



unrwa and neutrality

Neutrality is critically important to United Nations humanitarian agencies – as well as ICRC and NGOs – to gain and maintain the confidence of all needed to operate independently, safely and effectively, especially in politically-charged or conflict situations. Neutrality is also a core obligation and value of UN staff and an important condition for our donors' continued trust and financial and political support.

Nexus between UN neutrality and donor conditions

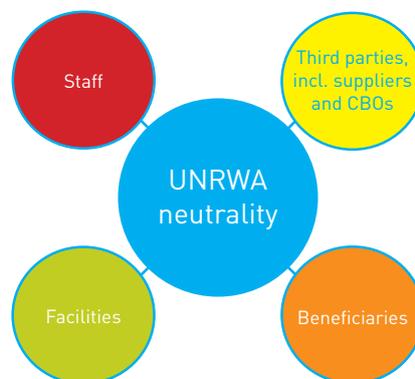
UNRWA has agreed with the US to "take all possible measures to ensure that no part of the United States contribution is being used to furnish assistance to any refugee who is receiving military training as a member of the so-called Palestinian Liberation Army or any guerilla-type organisation or anyone who has engaged in any act of terrorism" (Section 301(c) of the US Foreign Assistance Act of 1961). There are similar provisions in other donor agreements.

UNRWA's adherence to UN neutrality is absolutely incompatible with funding or in any way assisting terrorism, terrorists or members of guerrilla-type organisations, i.e., conduct covered by Section 301(c). As a neutral, impartial UN agency providing humanitarian assistance, UNRWA has a legal framework for operations that requires neutrality of staff, third parties, facilities and beneficiaries.

UNRWA's legal framework proscribes a broad range of conduct, including – but going beyond – conduct falling within donor conditions relating to neutrality. For example, staff member involvement in a militant group or terrorist activities would be clearly contrary to UNRWA's staff regulations and rules and would certainly result in dismissal.

UNRWA processes and mechanisms supporting UN neutrality

There are many Agency processes and mechanisms for implementation and enforcement of its rules, regulations and policies relating to UN neutrality and issues related to donor conditions such as Section 301(c).



Staff

From recruitment to separation there are a variety of Agency processes and mechanisms to ensure UN staff neutrality:

- All vacancy announcements include neutrality statement in Arabic/English
- Application form includes question about prior convictions
- Assessment of candidate suitability for UN during recruitment process - interview panels take into account the need to uphold the values of integrity, neutrality and impartiality
- Reference check and security clearance prior to/on appointment
- Letter of appointment refers to neutrality provisions of staff rules and regulations
- Applications to governmental authorities for visas for all international staff members
- Permit applications to Government of Israel for local staff (West Bank and Gaza Strip)
- Induction and training address UN neutrality
- Regular circulars
- Annual pledges not to engage in political activities (e.g., Gaza Strip)
- Regular staff meetings with Agency management
- Promoting UN culture at workplace
- Monitoring of staff activity during and outside work hours by management and through media and other sources
- Staff members have an obligation to report misconduct and are protected from retaliation
- Information sought from authorities whenever staff are detained, convicted, refused a permit or targeted
- Field and HQ investigation mechanisms operating in accordance with Agency



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Guide to Conducting Misconduct Investigations

- Swift disciplinary action taken whenever there is evidence of involvement of staff members in inappropriate political activities or in military activities
- Agency disciplinary action is well-known, predictable and consistent and therefore deters others
- Six-monthly checks of staff names against UN 1267 Sanctions Committee list of terrorists and terrorist entities. (There have been no matches.)
- Annually lists of all staff provided to governments including Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Israel and the PA. List provided to Israel in digital format with Israeli/Palestinian ID.

Third parties incl. suppliers and Community-Based Organisations

Agency processes and mechanisms to ensure third party neutrality include:

- Six-monthly checks of names of all suppliers and other payees against UN 1267 Sanctions Committee list of terrorists and terrorist entities. (There have been no matches.)
- Checks of suppliers against UN Suspect Vendor reports
- Contracts supervised by contracting departments. Inappropriate conduct from media or other sources would be brought to attention of management and/or police authorities and would result in termination of contract for breach of standard representation and warranty re neutrality
- UNRWA Relief and Social Services Dept (RSSD) staff members work closely with and monitor CBOs.

Beneficiaries

Agency processes and mechanisms to ensure beneficiary neutrality include:

- Six-monthly checks of names of all registered Palestine refugees, plus

microfinance loan recipients, against UN 1267 Sanctions Committee list of terrorists and terrorist entities. (There have been no matches.)

- Cash assistance to social safety net (special hardship) cases only provided to registered Palestine refugees, all of whom have been screened against the UN 1267 list
- Applications for cash assistance are individually screened by Agency for eligibility against Relief Instructions. Screening process includes home visit by social worker plus spot checks and follow-up that assistance has been used for the purpose provided. If family has other sources of income, e.g., PA Ministry of Detainees and Ex-Detainees Affairs, assistance would be excluded applying needs-based test
- Inappropriate conduct triggers Agency investigation and could result in denial of discretionary assistance such as burial expenses, shelter rehabilitation or re-housing assistance. (Agency does not deny education to children or health services.)
- Assistance to beneficiaries or JCPs supervised by RSSD and hiring department respectively. Inappropriate conduct from media or other sources would be brought to attention of management and/or police authorities and would result in termination of contract for breach of standard representation and warranty re neutrality
- UNRWA RSSD staff members work closely with and monitor CBOs.

Facilities

Agency processes and mechanisms to ensure facility neutrality include:

- Facilities monitored by UNRWA staff members. Installation heads responsible for facility use and accountable to Front Office for proper use. Regular visits by senior staff
- In the West Bank, Gaza Strip and Lebanon the Operations Support Officer Programme conducts formal installation inspections as well as visits in the course of their work.
- UNRWA RSSD staff members work closely with and monitor CBOs
- The Agency protests armed incursions by the Israel Defence Force and Palestinian militants
- Strict no weapons policy in UNRWA installations
- (Limited) third-party agreed use of Agency facilities monitored by Agency staff.

General

The above specific processes are supported by more general Agency processes and mechanisms, including:

- Audit function: Dept of Internal Oversight Services, UN Board of Auditors. Oversight by Advisory Committee on Internal Oversight, which has three external members
- Financial and management controls, in accordance with Financial Rules and Regulations and UN processes, e.g., UN Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ), UN General Assembly Fifth Committee and UN Board of Auditors
- Donors such as the EC conduct verification reviews that their funds have been used in accordance with grant agreements
- US funds for Emergency Appeals for West Bank and Gaza negatively earmarked away from cash assistance. Finance Dept assures donor conditionality
- Programme and project monitoring and evaluation (M&E) by Programme Coordination Support Unit and M&E staff.



unrwa
الاونروا

the un agency for
palestine refugees
وكالة الأمم المتحدة
للاجئين الفلسطينيين

Peace | السلام
Starts Here | يبدأ هنا

UNRWA provides assistance, protection and advocacy for some 4.8 million registered Palestine refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and the occupied Palestinian territory, pending a solution to their plight. The Agency's services encompass education, health care, social safety-net, camp infrastructure and improvement, community support, microfinance and emergency response, including in times of armed conflict.

Through these services UNRWA strives to help Palestine refugees achieve a decent standard of living, long and healthy lives, knowledge and skills and full enjoyment of human rights. These goals are formulated according to the UN criteria for human development.