UN won’t reinstate official transferred for criticizing Islamic Jihad rocket fire

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<https://www.timesofisrael.com/un-wont-reinstate-official-transferred-for-criticizing-islamic-jihad-rocket-fire/>

The United Nations said Tuesday that a senior official in East Jerusalem who was removed from her position after condemning Palestinian Islamic Jihad will remain in a new location, despite Israel calling to reinstate her.

Sarah Muscroft, the head of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, was removed from her post last week after she condemned the Palestinian terror group’s conduct during the recent Gaza conflict.

Her tweet criticizing the PIJ for “indiscriminate rocket fire” sparked an uproar among Palestinian supporters.

Israeli Ambassador to the UN Gilad Erdan on Sunday called on UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres to [reverse the decision](https://www.timesofisrael.com/israel-urges-un-chief-to-cancel-ouster-of-top-official-who-condemned-pij-rocket-fire/) to transfer her out of her position.

But a UN spokesperson told The Times of Israel Tuesday that Muscroft will remain in a new position despite Erdan’s request.

“She’s been reassigned to a different post. I don’t know where that post yet is,” the spokesperson said. “Her location of work has been changed. That was the decision taken by our Humanitarian Affairs colleagues.”

In her tweet, Muscroft wrote she was “relieved to see a ceasefire agreed ending hostilities impacting both Palestinians and Israeli civilians. Such indiscriminate rocket fire of Islamic Jihad provoking Israeli retaliation is condemned. The safety of all civilians is paramount — the ceasefire must be upheld.”

Muscroft, who had been based in East Jerusalem, came under massive criticism from pro-Palestinian activists, who said she was blaming Palestinians for the latest round of violence and was failing to hold Israel responsible.

The latest Gaza conflict began with several Israeli airstrikes against Islamic Jihad targets in response to what the army said was a concrete terror threat from a PIJ cell to fire anti-tank missiles across the border at Israeli troops or civilians. The strikes were followed by the firing of nearly 1,000 rockets by PIJ as well as roughly 170 Israeli counterstrikes.

Muscroft later deleted the post and tweeted an apology the next day, saying that “one of my previous tweets was ill-informed and I have deleted it. I sincerely apologize for my poor judgment. All civilians — everywhere — must be able to live in peace.”

The turmoil did not subside though, and Muscroft went on to close her Twitter account entirely.

Explaining the decision to remove Muscroft, OCHA deputy spokesman Jens Laerke said at the time, “OCHA has been present in the occupied Palestinian territory for the past 20 years, working to help meet humanitarian needs, guided by the humanitarian principles of neutrality, impartiality, and humanity. Over two million people in the occupied Palestinian territory need assistance — they remain our only focus and priority.”

The OCHA has in the past been highly critical of Israeli policies in the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

Last week, the Hamas-run health ministry in Gaza said the death toll from the recent round of fighting in Gaza had risen to 48, after a man and an 11-year-old girl died from wounds sustained during the violence.

In all, more than 300 Palestinians were wounded over the three days of fighting. Israel says some of the deaths and injuries were caused by PIJ rockets that fell short and landed inside Gaza.

No Israelis were killed or suffered severe wounds as a direct result of the PIJ rocket fire, but numerous people were moderately hurt while seeking shelter or were treated for shock brought on by the barrages from the Gaza Strip. One 60-year-old man [died of a heart attack](https://www.timesofisrael.com/family-of-man-who-died-running-to-rocket-shelter-wants-terror-victim-designation/) as he ran to a shelter.