**High time to dismantle UNRWA**

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In theory, the purpose of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency was to aid the Palestinians and to help end the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In reality, this agency has done just the opposite: UNRWA has become a primary obstacle preventing the State of Israel and the Palestinian people from living in peace. After almost seventy years in existence, UNRWA must finally be dismantled.

Established in 1949, UNRWA was originally intended only to assist the Palestinians for a short period of time. After continuous extensions far beyond its original mandate, this agency now provides any registered Palestinian refugee with schooling, healthcare, social services, and countless other benefits. While UNRWA may seem to support the Palestinians, their actions have proven that their ultimate goal is to harm the State of Israel.

Firstly, UNRWA schools strive to instill a blatantly anti-Semitic and anti-Israel ideology in their students. UNRWA schoolbooks praise terrorism, insist that Palestine must be liberated, and have replaced the State of Israel with the State of Palestine on their maps. Rather than recognizing recent archeological excavations, UNRWA students are taught to reject any Jewish connection to the land of Israel.

Just as education has the power to lift up an entire society, so too, a corrupt educational system has the power to tear it apart. As Khaled al Hassan, a founder of Fatah and an early advisor to Yasser Arafat, once stated, "while Fatah's terror cells could only train one agent at a time, UNRWA schools could train the hearts of the masses."

UNRWA has instituted two policies which, when considered together, acts as a formidable obstacle to resolving the conflict. Unlike all other refugee assistance programs, UNRWA grants refugee status to the descendants of any registered Palestinian. This essentially means that even if the great-grandchild of a registered refugee is born and raised in New York, they will still be deemed a refugee. As expected, the number of registered refugees has skyrocketed - from 726,000 in 1949, to over 5,000,000 today.

Secondly, UNRWA strongly supports the Palestinian demand to have a right of return to the entire land of Israel. With an estimated population of 9,000,000 Israeli citizens, consisting of less than 7,000,000 Jews, if Israel were to ever agree to this demand the Jewish State would cease to exist. This demand for a "right of return," combined with the skyrocketing number of refugees, has been a roadblock on the pathway to establishing peace.

Finally, while UNRWA publicly declares itself to be dedicated to improving the lives of the Palestinians, it privately maintains close ties to Hamas, a known terrorist organization. Both Suhail al-Hindi, a one-time leader of UNRWA, and Muhammad al-Jamassi, an UNRWA staffer, have been elected to leadership positions within this terror group.

According to UN Watch, a leading watchdog group, terror tunnels were discovered below UNRWA schools, and, in Gaza, schools have a representative designated to recruiting students into Hamas. Furthermore, terror groups have used these buildings to store rockets, thereby forcing each child to act as a human shield and to live in perpetual danger. Rather than acting for the betterment of the Palestinian people, UNRWA has allowed terrorist organizations to manipulate innocent children in an endless war against the State of Israel.

UNRWA continues to receive funding, even while actively working to prevent any form of peace between the Israelis and the Palestinians. After almost seventy years in existence, it is time that we do our part in bringing an end to this conflict. UNRWA must be dismantled for the sake of preventing the loss of any more innocent lives and to protect the Palestinian children from receiving a hate-filled, anti-Semitic education. Without the continuous interference of UNRWA, all Israelis and Palestinians will have a greater chance of one day living side by side, in peace.