



February 1, 2024

The Honorable Michael Johnson  
Speaker of the House  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Chuck Schumer  
Majority Leader  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries  
Minority Leader  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Minority Leader  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Re: ***Call to Stop Funding United Nations Relief and Works Agency***

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

On October 7, Hamas perpetrated a mass terror attack against our ally Israel—an attack that included kidnapping and murdering many Americans. In the wake of that attack, America has been at its best in supporting our ally and working to destroy Hamas.

But Hamas has its allies, too—other designated terrorist organizations like Hezbollah and the malignant country funding terror around the globe, Iran. But now we know that [UNRWA and its employees](#) also played a role in October 7. On January 26, UNRWA Commissioner-General Philippe Lazzarini [announced](#) that he fired more than a dozen UNRWA staffers for participating in the October 7 terror attacks. Unlike Hezbollah or Hamas, the United States funds UNRWA—delivering more than \$1 billion since the start of the Biden administration to an organization that diverts money intended for education and civil works to material support for kidnapping, torture, and murder. Our government finds itself in a strange situation when it prosecutes people for the crime of [providing material support to terrorists](#) but simultaneously sending more than [\\$6 billion](#) to an organization that we know employs terrorists. That must stop.

We, the undersigned attorneys general of Iowa, South Carolina, Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Virginia, West Virginia, and Wyoming recognize the dangers terrorism imposes on society at home and abroad. We [applaud](#) the January 30 hearing seeking to hold UNRWA to account. That is a necessary first step to recalibrating our approach to aid organizations in Gaza. There is no reason to fund organizations that support terrorist operations. It is abundantly clear, and has been for some time, that UNRWA does just that.

President Trump got UNRWA right in 2018. The United States cut funding to UNRWA and ensured not one penny was directed to this organization that employs terrorists. But President Biden reversed that position and restarted funding UNRWA on his first day in office. It is no longer enough to leave funding discretion to the President. Indeed, even after October 7, President Biden took months to announce that he was suspending *prospective* funding to UNRWA—leaving untouched currently committed funding decisions. That long-delayed baby step, though in the right direction, is not close to sufficient.

While UNRWA now acknowledges that it is likely more than a dozen of its employees participated in the October 7 massacre, its problems are not new. An UNRWA school principal [moonlit as an Islamic Jihad bombmaker](#). Another school principal was a  [Hamas commandant](#). One recent report explained that in *every* UNRWA school the Israeli Defense Forces searched, they found weapons. And now there are reports that an [UNRWA schoolteacher](#) detained one of the hostages for almost two months. It has long been known that UNRWA schools [teach hate](#) and that should never have been tolerated.

Any of these stories should have raised red flags about President Biden's 2021 decision to restart funding to UNRWA. There are no excuses to continue after October 7. Yet somehow we are giving billions of dollars to this fundamentally corrupt organization. At a minimum, UNRWA should reassess its policies and [submit the names of its staff, contractors, and beneficiaries](#) to the United States for counterterrorism vetting.

Part of the problem is UNRWA insists on willful blindness—the United Nations does not recognize Hamas, Islamic Jihad, or Hezbollah as terrorist groups. UNRWA considers being a member of Hamas to be a political affiliation. Perhaps that is because recent reporting contends that 10% of UNRWA staff have [ties to Islamist militant groups](#). Facilitating, promoting, assisting, and committing the heinous acts the world has witnessed on October 7 and its aftermath are not political statements; they are crimes. UNRWA and

its affiliated 501(c)(3) organization UNRWA USA, should know that fundraising efforts in our States will be scrutinized to ensure full compliance with State and federal material-support statutes.

UNRWA is a multi-decade failed experiment and there is no justification to continue sending good money after bad. The United States must end financial contributions to UNRWA, both in the future and currently scheduled to be paid. Humanitarian aid to organizations in Gaza must be conditioned on robust third-party oversight that ensures that staff are in no way affiliated with, and money is in no way passed under the table to, Hamas or other terror organizations. No funds should go to humanitarian organizations in Gaza until they acknowledge reality and recognize Hamas, Islamic Jihad, and Hezbollah as terrorist organizations. And no United States funds should go to humanitarian aid in Gaza until and unless the United States audits their staff to ensure they are not employing terrorists.

It is time for Congress to stop funding this organization that rapes, murders, and kidnaps innocents—and that has shown it has no willingness, desire, or capacity to stick to humanitarian aid and away from supporting antisemitism and terrorism.

Respectfully Submitted,



Brenna Bird  
Attorney General of Iowa



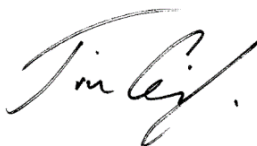
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