Negative Brief: UNRWA - Bad

By Jonathan T. Helton

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

The AFF plan restores US funding (recently cut by Pres. Trump) for the United Nations Relief & Works Agency (UNRWA) for Palestinian Refugees. UNRWA was created about 70 years ago to help Palestinians displaced by the first Arab-Israeli war in 1948 and continues to provide social welfare (food, housing, medical care, education) to them and other Palestinians displaced by war (e.g. the Arab-Israeli war in 1967) and their now 5 million descendants. This brief argues the AFF plan to increase funding to UNRWA is misguided and will only further perpetuate the problems between Israel and Palestine. The NEG position is that UNRWA is a failed agency and that funding it will make the problem worse, not better. Trump’s cut is a way of showing UNRWA that something needs to change.

One key issue is the long-term feasibility of the AFF position. What do they do other than patch the wound? They do nothing to fix the cause, and the DA's highlight this. Cutting UNRWA would force the Status Quo to come up with better solutions rather than continuing to fund a failed program indefinitely and without end. The Disads can outweigh most of the AFF’s Advantages with long-term impacts. A little pain in the short-term under Status Quo policies is better than all the long-term problems that will get worse if UNRWA continues on its present course.

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Negative: UNRWA - Bad

NEGATIVE PHILOSOPHY

Corruption and terror – byproducts of UNRWA’s existence

Brett D. Schaefer 2018 (master's degree in international development from the School of International Service at American University ; Jay Kingham Fellow in International Regulatory Affairs at Heritage's Margaret Thatcher Center for Freedom.) 16 January 2018 “Trump Must Follow through with his UN Threats” <https://www.heritage.org/middle-east/commentary/trump-must-follow-through-his-un-threats>

The current dispute over UNRWA funding within the administration presents an opportunity for the United States to clarify the situation. UNRWA was established more than sixty years ago as a temporary initiative to address the needs of Palestinian refugees and facilitate their resettlement and/or repatriation. It has become a permanent institution providing services to multiple generations of Palestinians, a large majority of whom live outside of refugee camps, enjoy citizenship in other countries, or reside in the Palestinian-governed territories. Meanwhile, the Palestinian refugee problem has ostensibly grown larger, in part due to UNRWA’s applying refugee status to the descendants of the original Palestinian refugees. UNRWA has employed individuals affiliated with the Palestinian Islamist extremist group Hamas and its facilities have been used to house rockets and Hamas tunnels. On top of everything else, a UN audit concluded that UNRWA was vulnerable to “misappropriation, graft and corruption in procurement, partner selection, food and cash distribution, hiring and promotions, and other areas.”

INHERENCY

1. Other contributors.

Other nations are funding UNRWA to replace US cuts

Reuters news service 2018 (journalist Stephanie Nebehay. Reuters is the world’s largest international multimedia news provide . ) 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>

Almost a dozen countries have agreed to advance their annual contributions to the U.N. agency for Palestinian refugees to help it plug a major shortfall after a partial cut-off of U.S. funding, its chief said on Tuesday.

Arab countries can easily fund UNRWA

Elliott Abrams 2018 (senior fellow for Middle Eastern studies at the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) in Washington; former deputy assistant to the president and deputy national security advisor in the administration of President George W. Bush, where he supervised U.S. policy in the Middle East for the White House.) 17 January 2018 “Trump Gets UNRWA Right” <https://www.cfr.org/blog/trump-gets-unrwa-right>

Second, one does have to wonder why the United States is giving UNRWA two or three times as much as all Arab donors combined. Just to take an example, the immensely rich Qatar gave a grand total of one million dollars to UNRWA in 2016.

MINOR REPAIR

1. Change the definition of refugees.

Definition of UNRWA “refugees” is a big part of the problem: Falsely inflates the number "refugees"

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>

For 64 years, the State Department ("State") has colluded in UNRWA practices that perpetuate the refugee problem rather than resolving it. Instead of seeking to correct the dubious UNRWA designations that continually expand the refugee population instead of resolving the problem or reducing its scale, State defends UNRWA practices. State routinely repeats as truth the fiction that there are more than five million "refugees." State defends the practice of counting as Palestinian "refugees" people who became citizens of other Arab states; defends counting people who were never refugees, but are merely grandchildren of deceased refugees; and defends counting people already living in the West Bank and Gaza, territory that the Palestinians themselves have declared to be their "homeland" and "state" and the location where declared U.S. policy states that they should be settled. These UNRWA practices foment conflict and hurt peace. And yet the State Department declares and defends what it openly calls "United States acceptance [of] UNRWA's method of recognizing refugees."

Quantification: 90% of UNRWA's "refugees" aren't really

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>

Another example of UNRWA definitions contravening U.S. law is the UNRWA practice of automatically conferring derivative "refugee" status on persons who never lived in what is now Israel and who were never displaced, but who are merely descended from a (male) refugee, even if they are merely grandchildren or great-grandchildren who have long been settled elsewhere. Section 207 of the United States Immigration and Nationality Act allows spouses and minor children of refugees to apply for derivative status as refugees but, unlike UNRWA's policies, does not allow for grandchildren or great-grandchildren. Indeed, the federal regulation implementing Section 207 specifically declares that grandchildren are ineligible for derivative refugee status. Form I-730, the USCIS Refugee/Asylee Relative Petition used by the Department of Homeland Security, says that "A petition may not be approved for the following persons: ...(6) A parent, sister, brother, grandparent, grandchild, nephew, niece, uncle, aunt, cousin, or in-law." If these legal standards were followed by the State Department in reviewing the UNRWA registration system, the United States would no longer recognize more than 90% of UNRWA beneficiaries as refugees.

Definition change would help: Other countries would follow and UNRWA's most damaging effects would be reduced

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](https://www.meforum.org/articles/2015/why-has-the-u-s-congress-done-so-little-about-unr#_ftn10)

Changing U.S. practices could lead, over time, to corresponding changes in other donor countries in the European Union, Japan, Australia, and Canada. If all the major donors redefined this population as "needy persons, yes, but refugees, no," it would be a major contribution toward reducing conflict in the region. It would not solve all the problems of UNRWA, but it would ameliorate UNRWA's most damaging effect, its practices that perpetuate the refugee issue as a source of tension and conflict.

COUNTERPLAN: Keep US funding cuts and have the United Nations shift responsibility to UNHCR & Palestinian Authority instead of UNRWA

Link: Bloated budget & staff. UNRWA has 1 staff per 182 "refugees." UNHCR has 1/5,500. UNHCR is much more efficient

Brett D. Schaefer and James Phillips 2015 (Schaefer - master's degree in international development from the School of International Service at American University ; Jay Kingham Fellow in International Regulatory Affairs at Heritage's Margaret Thatcher Center for Freedom James Phillips is Senior Research Fellow for Middle Eastern Affairs in the Douglas and Sarah Allison Center for Foreign and National Security Policy of the Davis Institute.) 5 March 2015 “Time to Reconsider U.S. Support of UNRWA” [Brackets added] <https://www.heritage.org/middle-east/report/time-reconsider-us-support-unrwa#_ftn33>

As of July 1, 2014, UNRWA reported a staff of 30,252 to support 5.49 million persons (5.09 million “registered refugees” and 398,229 “other registered persons”) in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, the West Bank, and Gaza Strip. UNRWA reported expenditures of $1.1 billion in 2013, including $678.9 million in regular budget expenditures ($206 in total budget expenditures per individual and $125 in regular budget expenditures per individual). UNHCR [U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees] reported a staff of 7,735 in 2013, a 2013 budget of $5.34 billion, and budget expenditure of $2.97 billion to support more than 42.9 million refugees, internally displaced persons, and “others of concern” to UNHCR in more than 100 countries ($124 of total budget per individual or $69 in budget expenditure per individual). The difference in the number of staff per refugee is staggering. UNHCR has one staff member for every 5,500 refugees and other persons of concern. UNRWA has one staff person for every 182 people registered by UNRWA.

Link: 70% of UNRWA money is spent on salaries

Chloé Benoist citing Jalal al-Husseini 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” [Jalal al-Husseini, a researcher with the French Institute of the Near-East] <https://www.equaltimes.org/sixty-eight-years-of-temporary-aid?lang=en#.WyqAdqdKg2x>

“UNRWA is a real local administration, temporary, weakly structured, with a weak financial base…but with 70 per cent of its budget going to the salaries of teachers, doctors, etc.,” claims al-Husseini. “For an international humanitarian relief agency, this is inconceivable.”

Solvency & Advocacy: Shift it to UNHCR and the Palestinian Authority

Brett D. Schaefer 2018 (He is writing for the Heritage Foundation. Brett D. Schaefer is the Jay Kingham Fellow in International Regulatory Affairs at Heritage's Margaret Thatcher Center for Freedom.) 16 January 2018 “Trump Must Follow through with his UN Threats” <https://www.heritage.org/middle-east/commentary/trump-must-follow-through-his-un-threats>

Leaving aside the Palestinian-Israeli peace process, the United States should withhold contributions to UNRWA until it implements critical reforms. In the medium term, Washington should seek to eliminate UNRWA, shifting responsibility for recent Palestinian refugees resulting from the war in Syria to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. We should also demand that the Palestinians assume responsibility for the services provided by UNRWA. That’s what sovereign governments are expected to do, and the Palestinians aspire to become a sovereign state.

Solvency & Advocacy: Benjamin Netanyahu says shift it to UNHCR

Herb Keinon 2018 (Keinon has a BA in political science from the University of Colorado, Boulder, and an MA in Journalism from the University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana. He is the author of two books: the recently released French Fries in Pita, a collection of his slice-of-life monthly 'Out There" columns; and Lone Soldiers: Israel's Defenders from Around the World. ) 7 January 2018 “NETANYAHU: UNRWA NEEDS TO DEPART FROM THIS WORLD” [Brackets added] <https://www.jpost.com/Israel-News/Benjamin-Netanyahu/Netanyahu-UNRWA-needs-to-pass-away-from-the-world-533022>

“I made a simple suggestion, that the funds for UNRWA should be [gradually transferred to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees](http://www.jpost.com/American-Politics/As-US-weighs-policy-on-UNRWA-Israel-recommends-gradually-reducing-aid-532988), with clear criteria for supporting real refugees, rather than fictitious refugees, which is what is happening today under UNRWA,” [Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu] he said.

Ending UNRWA support doesn’t mean abandoning refugees

Gregg Roman 2018 (Gregg Roman is director of the Middle East Forum, a nonprofit organization that promotes American interests and Western values in the Middle East.) 7 January 2018 “Trump is right to cut funding to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency” <http://thehill.com/opinion/international/367718-trump-is-right-to-cut-funding-to-the-united-nations-relief-and-works>

Ending UNRWA doesn’t mean ending humanitarian support for Palestinians. If the definition of a Palestinian refugee changes, the small number of remaining refugees could be served by the U.N. Refugee Agency [(UNHCR)](http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/) and Palestinians in need could be served by the Palestinian Authority.

SIGNIFICANCE / HARMS

1. Inflated refugee number.

A/T "5 million refugees" – Actually, it's only 30,000 who were actually displaced by a war. (so, 99.4% are not actual refugees)

Dr. Jonathan Schanzer 2012 (worked as a terrorism finance analyst at the U.S. Department of the Treasury, where he played an integral role in the designation of numerous terrorist financiers; worked for the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, the Jewish Policy Center, and the Middle East Forum; studied Middle East history in four countries; Ph.D. from Kings College London on subject of terrorism) 21 May 2012 " Status Update" <https://foreignpolicy.com/2012/05/21/status-update/>

UNRWA’s time to defend itself has unquestionably arrived. The Kirk amendment would require the secretary of state to report to Congress on how many Palestinians serviced by UNRWA are true refugees from wars past — those who could prove that they were personally displaced. That number is believed to be closer to 30,000 people.

Number of UNRWA "refugees" is vastly inflated and kept artificially high

**[Note: This argument can be paired well with the Minor Repair and the “Worsens refugee situation” DA]**

Security Studies Group 2018 (research group headed by Jim Hanson, who served in US Army Special Forces and conducted Counter-Terrorism, Counter-Insurgency as well as Diplomatic, Intelligence and Humanitarian operations in more than a dozen countries) 5 June 2018 “Paying the Palestinian Authority” <https://securitystudies.org/paying-palestinian-authority/>

The Palestinian leaders have used their “refugees” as a 70 year long issue and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) has aided and abetted this. The number of refugees is vastly inflated because, contrary to every other refugee situation, the descendants of those displaced long ago are added to the count. This created a permanent and growing aid generator and graft opportunity.  
[END QUOTE. He goes on later in the article to say QUOTE:]  
One of the main drivers of aid to the Palestinians is the purported number of more than 5M refugees. This is vastly inflated and kept artificially high when compared to the actual number of approximately 550,000 Palestinian Arab refugees from the 1947-9 war.

Most of them aren't "refugees": 71% of the UNRWA's "refugees" don't live in refugee camps

Brett D. Schaefer and James Phillips 2015 (Schaefer - master's degree in international development from the School of International Service at American University ; Jay Kingham Fellow in International Regulatory Affairs at Heritage's Margaret Thatcher Center for Freedom. Phillips is Senior Research Fellow for Middle Eastern Affairs in the Douglas and Sarah Allison Center for Foreign and National Security Policy of the Davis Institute.) 5 March 2015 “Time to Reconsider U.S. Support of UNRWA” <https://www.heritage.org/middle-east/report/time-reconsider-us-support-unrwa#_ftn33>

Although the immediate descendants of refugees who were born while displaced are often considered refugees, applying this status to multiple generations is a unique situation that applies nowhere else in the world. As stated in the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, a person should no longer be considered a refugee if he has “voluntarily re-availed himself of the protection of the country of his nationality”; “acquired a new nationality, and enjoys the protection of the country of his new nationality”; or “has voluntarily re-established himself in the country which he left or outside which he remained owing to fear of persecution.” Of the 5.49 million “registered persons” supported by UNRWA, only 1.58 million or 28.7 percent actually reside in UNRWA camps. In other words, over 71 percent of the people registered with UNRWA are not actually in refugee camps and have established alternative housing arrangements.

DISADVANTAGES

1. Worsens refugee situation.

Link: UNRWA encourages mission creep, never-ending growth of "refugee" population

NEW YORK TIMES 2018 (journalist David M. Halbfinger, Jerusalem bureau chief of The New York Times17 January 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>

The agency, known by the acronym Unrwa, was set up in 1949 to aid those who fled or were expelled from their homes during the Arab-Israeli war of 1948. Meant to be temporary, it defined refugees loosely and expanded that definition over time. One key difference between it and the office of the United Nations high commissioner for refugees, critics say, is that the agency routinely allows refugee status to be passed down for generations. Another is that it does not remove people from its list who have acquired citizenship in a new country, so the number always increases.

Impact: Palestinians harmed. UNRWA blocks Palestinians from achieving self-reliance, economic development and productivity.

Prof. Nitza Nachmias 2009. (Senior Research Fellow at The Jewish-Arab Center, University of Haifa and a Visiting Professor at the Department of Political Science, Towson University, Maryland. 12 Oct 2009 “UNRWA at 60: Are There Better Alternatives?“ <http://www.meforum.org/2481/unrwa-at-60-better-alternatives> (brackets added)

We argue that UNRWA's inflated bureaucracy and the unrestrained scope of its non-emergency services hinder rather than induce Palestinian self-reliance. UNRWA's operations have been particularly damaging to the fledgling PA [Palestinian Authority] that has to accept the existence of a competing United Nations governing authority within its boundaries . The World Bank recently reported that the PA [Palestinian Authority] is "developing strategies that encourage productivity and growth in the industrial, agricultural, housing, and tourism sectors and allow the Palestinian economy to develop a diversified export portfolio" UNRWA's operations have the reverse effect of nurturing and advancing dependence.

Impact: Palestinians harmed. Palestinians are locked in victimhood because UNRWA will be disbanded if problems are solved, so they have no incentive to solve.

Jonathan Greenberg 2018 (ordained Reform rabbi and the senior vice president of the news and public policy group Haym Salomon Center.) 17 January 2018 “GREENBERG: Trump's Decision To Cut UNRWA Funding Is The First Step Toward Middle East Peace” <https://www.dailywire.com/news/26012/greenberg-trumps-decision-cut-unrwa-funding-first-jonathan-greenberg>

That last sentence should shock you. Its name notwithstanding, UNRWA has not “relieved” the refugees’ situation. It has encouraged and exacerbated it. No other program to assist refugees has overseen and, in fact, helped create a 650% increase in the population it serves. Unfortunately, UNRWA has made Palestinian refugee status hereditary. Rather than moving on with their lives, UNRWA has locked generations of Palestinians in permanent victimhood. UNRWA’s definition of a Palestinian refugee as including descendants is partly a strategy to ensure organizational continuity, but it also serves the Palestinian victimization narrative both within their society and beyond. What it does not do is create any incentive for Palestinians to resettle, move on, or build the kind of institutions necessary for statehood.

Impact: Even Palestinians admit donating to UNRWA harms Palestinians. They'd be better off without it

Prof. Nitza Nachmias 2009. (Senior Research Fellow at The Jewish-Arab Center, University of Haifa and a Visiting Professor at the Department of Political Science, Towson University, Maryland. 12 Oct 2009 “UNRWA at 60: Are There Better Alternatives?“ <http://www.meforum.org/2481/unrwa-at-60-better-alternatives>

In summary, UNRWA's clients, the Palestinian people, are highly critical of the "patron" that was imposed upon them. We agree with them that the termination of UNRWA's operations is not only feasible but is imperative. Donors to UNRWA actually harm the Palestinian community by perpetuating UNRWA's superfluous existence.

Impact: Palestinians harmed. UNRWA funding prolongs endless welfare dependency, making Palestinians worse off

Michael Bernstam 2011. (a research fellow at the Hoover Institution, Stanford University; former visiting professor of economics at Monash University, Australia; former adjunct professor in Stanford University's Overseas Studies Program; former economic adviser to the Russian Parliament and the Central Bank of Russia) 7 Jan 2011 UNRWA: Five Letters That Spell Middle Eastern Misery, <http://www.cija.ca/middle-east/unrwa-five-letters-that-spell-middle-eastern-misery/>

For 60 years, UNRWA has been paying four generations of Palestinians to remain refugees, reproduce refugees and live in refugee camps. It is UNRWA that put them in refugee cages and watched the number of inhabitants grow. The Palestinian refugee population in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, the West Bank and Gaza has exploded from 726,000 in 1950 to 4.8 million in 2010. About 95% receive some form of UNRWA care. The unprecedented nature of this guardianship is rooted in the unusual nature of this institution. UNRWA is a supranational welfare state that pays its residents not to build their own nation-state; for, were they to do so, they would forfeit their refugee status and its entitlements of cash, housing, health care, education, credit and other largesse. It is these perverse incentives above all that have undermined efforts to improve the lot of the Palestinian people. If the international community truly wishes to serve the needs of the Palestinians and improve their lot, its first task would be the abolition of UNRWA.

2. Blocks Israeli-Palestinian Peace Efforts

Link: Status Quo policy of cutting UNRWA encourages peace

Jonathan Greenberg 2018 (ordained Reform rabbi and the senior vice president of the news and public policy group Haym Salomon Center.) 17 January 2018 “GREENBERG: Trump's Decision To Cut UNRWA Funding Is The First Step Toward Middle East Peace” <https://www.dailywire.com/news/26012/greenberg-trumps-decision-cut-unrwa-funding-first-jonathan-greenberg>

The United States has taken the welcome step of cutting half of our planned $125 million in funding to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency. UNRWA, which provides aid to Palestinians displaced by the Israeli War of Independence and their descendants, has been [referred to](http://fathomjournal.org/unrwa-an-obstacle-to-peace/) as “one of the greatest obstacles to peace.” Despite the [jeremiads](https://twitter.com/RichardHaass/status/948367723117113345) of people who who believe U.S. aid is charity [untethered](https://twitter.com/RNicholasBurns/status/950015109954498560) to policy outcomes, this is a [peace-encouraging](http://foreignpolicy.com/2018/01/05/nikki-haleys-diplomacy-of-revenge-targets-u-n-relief-agency/) development toward dismantling UNRWA entirely, folding its operations into those of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, and ending international maintenance of the Palestinian “refugee crisis” now reaching into its fourth generation.

Link: SQ policy cutting UNRWA is a step in the right direction: Motivates Palestinians to make peace

Gregg Roman 2018 (director of the Middle East Forum, a nonprofit organization that promotes American interests and Western values in the Middle East.) 7 January 2018 “Trump is right to cut funding to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency” <http://thehill.com/opinion/international/367718-trump-is-right-to-cut-funding-to-the-united-nations-relief-and-works>

President Trump came into office making big promises about solving the Arab-Israeli conflict and reforming the United Nations. His announcement on Jerusalem dealt a serious blow to the Palestinian rejectionism that has prolonged this conflict for generations. Finding a way to end UNRWA’s support for the structures behind the unwillingness of Palestinians to make peace would be another important step. Freezing payments is a step in the right direction.

Link: UNRWA provides no reason for the Palestinian Authority to be responsible, so it can divert resources to resistance.

Asaf Romirowsky 2007 (Associate Fellow at the Middle East Forum and Manager of Israel & Middle East Affairs for the Jewish Federation of Greater Philadelphia.) Fall 2007 “How UNRWA Supports Hamas” <https://www.jewishpolicycenter.org/2007/08/31/how-unrwa-supports-hamas/>

UNRWA does not hide this. As Commissioner General Karen AbuZayd states, UNRWA’s goal “is to reconstruct houses, create jobs, and micro-financing.” It has been filling this role since 1991, when UNRWA launched its micro-finance and micro-enterprise program (MMP) in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Indeed, UNRWA provides services that the Palestinian economic ministry or treasury should handle. UNRWA, originally conceived as a temporary apparatus to ease the refugees’ economic plight more than a half-century ago, has been providing the Palestinians of Gaza (as well as the West Bank, Lebanon, Syria, and Jordan) with critical economic services for a decade so that the Palestinian government, whether Hamas or the Palestinian Authority, can continue to concentrate on “resistance.”

UNRWA blocks the peace process

Prof. Nitza Nachmias 2009. (Senior Research Fellow at The Jewish-Arab Center, University of Haifa and a Visiting Professor at the Department of Political Science, Towson University, Maryland. 12 Oct 2009 “UNRWA at 60: Are There Better Alternatives?“ (ellipses in original) <http://www.meforum.org/2481/unrwa-at-60-better-alternatives>

In 2000, Palestinian leaders publicly expressed disappointment at UNRWA's resistance to relinquish its responsibilities. "While the Oslo Process of 1993 renewed the debate about the future of UNRWA, and for the first time since UNRWA was established it is possible to see on the horizon the end of the Agency's mission and UNRWA's ultimate dissolution…five years later, however, the future of the Agency remains unclear." To date, UNRWA continues to deny the well-known fact: most refugees are long settled. Only an acknowledgment of this fact will move the peace process forward.

Link: Success depends on Palestinians taking responsibilities for being a sovereign government – that's why past Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations have failed

Brett D. Schaefer 2018 (master's degree in international development from the School of International Service at American University ; Jay Kingham Fellow in International Regulatory Affairs at Heritage's Margaret Thatcher Center for Freedom.) 16 January 2018 “Trump Must Follow through with his UN Threats” <https://www.heritage.org/middle-east/commentary/trump-must-follow-through-his-un-threats>

Leaving aside the Palestinian-Israeli peace process, the United States should withhold contributions to UNRWA until it implements critical reforms. In the medium term, Washington should seek to eliminate UNRWA, shifting responsibility for recent Palestinian refugees resulting from the war in Syria to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. We should also demand that the Palestinians assume responsibility for the services provided by UNRWA. That’s what sovereign governments are expected to do, and the Palestinians aspire to become a sovereign state. Are there risks to this policy? Of course, but risks are also inherent in adhering to the same policies that have led to the deeply unsatisfactory, insecure status quo. Presidents Clinton, Bush, and Obama all failed in their ambition to negotiate a peace between the Palestinians and Israelis. Success hinges on the Palestinians understanding that there is a cost to their intransigence.

Link: Getting UNRWA out of the way helps remove the never-ending issue of refugees that blocks a peace settlement

NEW YORK TIMES 2018 (journalist David M. Halbfinger is the Jerusalem bureau chief of The New York Times.)17 January 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>

“At the rate we’re going now, it’s going to be 15 million soon,” said Asaf Romirowsky, executive director of Scholars for Peace in the Middle East, who has called for disbanding the agency and turning over its functions to other institutions, like the Palestinian Authority. “Unrwa will tell you they’ll leave the situation when there is a resolution to the conflict, but it’s a catch-22: They are the gatekeepers for the one single issue that perpetuates the conflict from generation to generation.” He said that freezing the agency’s money could be a good step if it forced Israel and the Palestinians to the table. “The endgame from a political standpoint has to be about fully ending refugee status and ending the right of return,” he said. “Otherwise, this is just going to come back in a different formulation.”

UNRWA perpetuates Israeli-Palestinian conflict by radicalizing Palestinian youth against Israel

Chana Roberts and Orly Harari 2018 (Writing for Israel National News) 17 January 2018 “Israeli official: UNRWA is one of the greatest frauds in history” <https://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/240781>

Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Office Michael Oren (Kulanu) said, "I congratulate US President Donald Trump on his decision to drastically cut funding to UNRWA. This is a false and corrupt organization, which fabricates millions of refugees in order to receive world funding. UNRWA perpetuates the Israeli-Palestinian conflict by teaching Palestinian youth to hate the State of Israel and to work to erase it. The President's decision is a crucial and vital step to putting an end to one of the greatest frauds in history. UNRWA's fraud has caused great damage to Israel and to the entire Middle East."

Benjamin Netanyahu: UNRWA promotes elimination of the state of Israel

Herb Keinon 2018 (BA in political science from the Univ of Colorado, Boulder, and MA in Journalism from the Univ of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana) 7 January 2018 “NETANYAHU: UNRWA NEEDS TO DEPART FROM THIS WORLD” [Brackets added] <https://www.jpost.com/Israel-News/Benjamin-Netanyahu/Netanyahu-UNRWA-needs-to-pass-away-from-the-world-533022>

“UNRWA is an organization that perpetuates the problem of the Palestinian refugees,” [Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu] he said. “It also perpetuates the narrative of the so-called ‘right of return’ with the aim of eliminating the State of Israel, and therefore UNRWA must disappear.”

Brink: UNRWA is the principle obstacle to Mid-East peace

Michael Bernstam 2011. (a research fellow at the Hoover Institution, Stanford University; former visiting professor of economics at Monash University, Australia; former adjunct professor in Stanford University's Overseas Studies Program; former economic adviser to the Russian Parliament and the Central Bank of Russia) 7 Jan 2011 UNRWA: Five Letters That Spell Middle Eastern Misery, <http://www.cija.ca/middle-east/unrwa-five-letters-that-spell-middle-eastern-misery/>

Though pundits and foreign-policy experts focus on the question of settlements or the current temperature of negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians, UNRWA’s institutionalization of refugee-cum-military camps is, in my view, the principal obstacle to peace in the Middle East. The chances of achieving peace and security in the Middle East will continue to be remote as long as UNRWA is, in effect, underwriting a self-destructive Palestinian cycle of violence, internecine bloodshed and a perpetual war against Israel.

Impact: Funding UNRWA furthers conflict

Elliott Abrams 2018 (senior fellow for Middle Eastern studies at the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) in Washington ; former deputy assistant to the president and deputy national security advisor in the administration of Pres. George W. Bush, where he supervised U.S. policy in the Middle East for the White House.) 17 January 2018 “Trump Gets UNRWA Right” <https://www.cfr.org/blog/trump-gets-unrwa-right>

So the Trump administration is once again upsetting the apple cart and defying conventional wisdom when it comes to Israel. And once again it is right to demand change. Perpetuating and enlarging the Palestinian “refugee” crisis has harmed Israel and it has certainly harmed Palestinians. Keeping their grievances alive may have served anti-Israel political ends, but it has brought peace no closer and it has helped prevent generations of Palestinians from leading normal lives. That archipelago of displaced persons and refugee camps that once dotted Europe is long gone now, and the descendants of those who tragically lived in those camps now lead productive and fruitful lives in many countries. One can only wish such a fate for Palestinian refugee camps and for Palestinians. More money for UNRWA won't solve anything.

Impact: Israeli-Palestinian conflict is deadly. > 8000 deaths since 2000

Max Fisher 2014 (journalist; former staff writer for Vox) 14 July 2014 “This chart shows every person killed in the Israel-Palestine conflict since 2000” <https://www.vox.com/2014/7/14/5898581/chart-israel-palestine-conflict-deaths>

It's no secret that the death tolls in the Israel-Palestine conflict are lopsided, with Palestinians [far more likely to be killed](http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/worldviews/wp/2014/07/11/the-lopsided-death-tolls-in-israel-palestinian-conflicts/) than Israelis. But just how lopsided is driven home by looking at the month-to-month fatality statistics, which the Israeli human rights organization B'Tselem has been [tracking](http://www.btselem.org/statistics) since September 2000. Those numbers also tell some important stories about the conflict, how it's changed, and maybe where it's going.  
[**END QUOTE. He goes on later in the same article to say QUOTE:]**You'll notice right away that the overwhelming majority of the deaths are Palestinian, and have been for the almost 14 years since B'Tselem began tracking. Overall, the group has recorded 8,166 conflict-related deaths, of which 7,065 are Palestinian and 1,101 Israeli. That means 87 percent of deaths have been Palestinian and only 13 percent Israeli. Put another way, for every 15 people killed in the conflict, 13 are Palestinian and two are Israeli. (Statistics for the past two months are from United Nations [Office for the Coordinator of Humanitarian Affairs](http://www.ochaopt.org/).)

3. Promotes terrorism

UNRWA creates for itself incentives to turn a blind eye to terror

Asaf Romirowsky 2007 (Associate Fellow at the Middle East Forum and Manager of Israel & Middle East Affairs for the Jewish Federation of Greater Philadelphia. The Jewish Policy Center, a 501c(3) non-profit organization, provides timely perspectives and analysis of foreign and domestic policies by leading scholars, academics, and commentators. The JPC passionately supports a strong American defense capability, U.S.-Israel security cooperation, and missile defense. We support Israel in its quest for legitimacy and security.) Fall 2007 “How UNRWA Supports Hamas” <https://www.jewishpolicycenter.org/2007/08/31/how-unrwa-supports-hamas/>

The interests of the refugees and UNRWA are so intertwined that UNRWA is staffed *in situ* mainly by local Palestinians—more than 23,000 of them—with only about 100 international United Nations professionals. While the U.N. High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR) and UNICEF (United Nations International Children’s Fund) avoid employing locals who are also recipients of agency services, UNRWA does not make this distinction. Thus, in the interest of self-perpetuation, UNRWA seeks to maintain the violent status quo in the Middle East, even if it means turning a blind eye to terror.

UNRWA is funding Hamas, a terrorist movement whose goal is eliminating Israel

Rhonda Spivak 2012. (journalist, quoting retired Lieutenant Colonel, Israeli military; senior researcher of the Middle East and radical Islam at the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs; former advisor to the Policy Planning Division of the Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs) Expert Briefs Canadian Parliamentarians: In Gaza, UNWRA and Hamas are Bedfellows, 2 Apr 2012, <http://www.winnipegjewishreview.com/article_detail.cfm?id=2324&sec=2>

In an interview following the event, Jonathan D. Halevi, a Senior researcher of the Middle East and radical Islam at the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs headed by former Israeli Ambassador to the UN, Dr. Dore Gold, said that "UNWRA in Gaza is just a tool in the hands of Hamas." He added that "Money provided by Western countries to UNWRA in Gaza is being used to fund a Hamas agenda- one of terrorism with the goal of eliminating Israel."

UNRWA supports terror group Hamas and other violent extremists

Brett D. Schaefer and James Phillips 2015 (Schaefer - master's degree in international development from the School of International Service at American University ; Jay Kingham Fellow in International Regulatory Affairs at Heritage's Margaret Thatcher Center for Freedom. James Phillips is Senior Research Fellow for Middle Eastern Affairs in the Douglas and Sarah Allison Center for Foreign and National Security Policy of the Davis Institute.) 5 March 2015 “Time to Reconsider U.S. Support of UNRWA” <https://www.heritage.org/middle-east/report/time-reconsider-us-support-unrwa#_ftn33>

**Support and Sympathy for Hamas.**Substantial evidence indicates that UNRWA employs individuals affiliated with Hamas, a Palestinian Islamist extremist group in control of Gaza that is designated as a terrorist organization by the United States, Israel, and the European Union and that refuses to recognize Israel’s right to exist. In 2012, UNRWA employees “elected candidates affiliated with the terror group Hamas to 25 out of 27 seats on a union board that represents ten thousand UNRWA workers. This is not surprising because UNRWA functions as a de facto jobs program for Palestinians, who comprise the vast majority of UNRWA’s 30,252 staff. It would be difficult for UNRWA staff not to reflect the beliefs and perspective of Palestinians, many of whom support Hamas and other radical extremists, when they overwhelmingly staff the organization.

UNRWA indoctrinates students with radical ideologies

Asaf Romirowsky 2007 (Associate Fellow at the Middle East Forum and Manager of Israel & Middle East Affairs for the Jewish Federation of Greater Philadelphia) Fall 2007 “How UNRWA Supports Hamas” <https://www.jewishpolicycenter.org/2007/08/31/how-unrwa-supports-hamas/>

UNRWA teachers who publicly identify with radical groups have created a teachers’ bloc that ensures the election of Hamas members and other individuals committed to Islamist ideologies. After using their classrooms as a place to refine their radical messages, these teachers gravitate to politics. As such, UNRWA’s education system has become a springboard for Hamas leaders. For example, Said Sayyam, the Hamas minister of interior and civil affairs, was a teacher in UNRWA schools in Gaza from 1980 to 2003. He went on to become a member of UNRWA’s Arab Employees Union and headed the teachers sector committee.

Example: Weapons smuggling by UNRWA ambulance driver

Asaf Romirowsky 2007 (Asaf Romirowsky is an Associate Fellow at the Middle East Forum and Manager of Israel & Middle East Affairs for the Jewish Federation of Greater Philadelphia. The Jewish Policy Center, a 501c(3) non-profit organization, provides timely perspectives and analysis of foreign and domestic policies by leading scholars, academics, and commentators. The JPC passionately supports a strong American defense capability, U.S.-Israel security cooperation, and missile defense. We support Israel in its quest for legitimacy and security.) Fall 2007 “How UNRWA Supports Hamas” <https://www.jewishpolicycenter.org/2007/08/31/how-unrwa-supports-hamas/>

Nidal Abd al-Fattah Abdallah Nazzal, an ambulance driver for UNRWA from Kalqiliya in the West Bank, was arrested by Israeli security services in August 2002. Nidal admitted that he was a Hamas activist and that he had transported weapons and explosives to terrorists in his ambulance, taking advantage of the freedom of movement afforded to UNRWA vehicles by the Israelis.

Example: UNRWA helped Hamas conduct terrorism in Gaza

Brett D. Schaefer and James Phillips 2015 (Schaefer - master's degree in international development from the School of International Service at American University ; Jay Kingham Fellow in International Regulatory Affairs at Heritage's Margaret Thatcher Center for Freedom. James Phillips is Senior Research Fellow for Middle Eastern Affairs in the Douglas and Sarah Allison Center for Foreign and National Security Policy of the Davis Institute.) 5 March 2015 “Time to Reconsider U.S. Support of UNRWA” <https://www.heritage.org/middle-east/report/time-reconsider-us-support-unrwa#_ftn33>

UNRWA has pressured Israel to permit entry of resources into Gaza that have been misallocated to support terrorism. UNRWA’s stated intent was to assist the rebuilding of destroyed and dilapidated infrastructure, which is an admirable goal. The people of Gaza have suffered tremendously under Hamas, but facilitating access to these resources ultimately assisted Hamas, which controls Gaza and used the supplies to continue its terrorist campaign. In particular, Hamas constructed tunnels to facilitate attacks into Israel that required hundreds of tons of cement and other construction materials. In one instance, during the 2014 conflict, Israeli soldiers were killed in a booby-trapped UNRWA facility that housed the end of a tunnel intended to allow terrorists to enter Israel.

Example: Hamas rockets in an UNRWA school

Elliott Abrams 2014 (senior fellow for Middle Eastern studies at the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) in Washington; served as deputy assistant to the president and deputy national security advisor in the administration of Pres. George W. Bush, where he supervised U.S. policy in the Middle East for the White House.) 28 November 2014 “Business as Usual with UNRWA” <https://www.cfr.org/blog/business-usual-unrwa>

Think about the discoveries of last summer, during the Gaza war between Israel and Hamas. July 17: 20 rockets found in a vacant UNRWA school. July 22: more rockets found in another UNRWA school. July 30: rockets found in an UNRWA school for the third time. Nor was that all. In the first case, it seems that Hamas was called upon to remove the rockets, which suggested that UNRWA was turning them back over to Hamas rather than seizing them or asking the UN for help.

UNRWA is cozy with Hamas

Colum Lynch and Emily Tamkin 2017 (Colum Lynch is writer at Foreign Policy covering ambassadorial and diplomatic affairs in Washington. 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/>

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu views it as unacceptably cozy with Hamas, the Palestinian militant group that refuses to recognize Israel. “I told U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Nikki Haley that it’s time to dismantle UNRWA,” Netanyahu told Likud ministers.

Naftali Bennett: UNRWA is a “terror-supporting organization”

Gregg Roman 2018 (Gregg Roman is director of the Middle East Forum, a nonprofit organization that promotes American interests and Western values in the Middle East.) 7 January 2018 “Trump is right to cut funding to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency” <http://thehill.com/opinion/international/367718-trump-is-right-to-cut-funding-to-the-united-nations-relief-and-works>

Israeli Education Minister Naftali Bennett recently [called](https://www.timesofisrael.com/top-minister-backs-us-threat-to-cut-unrwa-aid-contradicting-foreign-ministry/) UNRWA a “terror-supporting organization” and said that “aiding the residents of Gaza should be no different than aiding the Syrian residents suffering under a terror regime, or aiding any other group of descendants of refugees.”

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