UN global comms arm under fire for anti-Israel bias as critics call for reforms

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<https://www.foxnews.com/world/need-reform-un-media-department-carrying-out-anti-israel-agenda>

As a [major ‘liquidity crisis’ looms](https://www.foxnews.com/world/doge-usaid-budget-cuts-hit-un-worst-liquidity-crisis-since-its-establishment) for United Nations entities in the face of Elon Musk’s Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) funding cuts, with experts saying the Trump administration should examine the U.N.’s media branch, the Department of Global Communications, for its role in churning out anti-Israel propaganda.

‘The U.N. continues its spin-cycle messaging machine without washing out its waste and inefficiencies,’ former National Security Council Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for International Organization Affairs Hugh Dugan told Fox News Digital. ‘That’s its real liquidity crisis.’

Among the Department of Global Communications’ responsibilities are the provision of press support, upkeep of the U.N. Dag Hammarskjöld Library, heading of worldwide information centers and coordination of the U.N.’s Twitter presence. A full independent review of the Department’s activities is set to begin this year.

Anne Bayefsky, director of the Touro Institute on Human Rights and the Holocaust and president of Human Rights Voices, expressed her desire for the U.S. itself to examine the Department of Global Communications’ funding. Bayefsky told Fox News Digital that ‘the United Nations is the world headquarters of global disinformation,’ with an ‘assembly line of lies, hate speech, incitement to violence, and antisemitism [that] is totally out-of-control.’

Bayefsky said it is the ‘organization itself that poses an integrity risk — to world peace, civilized discourse, and human rights protection. The information environment cultivated by the U.N. has been poisoning the minds of generations of Americans, so isn't it about time that Washington posed a risk to this U.N. ‘work’?’

The Department’s fixation on Israel was evidenced in a February report about its operations, in which it briefly described crisis communications cells it runs regarding worldwide disasters in Haiti, Sudan and Ukraine, and went into more expansive detail describing its cell on ‘Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory.’

According to the Department, the crisis in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory ‘required strong messaging and outreach to ensure continued international support for the work of the United Nations and its partners.’ The Department also mentioned that the cell ‘analyzed information integrity risks, such as the spread of misinformation and disinformation about United Nations work.’

Throughout 2024, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) came under serious scrutiny and [lost donors after information was uncovered](https://www.foxnews.com/world/controversy-plagued-un-agency-employed-oct-7-terrorists-facing-new-problems-country-redirects-funding) about UNRWA leaders’ and members’ ties to terrorism, and the hate propelled through UNRWA curricula.

Fox News Digital asked Melissa Fleming, U.N. Under-Secretary-General for Communications, to clarify the department’s allegations of misinformation and disinformation, and to describe why ‘strong messaging’ was required of the department.

Fleming explained that the Department needed to ‘clearly explain the role’ of the U.N. and its humanitarian agencies, and analyze ‘information environments to better understand trends that might pose risk to the U.N.’s work.’

Dugan, who was a senior advisor to 11 U.S. ambassadors to the U.N. said when it comes to the crisis in Gaza, ‘there’s some special treatment they’re giving to that region and the coverage of it, which I think is concerning to me.’ He noted that cells focusing on Haiti, Ukraine, and Sudan ‘don’t talk about misinformation [or] disinformation.’ The situation, he said, ‘wreaks… of the U.N.’s hand in propagandizing and service as a type of mediator of what information gets to whom, and when, and how.’

Asked how many hours the Department of Global Communications devoted to its various crisis cells, Fleming said that time ‘is determined by a number of factors,’ including ‘the scale of the crisis and the speed of developments on the ground,’ and the level of international interest and U.N. events involved with the crisis. Fleming added that cells meet more often ‘in the early stages of a crisis.’

Fleming said that ‘the Israel-Occupied Palestinian Territory crisis communications cell has met on a weekly basis for approximately one hour’ following the attacks of Oct. 7, 2023. She noted that this was ‘equivalent to the frequency and timing of meetings for the Ukraine crisis during the first year of the full-scale invasion by the Russian Federation in 2022.’

Fleming did not state how much time has been devoted to the Haiti or Sudan crisis cells. The organization’s report on its activities refers to the situation in Sudan as a ‘massive humanitarian crisis.’

In January, former Secretary of State Antony Blinken [declared that rebel actions in Sudan](https://www.foxnews.com/world/biden-admin-slammed-waiting-declare-genocide-sudan) constituted genocide. Blinken described how tens of thousands of Sudanese individuals had died in conflict, that 30 million required humanitarian aid and that 638,000 were experiencing ‘the worst famine in Sudan’s recent history.’

Blinken stated that Sudanese rebel group Rapid Support Forces (RSF) ‘and RSF-aligned militias have continued to direct attacks against civilians, have systematically murdered men and boys — even infants — on an ethnic basis, and (have) deliberately targeted women and girls from certain ethnic groups for rape and other forms of brutal sexual violence.’

The U.N.’s Independent International Fact-Finding Mission for the Sudan did not mention genocide in its September 2024 findings that ‘Sudan’s warring parties have committed an appalling range of harrowing human rights violations and international crimes, including many which may amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity.’

Conversely, the U.N. Special Committee to investigate Israeli practices declared in November 2024 that ‘Israel’s warfare in Gaza is consistent with the characteristics of genocide, with mass civilian casualties and life-threatening conditions intentionally imposed on Palestinians.’

Former national security advisor Jake Sullivan said last year that the Biden administration does ‘not believe what is happening in Gaza is a genocide.’

David May, a research analyst at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, told Fox News Digital that ‘the focus on an imagined genocide, Gaza, is taking time and focus away from an actual genocide, Sudan.’ May added that ‘essentially, the Department of Global Communications is tasked with presenting a Palestinian narrative and uses U.N. funds to act as another pro-Palestinian U.N. body.’

May said that ‘while the United States withholds funding to the United Nations proportionate to the budgets of Palestinian-specific bodies, Washington does not account for more general [U.N. departments](https://www.foxnews.com/category/world/united-nations) carrying out an anti-Israel agenda.’

Dugan expressed concern over the Department of Global Communications’ emphasis on its role in combating misinformation in its latest report. It ‘sends its mandate to go far beyond daily relations with the press corps,’ he explained, and instead ‘sets them up to be judge, jury and executioner on storylines and narratives that the secretariat employees find offensive.’