

# Unchanged In Its Inculcation of Hate, UNRWA Should Remain Without American Funding

by Hugh Fitzgerald



**Among the most admirable acts** of the Trump Administration was its ending of American funding for UNRWA, the U.N. organization responsible for the housing, feeding, medical care, and education, of those who are now called “Palestinian refugees.” There were several reasons for the cutoff in hundreds of millions of dollars in American aid to UNRWA.

The first was the absurd insistence by UNRWA (and the UN) that unlike all the other tens of millions of refugees created after World War II, the “Palestinian refugees” could – uniquely – pass on their refugee status to their progeny, as part of their genetic inheritance, so that the children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren (and so on, world

without end), of the original “refugees” were themselves considered to be refugees. As such, they were listed on the UNRWA rolls, which is ever-lengthening, as new generations of these pseudo-refugees appear, needing to be supported. The Trump Administration decided it was time to act against such an absurdity, as a way to pressure UNRWA – and the UN – to stop allowing “Palestinian refugee status” to be treated as an inheritable genetic trait. It was also hoped that the American example would lead other donor states to end their own contributions to UNRWA. So far, that hasn’t happened.

The second reason for cutting funding to UNRWA was the scandal of its schoolbooks, which have always been full of antisemitic and anti-Israeli hate speech and incitements to violence. Even simple lessons in arithmetic have been used to celebrate terrorists. “If Mohammed is sentenced to 15 years in jail by the Zionists, and has served two-thirds of his cruel sentence, how many more years will he remain imprisoned for defending his people’s rights?”

One hopes that Tony Blinken and Jake Sullivan will study very closely the latest report on antisemitic and anti-Israeli content in UNRWA’s schoolbooks, before suggesting a course of action to Biden who, as of now, is believed to favor renewing American contributions to UNRWA. That report on the UNRWA schoolbooks is here: “Study Finds UNRWA Educational Materials Replete With Antisemitism, Anti-Israel Hate, Incitement,” [here](#).

***A new study of educational materials used by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), which serves Palestinian refugees, has found that the materials contain anti-Israel and antisemitic racism, encouragement of terrorism and jihad, and rejection of peace with the Jewish state.***

*The report by the organization IMPACT-se, which monitors school curricula, claims that this content violates the UN’s*

*own requirements set by the cultural organization UNESCO – which demand respect for the “other” and a commitment to peace, and which proscribe hate speech, incitement, and bias.*

*Contrary to these requirements, the report said, the UNRWA materials – which are used to teach over 500,000 children – encourage jihad, terrorism, and martyrdom, and present terrorists as heroes...*

*Europe is demonized for the Crusades, and there is no information presented about the historical narrative of the Jews or Israel.*

While Jews are the most demonized people in the UNRWA textbooks, in a spirit of equal-opportunity hate, the UNRWA texts also make room for denouncing other non-Muslims, including European Christians, for such offenses as taking part in the Crusades. That’s slim consolation for Israelis.

*Israel is consistently demonized with lies and conspiracy theories, such as the false claims that Israel has sought to destroy the al-Aqsa mosque, dumps toxic waste in the West Bank, and robs Palestinian antiquities...*

The Al-Aqsa mosque is under the sole control of the Islamic Waqf, which in turn is controlled by the government of Jordan. Israel has never sought to destroy, or to touch a hair on the head, of the Al-Aqsa Mosque. In fact, Israel is so solicitous of the feelings of Muslims at the mosque that it strictly forbids any Jewish visitors to the Temple Mount from approaching too closely to the mosque’s entrance. And in order not to offend Muslims, Jews on the Temple Mount are under strict instructions from Israeli authorities to refrain both from praying, and from silently mouthing prayers.

The “toxic waste charge” is also a falsehood. It is the Palestinians who dump and burn waste, especially from

electronic appliances, much of it collected in Israel, in order to derive valuable metals, especially copper, from the ashes. As for the charge that Israelis “rob Palestinian antiquities,” this again is a completely false charge. Israel scrupulously maintains and tries to protect all archeological sites, Jewish, Christian, and Muslim. It is the Palestinians who have attacked, set on fire, and tried to destroy, both Joseph’s Tomb and Rachel’s Tomb. It is the Palestinians who keep damaging or even managing to destroy, Jewish archaeological sites located in Areas A and B of the West Bank. This is done in order to efface the historical evidence of the 3000-year presence of Jews in the land of Israel.

*The materials often simply erase Israel and the Jews as a whole. Israel’s name is rarely mentioned, and maps of the region show the entirety of Israel as “Palestine.” Jewish history in the land of Israel and the Middle East in general is almost completely ignored, and Israel is instead accused of trying to “Judaize” the area.*

Thus are the children in UNRWA schools taught that the Jews have no right to, never had a presence in, their ancestral homeland. The Israelis are accused, preposterously, of “Judaizing” the very land where Jews have lived continuously for 3000 years.

*IMPACT-se, which is based in Jerusalem and has also studied curricula in Israel and throughout the region, did note a few positive trends. Israel’s name is mentioned in a few more cases than was found in past reviews; some libels have been removed, such as the baseless claim that Israel is stealing Palestinian water; and some Quranic verses calling for jihad do not appear...*

These changes are so slight as to be scarcely noticeable. At least “Israel” appears in just a few more places, referred to as such, instead of as the “Zionist entity.” A few of the most

absurd charges have been taken out. For example, the charge that that Israel has been “stealing Palestinian water”— when it is Israel that has been sending 10 million cubic meters of its own water to the Palestinians – has at last been taken out of the schoolbooks. A handful of Qur’anic verses calling for violent Jihad have been removed, but many remain. It would be fascinating to know if the schoolbooks still inform their impressionable readers that Muslims “are the best of peoples” while non-Muslims are “the most vile of created beings.” But, on the other hand, that there have been any changes at all should be taken as a sign that the Trump Administration’s financial pressure did have an effect, and if the pressure is kept on by America’s refusal to reinstate aid to UNRWA, more changes should be the result.

It would be deeply disturbing if the Biden Administration were to revert to supporting UNRWA, with the spigot again turned on for hundreds of millions of dollars in American aid to flow, at the very moment when the financial pressure – forget about moral pressure because that clearly has no effect on UNRWA – is starting to show (admittedly slight) results. That pressure needs to continue in order to push UNRWA into making more important changes to its schoolbooks than those few, mostly cosmetic, that it has made so far. To return to the status quo ante Trump, to let UNRWA think that it can continue to inculcate antisemitic and anti-Israel hate in its schoolbooks without incurring any penalty, would constitute a quite unnecessary surrender to the forces of darkness that always lurk just below the deceptive surface of Palestinian propaganda.

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