

The War on UNRWA in Jerusalem

***A drop from a torrent and a little from
an abundance of the liquidation of the
Palestinian cause***

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The ongoing Israeli campaign to liquidate the Palestinian cause and erase Palestinian existence persists through a brutal and bloody war of extermination waged by the Israeli occupation army against Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank.

This comprehensive plan to dismantle the Palestinian cause involves implementing a series of aggressive policies, including the closure of all institutions linked to Palestinian refugees. Among the most prominent targets is the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), established on December 8, 1949, to bear witness to the historical injustice inflicted on the Palestinian people.

The 24th issue of Al-Maqdisiyah Journal delves into various studies, research, and articles that highlight Israel's ongoing war against UNRWA. It sheds light

on the efforts to dismantle UNRWA's operations both within and beyond occupied Palestine, including in Jerusalem, the agency's main hub. The articles trace the escalation of these attacks in recent years, global reactions, the legality of the attempts to dissolve UNRWA, and the agency's potential future. They also explore strategies for resistance and confrontation.

In the upcoming article, we will examine the plans to dismantle UNRWA, analyzing their recent escalation and evaluating the agency's capacity to withstand these attacks. Additionally, we will review the reactions from Arab and international actors, recognizing that UNRWA stands as the final line of defense for Palestinian refugees in their struggle against renewed displacement and Zionist expulsion.

A joint and intensifying American-Zionist assault on UNRWA has become increasingly evident in recent years, beginning with the U.S. decision to cease funding the agency and boycott its activities. This hostility escalated through accusations of terrorism, culminating in persistent efforts to abolish the agency altogether. The significance of UNRWA lies in its close connection to the Palestinian cause, symbolizing the international commitment to the Palestinian refugee issue. While not an existential bond, UNRWA represents the global witness to the Palestinian refugees' plight and their right to return, as enshrined in international resolutions. Furthermore, the agency provides critical services to camp residents, who are deprived of basic human rights such as employment, housing, healthcare, and education.

The UN agency, UNRWA, was established by UN General Assembly Resolution No. 302 on December 8, 1949, as an extension of Resolution No. 194, which explicitly recognized the right of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes from which they were displaced in 1948. Initially, the agency was given a temporary mandate to provide relief and employment to Palestinian refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, the Gaza Strip, and the West Bank, until they could return to their homes. As such, UNRWA remained accountable to the UN General Assembly, the only body authorized to terminate its mission. However, over time, its temporary nature transformed into permanence with Resolution No. 393 (D5), which upheld that direct relief could not be ceased as

outlined in paragraph 302 (D4), while recommending that UNRWA continue its operations until peace and stability in the region allowed for the refugees' return.

Far from being a threat to Israel, the agency was viewed as a convenient means for Israel to avoid taking responsibility for the displaced Palestinian population. Israeli officials frequently expressed their appreciation for UNRWA, acknowledging its role in fostering stability in the West Bank and Gaza by providing necessary services.

While UNRWA was under the complete authority of the United Nations, its largest donors, led by the United States, exerted considerable control over its activities. Despite this, the agency's mandate was consistently renewed without difficulty—until the Trump administration came into power. Securing the required majority in the UN General Assembly to extend UNRWA's mandate became more challenging, necessitating greater Arab and Palestinian effort, especially as the U.S. and Israel intensified their efforts to undermine the agency. Their goal was to strip UNRWA of its funding, crippling its ability to function, and to dilute its mandate by redefining who qualified as a Palestinian refugee.

These efforts began with attempts to shift the agency's focus from relief to employment, aiming to strengthen the economies of host countries and create jobs for refugees, effectively integrating them and erasing their right of return. This strategy eventually led to severe budget cuts and reductions in donor contributions, deepening UNRWA's financial crisis. By 2015, the agency was so cash-strapped that it could not open schools on time—were it not for emergency interventions from Arab Gulf states, the school year would have been delayed.

After the Trump administration took office, public attacks against UNRWA escalated. Some members of Congress labeled the agency as one of the worst institutions within the UN, accusing it of harboring “terrorists.”

In 2018, the Trump administration enacted several measures targeting UNRWA. The first significant blow came on January 16, when it announced a reduction in aid. This was followed by a complete withdrawal of funding on August 3.

This American stance was part of a broader plan to dismantle the Palestinian issue, framed within what was then known as the “Deal of the Century.” This effort coincided with the declaration of Jerusalem as the unified and eternal capital of Israel and the decision to relocate the U.S. embassy there.

Perhaps the Trump administration anticipated that the upcoming United Nations General Assembly meetings in the autumn of 2019 would allow it to successfully block the extension of UNRWA’s mandate for another three years, until June 2023. However, this strategy failed spectacularly, as 170 countries voted in favor of extending the mandate, with only the United States and Israel opposing it, while seven nations abstained. This vote was a resounding affirmation of global support for UNRWA, underscoring the commitment to its original mandate and its responsibilities.

Despite this setback, American policies regarding UNRWA show no signs of abating. The U.S. continues to exert pressure, attempting to cut off funding and persuade other donor countries to withdraw their support, aiming to transform UNRWA from an international agency into a mere Arab humanitarian organization. Observers recognize that the intent behind targeting UNRWA is to undermine a key witness to the displacement of the Palestinian people and the seizure of their lands. Removing UNRWA from the equation would bolster efforts to question the existence of Palestinian refugees.

As UNRWA Commissioner-General Pierre Krähenbühl noted during the opening session of the League of Arab States Council on September 10, 2019, the crisis facing UNRWA is not merely financial; it is a political crisis tied to the fate and future of Palestinian refugees. He emphasized that the ongoing and escalating attacks on UNRWA, its services, and its legitimacy form part of a strategy aimed at weakening the essential criteria for a two-state solution and diminishing the prospects of the 2002 Arab Peace Initiative.

The primary reason for targeting UNRWA, as previously noted, is to obscure the evidence of Palestinians’ uprooting and forced displacement. This campaign aims to erase the profound historical witness of extensive ethnic cleansing and the brutal wars of extermination waged by Israel over the past seven decades. The heinous crimes and massacres committed, particularly

in the Gaza Strip in the past year, persist even today. Through the agency's records and testimony, the Zionist narrative—that Palestine was a land without a people for a people without a land—can be effectively challenged.

Israel views the maintenance of refugees outside their homeland as a critical issue and, consequently, denies their right to return. Undermining UNRWA serves this agenda. Since October 7, 2023, Zionist and American efforts to dismantle the agency have intensified. Israel has made new allegations, claiming that several UNRWA employees participated in the October attack due to their ties with resistance factions. They also asserted that 450 UNRWA employees in Gaza are affiliated with armed Palestinian groups. Following these accusations, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu stated that UNRWA is part of the problem, not the solution, asserting it is time to replace the agency with alternative entities.

The United States swiftly echoed these claims. The State Department announced the suspension of American funding to UNRWA, which had been partially restored under the Biden administration, pending verification of the Israeli allegations. Similar statements soon emerged from Britain, Japan, Germany, and France, culminating in the suspension of approximately \$440 million in funds. In March 2024, the U.S. Congress passed a bill to freeze UNRWA funding until March 2025, aligning with Israeli accusations.

Several U.S. research centers then proposed visions for a post-UNRWA landscape. These included suggestions for UNESCO to oversee the agency's schools, the World Food Program to manage humanitarian aid, the World Health Organization to supervise healthcare facilities, and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to handle refugee affairs in Lebanon, Syria, and Jordan, facilitating their integration into the host countries.

However, the countries hosting refugees, along with many others around the world, have bolstered their rejection of any attempts to undermine or dismantle UNRWA. The agency's role has become increasingly crucial amid the ongoing war of extermination and the escalation of Israeli crimes in the Gaza Strip. There is an urgent need for humanitarian relief and to confront the starvation tactics employed by the Israeli government in the region.

This solidarity was reflected in the supportive stances of countries like Spain and Norway. In March 2024, Canada, Finland, and Australia announced the resumption of their funding for the agency, while Japan also returned as a contributing nation. The results of impartial investigations conducted by the United Nations, at the request of Secretary-General António Guterres and overseen by former French Foreign Minister Catherine Colonna, dealt a significant blow to the Zionist-American plan to eliminate UNRWA.

These investigations concluded that the Israeli allegations against the agency were completely unfounded. They found that UNRWA adheres to strict policies that ensure compliance with the principle of neutrality. Disciplinary actions are imposed on any employees who violate this neutrality, contradicting the Israeli claims. Furthermore, the report revealed that UNRWA shares the names and duties of its employees annually with the governments of host countries, as well as with Israel and the United States. Notably, the Israeli government has not raised any concerns regarding these employees since 2011.

On July 12, 2024, an initiative was launched to unite commitments in support of UNRWA as it navigates political and financial challenges. This initiative, spearheaded by Jordan, Kuwait, and Slovenia, underscores the agency's vital role in providing services to Palestinian refugees, with 118 countries joining this tripartite effort. Tanja Fajon, Slovenia's Minister of Foreign Affairs, articulated the importance of UNRWA's work, stating, "My country appreciates the agency's role as the backbone of all humanitarian responses in Gaza. We commend the dedication of its employees in implementing the agency's mandate while upholding the principles of humanity, neutrality, integrity, and independence. UNRWA is also a pillar of regional stability."

Philippe Lazzarini, the Commissioner-General of UNRWA, expressed gratitude for the robust support and solidarity not only for the agency but also for its employees. He noted that the joint commitment initiative included all members of the Security Council and emphasized that it marked an important day for the agency amidst a fierce, politically motivated attack. He stressed the necessity of countries reaffirming their unwavering support for UNRWA. Despite this backing, Israel intensified its efforts to undermine and dismantle

the agency's operations in the Palestinian territories. On July 22, 2024, the Israeli Knesset passed a resolution declaring the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) a terrorist organization, effectively banning its operations within Israel.

The initial decision, which prohibited UNRWA from functioning in Israel, garnered 58 votes in favor out of 120 in the Knesset, with only nine opposing votes. This was followed by a second decision, supported by 63 votes against nine, stripping UNRWA employees of the legal immunities and privileges granted to UN personnel in Israel. Finally, a third decision classified UNRWA as a terrorist organization, passing with 50 votes in favor and ten against.

The Israeli Knesset's passage of the resolutions in their initial reading was met with widespread condemnation from all Palestinian factions and Arab nations. They viewed the measures as a blatant disregard for the international community and its organizations. This action was deemed invalid, reflecting the intentions of an occupying authority determined to obliterate the Palestinian cause, particularly the refugee issue and their right to return. The classification of UNRWA as a terrorist organization was specifically condemned, as it was seen as an attempt to politically assassinate the agency and undermine its symbolism, which affirms the rights of Palestinian refugees to return and seek compensation under international law.

In response to the intensified assault by Israel against the UN agency, several measures were implemented to further isolate it from Jerusalem. These included:

1. Freezing UNRWA's accounts in Israeli banks, justified by the false designation of the agency as a terrorist organization.
2. The Israeli Tax Authority demanded that UNRWA in Jerusalem pay 553 million shekels in accumulated taxes, in addition to declaring all its properties and operational details within the city.
3. The Israel Land Authority ordered UNRWA to vacate the Qalandia Vocational Training Center in East Jerusalem, which had been allocated to the agency by Jordan in 1952, and demanded a user fee of \$4.5 million, despite the American knowledge that UNRWA is entirely exempt from taxes as a UN agency.

4. The Israeli government halted all land contracts with UNRWA, which the Israeli Minister of Housing labeled as criminal, and moved to evict the agency from its leased properties, particularly its main headquarters in Sheikh Jarrah and its office in the Kafr Aqab neighborhood, north of East Jerusalem.

5. Israeli Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich ordered the cancellation of the tax benefits traditionally granted to the agency as a UN entity. Consequently, customs authorities ceased shipments of UNRWA goods, blocking the entry of vital aid and relief.

In addition to these governmental actions, Israeli authorities incited local settlers against UNRWA, leading to attacks on the agency's headquarters and threats against humanitarian workers.

UNRWA operates its Jerusalem headquarters through a series of rented properties, as confirmed by official documents and numerous Palestinian reports:

- The main headquarters in Sheikh Jarrah, rented from the Jordanian government.
- Silwan School, leased from the Abdo family.
- Wadi al-Joz School, rented from the Siam family.
- Al-Zawiya Clinic, an Indian endowment that served as the headquarters for Indian battalions during the British Mandate, with annual rent paid to the Indian embassy.
- The land for the Qalandia Institute has been allocated by the Jordanian government for the establishment of a vocational training center.
- The Shuafat camp serves as a designated space for the benefit of 500 refugee families, according to a decision from the Jordanian government.

Solid Position

Despite the evident targeting, the agency has consistently reaffirmed its commitment to operating in Jerusalem. On June 8, 2024, agency spokesman Jonathan Fowler emphasized that UNRWA will maintain its activities from its headquarters in East Jerusalem, regardless of the ongoing pressures. He

pointed out that the latest attack came on May 30, 2024, when Israeli authorities ordered the evacuation of the UNRWA headquarters in Sheikh Jarrah within thirty days, citing the need for approval from the Israel Land Authority to construct a new facility on that land.

Fowler stated, «The manner in which Israeli authorities engage with UNRWA contradicts the principles of international diplomacy and respect for UN entities.» He reminded all that UNRWA has occupied its headquarters since the 1950s, asserting, «We have the right to be where we want; this is our headquarters, and we will not vacate it. We are here in occupied territory under international law.» He also revealed that extremist Israelis had attacked the agency's headquarters in Sheikh Jarrah, spitting on staff and throwing stones at their vehicles. He concluded that Israel's attempts to classify UNRWA as a terrorist organization represent a broader strategy to dismantle the agency. Ultimately, the legal ramifications of Israeli policies, alongside the measures, procedures, and incitements pursued by the Israeli government against UNRWA, underscore the gravity of Israeli violations of international law and bilateral agreements.

The Israeli actions against UNRWA and its headquarters in Jerusalem, coupled with the terrorist attacks it has endured, constitute a direct affront to the agreement reached between UNRWA and the Israeli government on June 14, 1967, shortly after the occupation of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. This agreement outlined the terms of engagement between the two parties and acknowledged the existing obligations, responsibilities, and facilities between the Jordanian government and UNRWA prior to the occupation. The agreement, articulated through correspondence, confirmed mutual obligations in line with international law. One such letter from the Israeli government to the UNRWA Commissioner-General clearly stated:

«I wish to refer to our discussions over the past two days and reaffirm our mutual understanding that, at the request of the Government of Israel, UNRWA will continue to assist Palestinian refugees with the full cooperation of the Israeli authorities in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.»

In return, the Government of Israel will facilitate UNRWA's mission to the

best of its ability, adhering to any necessary military security protocols. With this understanding, we are prepared to agree in principle to the following:

1. Protection and Security: Ensuring the safety and security of UNRWA personnel, installations, and property.

2. Movement of Vehicles: Allowing the free movement of UNRWA vehicles into and out of Israel and the designated areas.

3. International Staff Movement: Permitting the Agency's international staff to travel within and outside Israel and the designated areas, along with the issuance of identification documents and any necessary permits.

4. Local Staff Movement: Facilitating the movement of the Agency's local staff within the designated areas under arrangements established with military authorities.

5. Communication Facilities: Providing radio, communication, and landing facilities.

6. Financial Arrangements: Until a supplementary agreement is finalized, maintaining the existing financial arrangements with the relevant governmental authorities regarding:

(a) Tax Exemptions: Exemptions from customs duties, taxes, and charges on the importation of supplies, goods, and equipment.

(b) Warehousing and Labor Services: Providing warehousing and labor services for unloading, handling, and transportation by rail or road free of charge in the controlled areas.

(c) Cost Recognition: Acknowledging any costs incurred by the Agency that were previously covered by the relevant government.

(d) Governance by UN Convention: Recognizing that the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations, dated February 17, 1946, to which Israel is a signatory, governs the relations between the Government and UNRWA regarding all functions of the Agency.

«This letter and your written acceptance will be regarded by the Government of Israel as an interim agreement, remaining in effect until it is replaced or revoked.»

(Michael Comay – Political Advisor to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and



Ambassador-at-Large) «End of quote.»

UNRWA Commissioner-General Laurence Michel Moore has confirmed in his correspondence the agency's readiness to continue its assistance to Palestinian refugees in the West Bank and Gaza Strip based on the framework proposed in your letter. This will be subject to any supplementary agreements that may be required and to detailed arrangements finalized by UNRWA representatives with the authorities in the two areas.

This cooperation does not imply any commitment or position on the part of UNRWA regarding the status of any of the areas in question or any related instruments; it solely concerns the continuation of its humanitarian mission.

As I mentioned during our conversation, the facilities outlined in paragraphs (a) to (d) of your letter are essential for the effective functioning of the Agency. Therefore, I expect that any current restrictions on the full use of these facilities will be lifted as soon as military security considerations allow.

I concur that your letter and this response form an interim agreement between UNRWA and the Government of Israel. This agreement will remain in force until it is replaced or terminated, subject to any relevant instructions or resolutions from the United Nations. End of quote.

The correspondence between the Government of Israel and the UNRWA

Commissioner in 1967 established a joint agreement under which UNRWA exercised its role and jurisdiction for nearly fifty years. Consequently, Israel's recent stance on the Agency represents a significant reversal of this agreement. These Israeli policies and measures against UNRWA constitute a grave violation of the United Nations Charter. UNRWA is one of the international organizations derived from the UN, integral to its framework. This is affirmed by the decisions establishing UNRWA, issued by the UN General Assembly, and subsequent resolutions that uphold UNRWA's continued role and presence for the Palestinian people. Key resolutions include Assembly Resolution 194 from December 1948, Resolution 212 from November 1948, and Resolution 302 from December 1949, alongside later resolutions like Resolution 2252 from July 1967 and Resolution 76/78 from December 2021. Relevant Security Council resolutions, beginning with Resolution 237 from 1967 and Resolution 259 from 1968, have all emphasized the necessity of maintaining UNRWA's functions until the decisions regarding the return and compensation of Palestinian refugees are implemented.

These resolutions reaffirm the renewal of UNRWA's mandate and the financial obligations of donor countries, underscoring UNRWA's status as a specialized international organization under the UN's auspices. The UN General Assembly, the body that created UNRWA and assigned it its tasks, prevents any state from unilaterally intervening in or obstructing this organization from fulfilling its responsibilities in accordance with the United Nations Charter. This is particularly emphasized in the following articles:

Article (100) states: "In the performance of their duties, the Secretary-General and the staff shall not seek or receive instructions from any government or from any other authority external to the Organization. They shall refrain from taking any action which might reflect on their positions as international officials responsible only to the Organization."

Article (104) declares: "The Organization shall enjoy in the territory of each of its Members such legal capacity as is necessary for the exercise of its functions and the achievement of its purposes."

Article (105) of the UN Charter states:

- The Organization shall enjoy, within the territory of each of its members, such privileges and exemptions as are necessary to fulfill its purposes.
- Likewise, the representatives of UN member states and officials of the Organization shall be granted the privileges and immunities essential for the independent performance of their duties related to the Organization.
- The General Assembly may make recommendations to define the application of paragraphs 1 and 2 of this Article and may propose agreements with member states for this purpose.

Israel's actions clearly violated the provisions of the International Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel, adopted by the UN General Assembly through Resolution 59/49 on December 9, 1994. This Convention applies not only to UNRWA but also binds the Israeli government, as Israel is a signatory. The Israeli government had reaffirmed its commitment to the provisions outlined in the exchanged letters that defined its agreement with UNRWA in 1967.

Additionally, these Israeli measures represent a profound breach of Israeli-Palestinian agreements, particularly the 1993 Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements. They also contravene subsequent accords between the Palestinian Authority and UNRWA regarding the agency's work in areas under Palestinian control, as outlined in the letters exchanged between President Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the PLO, and UNRWA Commissioner-General Peter Hansen. In those exchanges, the Palestine Liberation Organization pledged the following commitments:

- Ensuring the protection and security of UNRWA staff, facilities, and assets.
- Permitting the free entry and exit of supplies, materials, and equipment to and from areas under Palestinian Authority control, and facilitating their transfer within the region without delay or obstruction.
- Guaranteeing free movement within and across the areas governed by the Palestinian Authority.
- Recognizing UNRWA's right to raise the United Nations flag over its facilities, vehicles, and modes of transportation.

• Providing unrestricted access to wireless and satellite communications and connecting them to the UN's communication networks.

• Facilitating air and sea transport within Palestinian-controlled areas without imposing fees.

• Acknowledging UNRWA's exemption from customs duties, taxes, and charges on the importation of supplies, materials, and equipment.

• Ensuring the provision of all necessary services for unloading, packing, and storing supplies, materials, and equipment intended for use in areas under the Palestinian Authority, and their transportation by land or rail without any fees. In his letter to the UNRWA Commissioner-General, the Chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization added:

«If the above aligns with the understanding of the Palestine Liberation Organization, I propose that this letter, along with your confirmation, be considered an agreement on the matter.»

Yasser Arafat further expressed:

«I would like to once again extend our deep appreciation and gratitude to the Commissioner-General of UNRWA and its staff for the exemplary manner in which they have carried out their mission, providing invaluable services and assistance to Palestinian refugees, whether in Jordan, Lebanon, or the Syrian Arab Republic. I trust that these services will continue, both in the occupied Palestinian territories, including Jerusalem, and elsewhere, until the Palestinian refugee issue is resolved in accordance with human rights principles and relevant United Nations resolutions, particularly General Assembly Resolution 194 (III) and Security Council Resolution 237 (1967).»

— Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization

The Commissioner-General of UNRWA responded with the following:

«I have the honor to acknowledge your letter dated 24 June 1994, in which you established the foundations of our mutual understanding regarding UNRWA's continued assistance to the Palestinian population in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.»

He continued:

«I also refer to the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government

Arrangements, signed in Washington on 13 September 1993, and the Agreement on the Gaza Strip and Jericho Area, signed in Cairo on 4 May 1994, between the Government of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization. As the Palestinian Authority assumes powers and responsibilities in the Gaza Strip, Jericho Area, and other parts of the West Bank, and in response to the request of the Palestine Liberation Organization, I wish to confirm our mutual agreement that the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) will continue its assistance to the Palestinian people in these regions.»

«In order to facilitate the continued provision of UNRWA's historic services to the Palestinian people in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and to initiate new efforts to improve their social and economic conditions, the Palestine Liberation Organization, as the representative of the Palestinian people, agrees to apply in all its dealings with UNRWA the relevant provisions of Articles 100, 104, and 105 of the United Nations Charter, as well as the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations, which the Palestine Liberation Organization endorses, though it is not formally a party to it.»

«I am honored to confirm that your letter faithfully reflects our mutual understanding. I agree to treat your letter, along with my acceptance of it, as a formal agreement between the Palestine Liberation Organization and UNRWA on this matter. My understanding is that the Palestinian Authority will assume powers and responsibilities within the occupied Palestinian territories, including Jerusalem.» End of quote.

All Israeli actions—laws, procedures, and practices—aimed at dismantling UNRWA's role and erasing its existence to ultimately dissolve the refugee issue and the broader Palestinian cause, now extend to camps in the West Bank, particularly Jenin, Tulkarm, and Tubas. These camps, living testimonies of the 1948 Nakba, have become vivid reminders of that catastrophe, which is now resurfacing in its most brutal and criminal forms. These official Israeli measures, illegal and aggressive, are met with firm international opposition. The world stands resolute, rejecting and condemning these actions, and fully supporting UNRWA's continued existence. The agency remains a symbol of

international political commitment to both the refugee issue and the Palestinian cause, particularly amid ongoing Israeli aggression and a war of extermination against the Palestinian people.

There is no doubt that Israeli authorities can obstruct, or even attempt to block, UNRWA's operations in the occupied Palestinian territories—be it in Gaza, the West Bank, or Jerusalem. However, no matter what measures Israel takes, it cannot erase, dissolve, or replace UNRWA as it so wishes. Israel's plans are being fully exposed, and the majority of the world's nations are standing firmly against them. The United Nations, with its Secretary-General António Guterres, along with UNRWA Commissioner-General Philippe Lazzarini and the overwhelming majority of the General Assembly members—the agency's principal backers—remain committed to defending and upholding UNRWA's mission.

This international support underscores the urgent need for coordinated Arab and Palestinian diplomatic efforts to counter and thwart Israeli attempts to undermine UNRWA. Preserving the agency's presence in Jerusalem is vital, not only for its symbolic and humanitarian significance but also for its immense strategic political value—an importance that must not be underestimated.