UNRWA's education filled with hate, calls to jihad and violence – report

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Educational content produced by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) is filled with hate and encouragement to jihad, violence and martyrdom, and entirely devoid of any material that promotes peace and peace-making, according to the research institute IMPACT-se based out of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

IMPACT-se describes itself as a “research, policy and advocacy organization that monitors and analyzes education,” according to “international standards on peace and tolerance as derived from UNESCO declarations and resolutions.”

According to the report, children in the Gaza Strip are called upon to "defend the motherland with blood."

It can take the form of a math problem asking students to identify the correct number of martyrs from the First Intifada, to the complete eradication of Israel, a UN member state, from any maps featured in UNRWA-created books, with the entire territory being labelled as a modern-day Palestine with no demarcation lines.

When it is mentioned, Israel is usually referred to as “The Enemy” or the “Zionist Occupation,” a clear violation of the UN’s principles of neutrality that UNRWA is expected to prioritize, explained IMPACT-se in the research.

The report goes on to expose the conspiracies propagated in the educational material, such as a libel that “Zionists” deliberately set fire to Al-Aqsa Mosque and that Israel deliberately dumps radioactive and toxic waste in the West Bank.

According to IMPACT-se, this UNRWA-created material is, in places, more extremist than Palestinian Authority material it complements.

This includes content that denounces Israeli-Palestinian economic cooperation, which flies in the face of internationally-supported cooperation efforts.

In response to a previous IMPACT-se report, UNRWA Commissioner-General Phillippe Lazzarini claimed at the European Parliament that “there is no room for any teaching that would encourage violence, discrimination, racism and antisemitism.”

Lazzarini further stated in a Jerusalem Post press interview: “Let’s be clear: There is no glorification of martyrs being taught in UNRWA schools... UNRWA is also in disagreement with this example [the glorification of Dalal Mugrabi]… UNRWA has given clear instructions that this not be taught in the schools.”

IMPACT-se claimed furthermore that its "findings show that these UNRWA materials clearly direct students to learn about Dalal Mugrabi, perpetrator of a terror act that killed 38 people including 13 children," stating that in the agency's material, she is characterized as a role model.

IMPACT-se CEO Marcus Sheff explained that last year, Lazzarini "launched a charm offensive, promising politicians and media that UNRWA schools are ‘a haven for tolerance.’ But the reality is that through its own-branded material, UNRWA is complicit in radicalizing [Palestinian] schoolchildren through the glorification of terrorists, encouragement to violence and teaching of blood libels."

Sheff added: "Let’s be clear: UNRWA is a United Nations organization, funded by the international donor community. The majority of its budget is earmarked for education. It is not unreasonable for donor countries to ensure their funding is not used to teach hate, or that prospective donors conduct due diligence of UNRWA school materials before they transfer funds.

"UNRWA has for years refused point-blank to make public its ‘Curriculum Framework’ that it claims combats incitement in the Palestinian textbooks," he said. "Now we know why: Some of its own content is even worse than that of the Palestinian Authority."

Sheff concluded: "After persuading governments and legislators over the last several months and without ever producing evidence that UNRWA does not incite children, Mr. Lazzarini needs to explain how this happened on his watch – and what he intends to do about it.”