**US envoy urges ‘transparent’ investigation of UNRWA over alleged misconduct**

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US President Donald Trump’s Mideast peace envoy Jason Greenblatt called for a full UN investigation into its agency for Palestinian refugees, after a report leaked Monday alleged widespread corruption and sexual misconduct.

The confidential internal ethics report claimed mismanagement and abuses of authority at the highest levels of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), even as the organization faced an unprecedented crisis after US funding cuts. The allegations are now being scrutinized by UN investigators.

“We’re extremely concerned about UNRWA allegations,” Greenblatt said in a tweet. “We urge a full & transparent investigation by the UN.”

He added: “UNRWA’s model is broken/unsustainable & based on an endless expanding # of beneficiaries. Palestinians residing in refugee camps deserve much better.”

Trump’s former UN envoy, Nikki Haley, took to Twitter to say, “this is exactly why we stopped their funding.”

The UN agency said it is cooperating fully with the investigation and that it cannot comment in detail because the probe is ongoing.

AFP has obtained a copy of the report, which describes “credible and corroborated” allegations of serious ethical abuses, including involving UNRWA’s top official, Commissioner-General Pierre Krahenbuhl.

It says the allegations include senior management engaging in “sexual misconduct, nepotism, retaliation, discrimination and other abuses of authority, for personal gain, to suppress legitimate dissent, and to otherwise achieve their personal objectives.”

One senior official named in the report has left the organization due to “inappropriate behavior” linked to the investigation, UNRWA said, while another has resigned for what the agency called “personal reasons.”

UNRWA said in response to AFP questions that it “is probably among the most scrutinized UN agencies in view of the nature of the conflict and complex and politicized environment it is working in.”

“Over the past 18 months, UNRWA has faced immense financial and political pressure, but its entire staff body has steered it, serving 5.4 million Palestine refugees through the most unprecedented financial crisis in its near 70 years of history,” it said.

The report was sent to the United Nations secretary general in December, and UN investigators have since visited UNRWA’s offices in Jerusalem and Amman, collecting information related to the allegations, sources familiar with the matter said.

Krahenbuhl said in a statement to AFP that “if the current investigation — once it is completed — were to present findings that require corrective measures or other management actions, we will not hesitate to take them.”

The agency provides schooling and medical services to millions of impoverished Palestinian refugees and their descendants in Lebanon, Jordan, Syria and the Palestinian territories.

It employs around 30,000 people, mostly Palestinians.

The report paints a picture of a small number of mostly foreign senior leaders centralizing power and influence while disregarding UN checks and balances.

Krahenbuhl himself is alleged to have been romantically involved with a colleague who was appointed in 2015 to a newly created role of senior adviser to the commissioner-general after an “extreme fast-track” process, the report says.

This enabled her to join him on business class flights across the globe, the report claims.

In 2018, the United States suspended and later cut all funding for UNRWA, causing a financial crisis that threatened to see its schools and hospitals closed.

US President Donald Trump’s administration, along with Israel, accuse UNRWA of perpetuating the Israeli-Palestinian conflict by extending refugee status to millions of descendants of Palestinians who fled or were forced out of homes in today’s Israel at the time of the establishment of the Jewish state in 1948, rather than limiting refugee status only to the original refugees, as is the norm with most refugee populations worldwide.

The agency disputes that and says the vital services it provides would otherwise not be available to Palestinians who benefit from them.