Israel rips ‘meaningless’ report by UNRWA review group

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<https://www.jns.org/israel-rips-meaningless-report-by-unrwa-review-group/>

U.N. member states got a private look in recent days at an interim report from a U.N.-commissioned, independent review group that studied the issues of neutrality and risk management at the U.N. Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA).

Israel has charged that some employees of UNRWA—the Palestinian-only, U.N. aid and social-services agency—participated directly in Hamas’s terror attacks on Oct. 7 and that many more have ties to Palestinian terrorism. A number of countries, including the United States, subsequently pulled funding from UNRWA.

Some countries have since resumed funding, though UNRWA’s biggest donor—Washington—won’t refund the agency for at least a year.

‘The interim report of the Independent Review Group is an attempt to cover up UNRWA’s failures in order to enable the refunding of the agency,’ Israel’s Foreign Affairs Ministry [stated](https://www.gov.il/en/departments/news/response-of-mfa-to-the-interim-report-led-by-catherine-colonna) on Friday. ‘All the proposals for cosmetic reforms offered by the group are meaningless and ignore the real problem that UNRWA is part of the terrorist infrastructure of Hamas.’

The Israeli ministry stated that it presented ‘detailed information’ about Hamas’s and Palestinian Islamic Jihad’s ‘deep penetration’ in Gaza, including ‘that more than 2,000 UNRWA employees are members of terrorist organizations, that one-fifth of UNRWA school principals and deputy principals are Hamas personnel and that tunnels or other terrorist infrastructures were found in more than 30 UNRWA facilities.’

Still, Israel said, the new U.N. report ‘did not even include the simple statement that UNRWA should fire or refrain from employing members of Hamas and other terrorist organizations.’

In the statement, Israel urged donor countries to divert funding from UNRWA to other humanitarian organizations in Gaza.

Lior Haiat, a spokesman for the Israeli ministry, did not cite any of the report’s recommendations with which Israel disagreed in response to a question from JNS.

The review group’s final report is slated to be made public on April 20.

JNS has [reported](https://www.jns.org/research-org-that-un-tapped-for-unrwa-probe-previously-dismissed-allegations-against-agency/) previously that two of the three research institutions that are part of the review have praised South Africa’s charges of genocide against Israel at the International Court of Justice in The Hague, and that one of those two also disparaged publicly the motivations of UNRWA critics.