

UNRWA Rejects Allegations of Incitement as Baseless: Statement by UNRWA Spokesperson Chris Gunness

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East Jerusalem

[الأونروا ترفض مزاعم التحريض وتقول أنها عارية عن الصحة: تصريح منسوب للناطق الرسمي باسم الأونروا كريس غانيس](#)

In recent days, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) has been attacked after an Israeli film-maker released a film, "Camp Jihad," alleging that UNRWA promoted anti-Semitism and incitement to violence in its 'summer camps'. These false accusations have been repeated in various media outlets.

UNRWA has conducted a lengthy and detailed investigation into the film and we categorically reject the allegations it contains. The film is grossly misleading and we regret the damage it has caused to UNRWA and the United Nations.

The film-maker concerned has a history of making baseless claims about UNRWA, all of which we have investigated and demonstrated to be patently false. It has long been the practice of the film-maker to show non-UNRWA activities and portray them as activities of UNRWA. He has done this again and we again reject his allegations. Our repeated rejection of his falsehoods is a matter of public record.

The main accusation in the film is that incitement is promoted during UNRWA 'summer camps'. The 'summer camp' shown in the West Bank was not affiliated with or organized by UNRWA. The only UNRWA summer activities actually depicted are those shot in Gaza. However, our investigation of the film has revealed that absolutely nothing anti-Semitic or inflammatory was done or said in the scenes filmed in Gaza.

In addition, those interviewed in the film are presented with captions that identify them as UNRWA staff members. However, only one of those interviewed is an UNRWA staff member. The comment she makes does not violate UNRWA's neutrality policy.

Some of the interviews filmed in the West Bank took place during the course of a third party's activities inside what is indeed an UNRWA installation. However, UNRWA did not organize or manage these activities, and – here, too – none of the interviewees were UNRWA staff members. In addition, the interviews were organized by the film-maker and conducted with children, without parental consent, in an unethical, highly 'leading' manner, by a media organization he contracted.

We firmly condemn the anti-Semitic and inflammatory statements made during some of the interviews filmed in the West Bank, and we have suspended our relationship with the third-party organization, pending a review. However, we reject in no uncertain terms the allegations that UNRWA promotes incitement and the notion that UNRWA is responsible for the views expressed in the film.

UNRWA is committed to fostering human rights and tolerance, and teaches these values through the curriculum in its schools. UNRWA is one of the few organizations that has implemented human rights and conflict resolution training for millions of Palestine refugee children in the complex political environment of the Middle East for over 12 years.

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Background information

UNRWA is a United Nations agency established by the General Assembly in 1949 and is mandated to provide assistance and protection to a population of some five million registered Palestine refugees. Its mission is to help Palestine refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, West Bank and the Gaza Strip to achieve their full potential in human development, pending a just solution to their plight. UNRWA's services encompass education, health care, relief and social services, camp infrastructure and improvement, and microfinance.

Financial support to UNRWA has not kept pace with an increased demand for services caused by growing numbers of registered refugees, expanding need, and deepening poverty. As a result, the Agency's General Fund (GF), supporting UNRWA's core activities and 97 per cent reliant on voluntary contributions, has begun each year with a large projected deficit. Currently the deficit stands at US\$ 54.3 million.

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