html
5. Baruch Spiegel 2012 (Baruch Spiegel is a retired brigadier general in the Israel Defense Forces and former deputy head of the office of the Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories, who served as a senior consultant for several Israeli ministers of defense and as special advisor for regional affairs for President Shimon Peres. Published in the Middle East Quarterly Fall 2012 Volume 19: Number) 1 September 2012 “Jerusalem's Surprisingly Good Relations with UNRWA” https://www.meforum.org/articles/2012/jerusalem-s-surprisingly-good-relations-with-unrwa#\_ftn4
6. Britannica copyright 2018 https://www.britannica.com/topic/foreign-aid
7. CBS News 2018 (Article written by the Associated Press) 16 January 2018 “What's at stake if Trump cuts funding to Palestinians?” https://www.cbsnews.com/news/palestinian-refugees-donald-trump-funding-unrwa-un-middle-east/
8. Chloé Benoist 2018 (Chloé Benoist is a French journalist who has been based in the Middle East since 2011, and is currently working in the West Bank. She writes mostly about politics and social justice.) 19 March 2018 “Sixty-eight years of temporary aid – the curious case of UNRWA” https://www.equaltimes.org/sixty-eight-years-of-temporary-aid?lang=en#.WyqAdqdKg2x
9. Christina Maza 2018 (Cristina Maza is an award-winning journalist who has reported from countries such as Cambodia, Kyrgyzstan, India, Lithuania, Serbia, and Turkey. She previously worked as a reporter for the Phnom Penh Post in Cambodia, and as a reporting fellow covering energy and cybersecurity for the Christian Science Monitor in Washington D.C. She writes frequently about international affairs, politics, global development, religion, defense, and cybersecurity. Ambassador Richard Murphy, a retired career diplomat who spent decades working on the Middle East) 30 March 2018 “TRUMP'S REFUGEE FUNDING CUT COULD CAUSE AN 'EXPLOSIVE SITUATION' IN THE MIDDLE EAST, U.N. OFFICIALS SAY” [Brackets in original text] http://www.newsweek.com/trumps-refugees-funding-cut-could-cause-explosive-situation-middle-east-un-906215
10. Colum Lynch and Emily Tamkin 2017 (Colum Lynch is Foreign Policy’s award-winning U.N.-based senior diplomatic reporter. Emily Tamkin is a staff writer at Foreign Policy covering ambassadorial and diplomatic affairs in Washington) 24 August 2017 “U.S Vows to Fund a U.N. Agency For Palestinian Refugees Israeli Leader Wants Shuttered” http://foreignpolicy.com/2017/08/24/u-s-vows-to-fund-a-u-n-agency-for-palestinian-refugees-israeli-leader-wants-shuttered/
11. Deutsche Welle 2018 (Deutsche Welle is Germany’s international broadcaster. We convey a comprehensive image of Germany, report events and developments, incorporate German and other perspectives in a journalistically independent manner. By doing so we promote understanding between cultures and peoples. We simultaneously also provide access to the German language.) 30 January 2018 “Germany and other donors speed up funding for Palestinians after US aid cut” http://www.dw.com/en/germany-and-other-donors-speed-up-funding-for-palestinians-after-us-aid-cut/a-42373586
12. Jim Zanotti 2018 (Specialist in Middle Eastern Affairs for the Congressional Research Service) 18 May 2018“U.S. Foreign Aid to the Palestinians” https://fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/RS22967.pdf
13. Megan Specia 2018 (Megan Specia is a story editor on the International Desk of The New York Times, specializing in digital storytelling and breaking news.) 3 January 2018 “What Is Unrwa and What Would It Mean if Trump Cuts Its Funding?” https://www.nytimes.com/2018/01/03/world/middleeast/what-is-unrwa-and-what-would-it-mean-if-trump-cuts-its-funding.html
14. Merriam Webster Online Dict. copyright 2018 https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/substantial
15. Reuters 2018 (By journalist Stephanie Nebehay. Reuters, the news and media division of Thomson Reuters, is the world’s largest international multimedia news provider reaching more than one billion people every day. ) 30 January 2018 “U.N. Palestinian aid agency gets cash injection after Trump cuts” https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-palestinians-aid/u-n-palestinian-aid-agency-gets-cash-injection-after-trump-cuts-idUSKBN1FJ2JO
16. Rosie Perper 2018 (Journalist for Business Insider) 17 January 2018 “The US suspended $65 million in aid to the Palestinian aid group UNRWA — and it could affect millions of lives” http://www.businessinsider.com/us-65-million-in-aid-cuts-to-palestinian-refugee-group-unwra-will-affect-millions-2018-1
17. Scott Anderson 2018 (Scott Anderson is the director of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) in the West Bank and previous deputy director of UNRWA in Gaza.) 2 February 2018 “The Unintended Consequences of Trump’s Palestinian Budget Cuts” http://foreignpolicy.com/2018/02/02/the-unintended-consequences-of-trumps-palestinian-budget-cuts/
18. Sean Ross 2016 (Sean Ross is Director of Business Development at Financial Poise™, an education and training website for investors, attorneys, accountants, and business owners/executives. He also operates an independent business consulting and writing practice. Mr. Ross earned degrees in Economics and Political Economy from Regis University, where he specialized in monetary policy and theory. Sean previously worked as a bankruptcy specialist, consultant, broker and financial advisor.) 21 August 2016 “Top 5 Ways Terrorism Impacts the Economy”https://www.investopedia.com/articles/markets/080216/top-5-ways-terrorism-impacts-economy.asp
19. Shira Efron 2018 (Shira Efron is an associate policy researcher at the nonprofit, nonpartisan RAND Corporation, a special advisor on Israel with RAND's Center for Middle East Public Policy and a professor at the Pardee RAND Graduate School.) 5 March 2018 “Gaza on the Brink” https://www.usnews.com/opinion/world-report/articles/2018-03-05/cutting-unrwa-funding-could-put-gaza-on-the-brink-and-backfire-at-israel
20. Steven J. Rosen 2015 (Steven J. Rosen is Director of the Washington Project of the Middle East Forum. From 1982 to 2005, he was a senior official of the pro-Israel lobby AIPAC, the American Israel Public Affairs Committee.) 15 March 2015“Why Has the U.S. Congress Done So Little About UNRWA” https://www.meforum.org/articles/2015/why-has-the-u-s-congress-done-so-little-about-unr#\_ftn10
21. Tamara Qiblawi 2018 (Journalist for CNN) 17 January 2018 “UN Palestinian aid agency says US cuts spark worst-ever financial crisis” https://www.cnn.com/2018/01/17/middleeast/un-palestinian-aid-agency-funding-cuts-intl/index.html
22. Ted R. Bromund 2015 (Ted R. Bromund is a Senior Research Fellow in Anglo-American Relations. Ted Bromund studies Anglo-American relations, U.S. relations with Europe and the EU, and the U.S.’s leadership role in the world.) 10 February 2015 “In the Middle East, let's support our friends” https://www.heritage.org/global-politics/commentary/the-middle-east-lets-support-our-friends
23. The Times of Israel 2018 (The Times of Israel is a Jerusalem-based online newspaper founded in 2012 to document developments in Israel, the Middle East and around the Jewish world.) 4 January 2018 “Netanyahu urging Americans not to cut funding for UNRWA — TV report” https://www.timesofisrael.com/netanyahu-urging-americans-not-to-cut-funding-for-unrwa-tv-report/
24. United Nations Regional Information Centre 2018 (UNRIC works with all stake holders in Europe - the European Union institutions, governments, all segments of the civil society and of course the media. UNRIC aims to inform but also to engage Europeans in issues of global reach.) 1 February 2018 “The hope that UNRWA has kept alive is at risk” https://www.unric.org/en/latest-un-buzz/30952-the-hope-that-unrwa-has-kept-alive-is-at-risk-
25. UNRWA 2018 (UNRWA is a United Nations agency established by the General Assembly in 1949 and mandated to provide assistance and protection to some 5.4 million Palestine refugees registered with UNRWA across its five fields of operation) 7 February 2018 “UNRWA and Iceland Sign First Ever Multi-Year Agreement in the Total Value of US$ 1 Million” https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/unrwa-and-iceland-sign-first-ever-multi-year-agreement-total