

Funding the Future

The UNRWA has been a force for peace and the good of pe...

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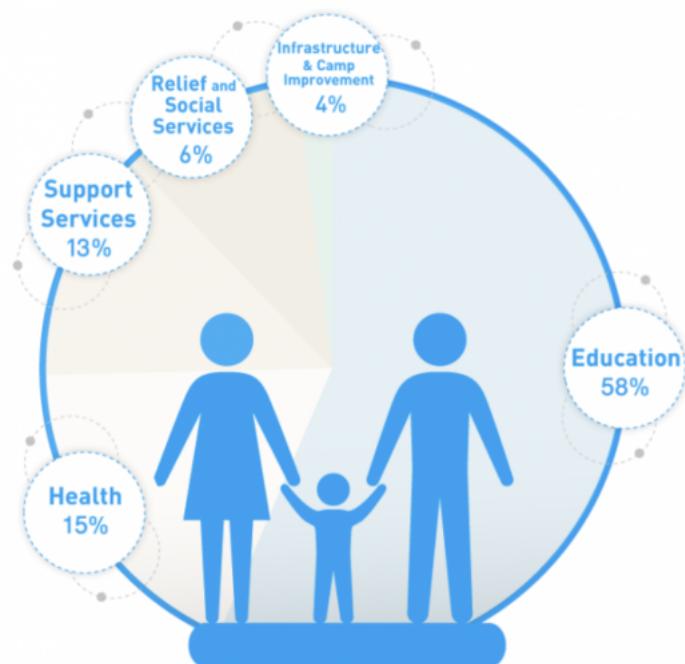
Trolls have been arriving here in some numbers, asking for my opinion on the United Nations RWA, which runs the UN's programmes to support Palestinian refugees.

As [it says of itself](#):

UNRWA is one of the largest United Nations programmes, with over 30,000 personnel working across five areas of operations, and is unique in that it delivers services directly to beneficiaries.

UNRWA Headquarters are located in Amman and in Gaza. The Agency maintains a field office in each of its areas of operations - Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip - and liaison offices in New York, Washington, Brussels and Cairo.

And this is what it funds:



In Gaza, where most people are young or children, education is vital.

Without the UNRWA these people would be entirely without hope, and this area would be massively more stressed than it already was pre-7 October, and than it is now.

Without the UNRWA there would be vastly worse healthcare in Gaza. Now, those facilities are largely destroyed.

The UNRWA made possible the Israeli sanctions on Gaza by providing funding for those who lived in Gaza, and to some extent elsewhere, to survive in this situation. As a result, I do not doubt that it helped maintain peace for a very long time while also improving the lives of the refugees it served.

That is why I think the UN overall is a force for good. Not a perfect one, because perfection is a goal humans do not achieve. But a good one, nonetheless.

Now, because it is suggested that twelve of the UNRWA's staff were involved with the Hamas attack (which I have always condemned, and still do condemn), the funding for the UNRWA is being withdrawn, just when their assistance is needed the most.

Let me make three observations.

First, the UNRWA had/has about 30,000 employees working in Gaza and elsewhere. Finding that maybe a dozen (as I understand it is suggested) of them were also engaged in violence for Hamas was akin to finding some coppers are bent, a teacher has abused children, or a GP has killed patients. Each is deeply regrettable. But do we stop funding the police, education and healthcare as a result? No. Of course, we don't. We root out the problem, but we don't suddenly declare law and order, education and healthcare undesirable as a result. So, why are we stopping funding the UNRWA because it did not know, and was not responsible for, what all its employees were doing? What is different?

Second, let's not ignore the extraordinarily convenient timing of this, coming just after the International Court of Justice ruling that was clearly very bad news for Israel, even if it stopped just short, as yet, of suggesting it is guilty of genocide, and has only at this moment to prevent it happening, which is a clear indication of its thinking that it might just be going on.

Third, let's look at the UNRWA's funding. The US is the biggest donor. Overall, though, the EU provides 44% of the funding and as the [EU Observer has noted](#):

The EU Commission is reevaluating its funding to the UN agency for Palestinian refugees (UNRWA) in light of allegations of 12 staff involvement in the 7 October attack, but Belgium, Ireland, Denmark, and Spain, the most critical voices of Israel in the 27-nation bloc, will continue their funding.

So, like the US, UK and others, the EU is looking at withdrawing support for people who are already, in my opinion, the very clear victims of genocide and who are in the most desperate need of humanitarian aid and all because the UNRWA could not control what all its employees did, as no employer ever can, and which it would be absurd to have expected them to do.

In my opinion, that makes the countries withdrawing that funding party to the genocide and the war crimes.

I am aware of the risk of posting this.

I know that trolling and abuse will happen.

But we have a choice here. We can stand up for people. Or we can stand up for a government that is pursuing a policy of genocide and is manipulating the world's governments so that they support its plan to ethnically cleanse the people of Gaza.

There can be only one side that deserves support in that issue. And as a believer in the rights of both Jews and Palestinians to their own states, and to a two-state solution, I think that this is the moment for the world to stand beside the UNRWA, whilst condemning the actions of any of its employees who might have committed wholly unwarranted violence. And anyone who cannot spot the difference does not deserve to hold high office.