

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-4313

HOUSE ARMED SERVICES
COMMITTEE
HOUSE PERMANENT SELECT
COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE
HOUSE FOREIGN AFFAIRS
COMMITTEE
HOUSE AGRICULTURE
COMMITTEE
SELECT SUBCOMMITTEE ON
THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC
HOUSE REPUBLICAN WHIP TEAM

December 9, 2024

The Honorable Mike Johnson
Speaker of the House
H-232, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
House Minority Leader
H-204, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Senate Majority Leader
S-221, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Senate Minority Leader
S-230, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Johnson, Leader Jeffries, Leader Schumer, and Leader McConnell,

As Congress works to pass government funding legislation, we write to encourage any appropriations bill that's to be considered for Fiscal Year 2025 to include a prohibition on funding the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA).

UNRWA, according to its website, is the United Nations agency tasked with providing “primary and vocational education, primary health care, relief and social services, infrastructure and camp improvement, microfinance and emergency response, including in situations of armed conflict” to Palestinian refugees in the near east.¹ As part of its employment strategy, UNRWA employs locals in the region who know the area, people, language, and are familiar with the local culture and customs. This strategy, along with the extreme integration of Hamas within Gaza, has created an organization where a disturbing number of UNRWA employees have been proven to be Hamas operatives, family of Hamas operatives, or otherwise affiliated with Hamas or other terror organizations such as Palestinian Islamic Jihad. At least twelve UNRWA employees were found to have participated in the barbaric October 7th attacks on Israel which led to the death of over 1,200 Israelis and the kidnapping of over 250 people, including American citizens.² These findings directly led to the United States, Australia, and members of the European Union to either halt or temporarily pause funding to UNRWA, a decision we wholeheartedly support.

Since the initial findings, Israel has provided the United Nations and UNRWA with a list of 100 additional employees linked to Hamas and other terror organizations and demanded that they be fired, but the agency has failed to take any meaningful action.³ In another attempt to work with UNRWA, the Israeli government has repeatedly asked for the identities of UNRWA employees operating on the ground in Gaza in order to vet and clear them of any ties to terrorism against Israel, but the agency, after resisting, gave Israel names of the employees, but with no other

¹ [What We Do | UNRWA](#)

² [Intelligence Reveals Details of U.N. Agency Staff's Links to Oct. 7 Attack - WSJ](#)

³ [Israel sends UNRWA list of 108 employees it says are Hamas, PIJ, terrorists | The Times of Israel](#)

verifiable information such as identification numbers or even dates of birth, thus rendering the employee list useless and any attempt to vet employees moot.⁴

The United Nations has an extensive history of systematically isolating and attacking the State of Israel, and UNRWA is deliberately working against Israel by refusing to share the identities of its employees and by employing terrorists and their affiliates. UNRWA turns a blind eye to its terror associated employees,⁵ diverts aid,⁶ and allows Hamas to use its facilities for military purposes.⁷

The United States House of Representatives, recognizing the harm that UNRWA does and the work that it does to embolden terrorist organizations like Hamas, passed *H.R. 8771 - Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2025* on June 28, 2024, which includes a prohibition on any appropriated funding from directly or indirectly supporting UNRWA. Despite warnings from the United States, UNRWA's largest contributor before the pause, UNRWA has refused to change its practices and continues to allow the infiltration of terror into its ranks.

On October 28, 2024, the Israeli Knesset passed two laws aimed at distancing Israel from UNRWA. The first prohibits UNRWA from directly or indirectly providing any service, conducting any activity, or operating any office in sovereign Israeli territory.⁸ The second law bars Israeli government agencies from having any contact with UNRWA, including prohibiting UNRWA employees from being able to apply for or receive work visas.⁹ Our countries have taken decisive action against UNRWA, and we must continue to work in lock step, especially as Israel defends itself on several fronts.¹⁰

Israel and the United States support aid to the innocent Palestinian civilians and to the region, but UNRWA has lost our faith in its ability to operate in the best interest of the people it is meant to help. The United States cannot justify supporting the United Nations agency that is responsible for enhancing Hamas' reach and sustainment in Gaza, and it is critical that any reconciled FY25 SFOPs appropriations bill maintains the critical provision barring federal funding for UNRWA. In the months following the suspension of United States' funds to UNRWA, the United States has worked with non-governmental organizations and other international partners, such as the World Food Programme (WFP), to distribute humanitarian assistance to the people of Gaza. We must finally do away with the agency that is responsible for so much suffering and focus on constituting more effective aid distribution mechanisms.

The United States stands with the State of Israel, our greatest ally in the Middle East, and our unique relationship is founded on shared democratic and moral values that reject terrorism and religious extremism. Unfortunately, terror is woven into the fabric of UNRWA, and there is no

⁴ [HJS-UNRWA-Report-web.pdf](#)

⁵ [Hamas leader slain in Lebanon was on UNRWA payroll - JNS.org](#)

⁶ [Inside Yahya Sinwar's bunker beneath Gaza: UN food rations, cash](#)

⁷ [Directly beneath UNRWA's Gaza headquarters, IDF uncovers top secret Hamas data center | The Times of Israel](#)

⁸ [Knesset votes to bar UNRWA from operating in Israeli territory | The Times of Israel](#)

⁹ [Knesset passes 2nd bill aimed at curtailing UNRWA activities in West Bank and Gaza | The Times of Israel](#)

¹⁰ [U.S. and Israel Differ on Scope of Gaza War and Broader Iran Threat](#)

hope for peace in the Middle East if UNRWA is allowed to continue to operate, which is why we call for a continued prohibition on providing federal funding for UNRWA in any upcoming Fiscal Year 2025 appropriations bill. Thank you for your work and consideration.

Sincerely,



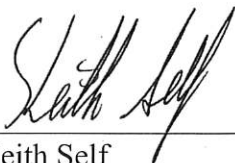
Ronny L. Jackson
Member of Congress



Joe Wilson
Member of Congress



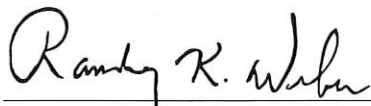
Warren Davidson
Member of Congress



Keith Self
Member of Congress



Tom Kean, Jr.
Member of Congress



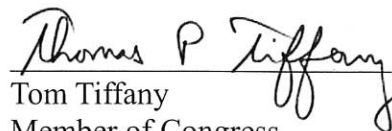
Randy Weber
Member of Congress



Dan Meuser
Member of Congress



Diana Harshbarger
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Tom Tiffany
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