



General Assembly

Distr.: General
5 August 2024

Original: English

Seventy-ninth session

Item 48 of the provisional agenda*

**United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine
Refugees in the Near East**

Palestine refugees' properties and their revenues

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report is submitted pursuant to paragraph 6 of General Assembly resolution [78/75](#) of 7 December 2023 on Palestine refugees' properties and their revenues. On 26 April 2024, the Secretary-General sent a note verbale to all Member States and the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine, drawing their attention to the relevant provisions of resolution [78/75](#) and requesting any pertinent information concerning any action taken, or envisaged, in relation to the implementation of the resolution be conveyed to the Secretariat by 24 June 2024. Replies were received from Colombia, Israel and the Russian Federation and are reproduced in the present report.

* [A/79/150](#).



I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to paragraph 6 of resolution [78/75](#) of 7 December 2023 on Palestine refugees' properties and their revenues.
2. On 26 April, the Secretary-General sent a note verbale to the Permanent Representatives of all Member States, as well as the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations, drawing their attention to the relevant provisions of the resolution and requesting any pertinent information concerning any action taken or envisaged, in relation to its implementation. As at 24 June 2024, replies were received from Colombia, Israel and the Russian Federation. These replies are reproduced in the present report.

II. Replies received from Member States and Observers

Colombia

[Original: Spanish]

Colombia reaffirms that the occupation of the Palestinian territory is a violation of international law and runs counter to the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, and reiterates that, in accordance with the principles of equity and justice, the Palestine refugees are entitled to their property and the income derived therefrom.

Likewise, Colombia reaffirms that the Israeli settlements in Palestine, including East Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan, are illegal and constitute an obstacle to peace and economic and social development, and joins the international call to put an end to all settlement activities, in full compliance with all relevant Security Council resolutions.

Colombia also recognizes and highlights the important work carried out in support of the Palestine refugee population in the Middle East by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), which, since 1950, has been dedicated to conducting works and direct aid programmes for Palestine refugees.

Humanitarian assistance is rooted in two principles of international humanitarian law: the principle of distinction and the principle of respect for, protection and humane treatment of persons not participating or no longer participating in hostilities. In this regard, supporting the work of UNRWA is an obligation for all States that promote respect for international law and international humanitarian law.

For this reason, Colombia has historically voted in favour of the General Assembly resolution entitled "Assistance to Palestine refugees", in which the Assembly recognizes the Agency's contribution with regard to emergency assistance and to the well-being, protection and human development of the Palestine refugees, and reaffirms the need for the unimpeded continuation of its work, pending the just resolution of the question of the Palestine refugees.

Similarly, in 2023, Colombia made two contributions to UNRWA and, as a reflection of the unwavering support and commitment of the Government of President Gustavo Petro to Palestine, Colombia aims to support the Agency's work again this year. Colombia has also voted in favour of General Assembly resolutions in which the Secretary-General requests information from Member States, in particular Assembly resolutions [78/75](#), [78/78](#) and [78/74](#).

Lastly, Colombia reaffirms its conviction that the definitive resolution of the Israel-Palestine conflict and regional stability necessarily involve a two-State solution, in accordance with the many resolutions adopted by the United Nations, in particular General Assembly resolution [181 \(II\)](#) of 1947 and Security Council resolution [242 \(1967\)](#). Palestinians and Israelis deserve to live in peace, within secure and recognized borders.

Israel

[Original: English]

The Permanent Mission of Israel to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and has the honour to refer to his note concerning General Assembly resolutions [78/75](#), [78/74](#) and [78/73](#) adopted by the Assembly on 7 December 2023, under the agenda item “United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East”.

Israel decided, once again, to vote against those resolutions due to the political motivation that stands behind them and the fact that they represent a one-sided view which fails to reflect the reality on the ground.

Israel has warned time and again of the major problems that characterize United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) activity in the Gaza Strip, including the employment of terrorists, the incitement to hatred and antisemitism in the UNRWA school system and the usage of UNRWA premises for terrorist purposes, as was made clear also in the reports of the Secretary-General ([A/73/150](#) and [A/72/150](#)). Nevertheless, after the revelations concerning the participation of certain UNRWA employees in the terrorist attack of 7 October, more information was exposed concerning the massive and systematic infiltration of Hamas into the ranks of UNRWA in Gaza, in a way that makes it clear that UNRWA in Gaza is beyond repair.

On 7 October, Hamas organized and led a major terror attack on Israeli territory and citizens that included butchering, murdering, burning alive, sexually assaulting, raping, defiling bodies and the kidnapping of Israeli and foreign citizens of all backgrounds, ages and religions. UNRWA employees actively participated in this terrorist attack. All of the above has been presented to the United Nations in the time frame since the attack.

The infiltration into the ranks of UNRWA by Hamas has been a recurring concern, which was presented over the years by Israel to UNRWA and to senior United Nations officials in letters or in-person meetings. However, the full scope of this infiltration was unknown and has become clear only after 7 October. Hundreds of terrorists, members of Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), have been employed by UNRWA in the Gaza Strip, some of them hold high-ranking positions either in UNRWA or in Hamas. Israel has shared this information with the United Nations in an elaborated and detailed manner. Moreover, Israel has shared with the United Nations a partial list, containing the names of hundreds of terrorists employed by UNRWA in Gaza, some of them hold positions of school principals and deputy school principals. Catherine Colonna, the Chair of the Independent Review Group on UNRWA, determined in the final report that “any involvement in a militarized group that promotes discrimination or violence, such as Hamas or Islamic Jihad, violates the principle of neutrality”. However, despite of the shocking revelation that so many UNRWA employees who are supposed to do humanitarian activity are actually members of terrorist organizations, thus serving the malicious agenda of Hamas or PIJ, the United Nations decided not to investigate this clear breach of neutrality.

Neither the Office of Internal Oversight Services nor the Independent Review Group received a mandate to investigate this massive employment of terrorists by UNRWA.

Furthermore, the usage of UNRWA infrastructure and facilities for terrorist purposes by Hamas and PIJ has been proven to be a similar reoccurring theme. Over the years, Israel has presented also this major problem to UNRWA and to senior United Nations officials in letters or in-person meetings. Once again, the scope of this problem was made clear only after 7 October, when it was realized that dozens of UNRWA premises in the Gaza Strip included within them or in their immediate surroundings a permanent terrorist infrastructure, such as tunnels, tunnel shafts, operation rooms, weapons caches, etc. for the usage of Hamas. In two instances, tunnels that had been exposed within UNRWA schools in recent years and according to UNRWA were effectively sealed right-after, have been proven to be active and used by Hamas during the current war. The most horrific example of the abuse of UNRWA infrastructure by Hamas is the terror tunnel that was exposed underneath UNRWA headquarters in the Gaza Strip. This tunnel, 700 meters long and 18 meters deep, served as Hamas' intelligence command centre and included a central servers farm. The electrical infrastructure of this tunnel was directly connected to UNRWA electrical infrastructure. It is impossible to imagine that UNRWA was unaware of it. Keeping in mind the number of UNRWA employees who are members of Hamas and PIJ, it is no wonder that UNRWA premises served the interests of Hamas to such a degree. It is our understanding that Hamas views UNRWA in Gaza as its strategic asset and acts accordingly.

The usage of UNRWA facilities by Hamas as "human shields" is not confined only to the Gaza Strip. For instance, the joint operations room used by the military-terrorist wings of the Palestinian terrorist organizations in Jenin (which was targeted by the Israeli Defense Forces in July 2023) was located only meters away from an UNRWA facility. This information was presented to the Commissioner-General himself in a meeting at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

UNRWA is an organization that perpetuates the Palestinian refugee problem. It also perpetuates the narrative of the right of return, as it were, in order to eliminate the State of Israel. By perpetuating Palestinian refugees' status, UNRWA demonstrates that it is part of the problem and not part of the solution.

In accordance with the above, it is unsurprising that the problem of incitement for violence and Jihad in UNRWA education system persists. Several studies and reports regarding incitement in UNRWA education system were published by independent research institutes and non-governmental organizations, such as IMPACT-se, the Georg Eckert Institute, United Nations Watch and the Center for Near East Policy Research. It is important to take notice that incitement for violence and jihad can be found not only in the Palestinian Authority textbooks used by UNRWA, but also in self-produced supplemental educational materials prepared by UNRWA teachers themselves. UNRWA was confronted with this information many times, but decided to turn a blind eye and chose not to rectify the situation in an effective manner. The overall picture of a lingering process of education for violence within UNRWA schools is worrying.

The role that UNRWA employees and facilities play during the current war, serving the terrorist interests of Hamas, and the inability of UNRWA leadership to commit to the immediate dismissal of all Hamas members employed by it, makes it clear that UNRWA in Gaza is beyond repair.

Russian Federation

[Original: English]

The Russian Federation reiterates its consistent position in favour of strict compliance with the key resolutions of the United Nations Security Council and the United Nations General Assembly on the Middle East settlement, with emphasis on the relevant Security Council resolution [497 \(1981\)](#). In addition, the Russian Federation has consistently opposed the arbitrary decisions of the Israeli and United States authorities to extend and recognize Israeli sovereignty over the occupied territory of the Golan Heights, condemned the illegal construction of Israeli settlements and the Israeli attacks and air-strikes on the territory of Syria. We would also like to reiterate our full support for the mandate of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) in the Golan to monitor the withdrawal between Syria and Israel.

With regard to United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, we wish to reiterate our unwavering support for the continued, sustained and uninterrupted operation of the Agency, which is the only structure providing comprehensive assistance to the Palestinians, both in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and in the neighbouring Arab countries. The Russian Federation opposes attempts by the Israeli leadership to designate UNRWA as a terrorist organization and to prohibit its operations in East Jerusalem, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. We emphasize the importance of preserving and protecting the UNRWA mandate with regard to one of the final status issues – the fundamental rights of the Palestinian refugees.
