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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6275

August 27, 2026

VIA ELECTRONIC TRANSMISSION

The Honorable Marco Rubio
Secretary
Department of State

Dear Secretary Rubio:

For years, I've raised concerns about United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and Department of State (DOS) funding for humanitarian aid, grants, and development assistance falling into the hands of terrorist organizations.¹ On October 7, 2023, the terrorist group Hamas launched horrific terrorist attacks in Israel, killing 1,200 people, raping women, and taking 250 people hostage, including Americans.² Since those horrific attacks, public reporting has alleged that staff members at the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) participated in them.³

According to a July 31, 2024, United Nations (UN) Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) Investigations Division report, OIOS received "allegations of the involvement of some UNRWA staff members in Gaza in the armed attacks of 7 October 2023 in southern Israel" from Israeli authorities.⁴ As a result of their investigation, OIOS made findings regarding the 19 UNRWA staff allegedly involved in the attacks.⁵ Specifically, OIOS found that in nine of the cases, there was insufficient evidence to support their involvement in the October 7th attacks.⁶ OIOS found that in one case, there was no evidence provided that supported the allegations of involvement in the October 7th attacks.⁷ Finally, OIOS determined that there was evidence indicating that nine staff members may have allegedly been involved in the October 7th attacks.⁸

¹ Christian Coalition, *Grassley Presses USAID Nominee on Effort to Remove Terror Funding Group from Sanctions List* (Feb. 2021), <https://cc.org/grassley-presses-usaid-nominee-on-effort-to-remove-terror-funding-group-from-sanctions-list/>; U.S. Senate Finance Committee, *World Vision Financial Transactions* (Dec. 2020), <https://www.finance.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/Oversight.%2012-23-20.%20Memo%20on%20World%20Vision%20Investigation.pdf>; Letter from Senator Charles E. Grassley to DLA Piper (Apr. 2024), <https://www.grassley.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/grassley-to-dla-piper-world-vision.pdf>; Kate Shellnutt, *Senator Demands to Know if World Vision Is Funding Terrorism* (Sep. 2023), CHRISTIANITY TODAY, <https://www.christianitytoday.com/2023/09/world-vision-halabi-grassley-terrorism-money/>; Letter from Sen. Charles E. Grassley to World Vision (Aug. 2023), <https://www.grassley.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/grassley-to-world-vision-terrorist-ties.pdf>; Letter from Senator Charles E. Grassley to USAID (Aug. 2023), <https://www.grassley.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/grassley-to-usaid-world-vision.pdf>; Letter from Senator Charles E. Grassley to U.S. Department of the Treasury (Feb. 2026), <https://www.grassley.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/grassley-to-treasury-taliban-funding-revisited.pdf>; Letter from Sen. Charles E. Grassley to Department of State (Jul. 2023), <https://www.grassley.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/grassley-to-blinken-taliban-funding.pdf>; Letter from Sen. Charles E. Grassley to Department of State (Oct. 2023), <https://www.grassley.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/grassley-to-blinken-taliban-funding-follow-up.pdf>.

² Office of Senator Charles E. Grassley, *Q&A: One Year Since October 7 Attacks* (Oct. 3, 2024), <https://www.grassley.senate.gov/news/news-releases/qanda-one-year-since-october-7-attacks>; The Associated Press, *Today in History: October 7, surprise attacks spark Israel-Hamas War* (Oct. 7, 2025), ASSOCIATED PRESS, <https://apnews.com/today-in-history/october-7>.

³ Office of Senator Charles E. Grassley, *Q&A: One Year Since October 7 Attacks* (Oct. 3, 2024), <https://www.grassley.senate.gov/news/news-releases/qanda-one-year-since-october-7-attacks>; The Associated Press, *Today in History: October 7, surprise attacks spark Israel-Hamas War* (Oct. 7, 2025), ASSOCIATED PRESS, <https://apnews.com/today-in-history/october-7>.

⁴ Adam Kredo, *Exclusive: UN Is Actively Obstructing US Probe Into Links Between Its Gaza Relief Groups and Hamas, as Americans Warn UN To Divorce 'Cancerous UNRWA'* (July 30, 2026), WASHINGTON FREE BEACON, <https://freebeacon.com/israel/exclusive-un-is-actively-obstructing-us-probe-into-links-between-its-gaza-relief-groups-and-hamas-as-americans-warn-un-to-divorce-cancerous-unrwa/>.

⁵ *Id.*

⁶ *Id.*

⁷ *Id.*

⁸ *Id.*

However, according to an USAID Office of Inspector General (OIG) memorandum provided to my office, the OIG found defects during its review of the OIOS report.⁹ The OIG noted that OIOS initially refused to provide an unredacted copy of the report and eventually relented.¹⁰ First, the USAID OIG noted that OIOS stated that it could not “independently authenticate” the evidence presented by the Israeli government.¹¹ The OIG highlighted that the information from the Israeli government had been obtained from Hamas and was considered “collected enemy materials.”¹² Second, OIOS failed to provide any evidence indicating the information was not authentic.¹³ Moreover, OIOS reportedly “did not meet with subject UNRWA staff and possible corroborating witnesses to conduct interviews and take statements.”¹⁴ According to the USAID OIG, it did not identify evidence to “suggest that the authenticity of the materials collected by the Israeli government should be questioned.”¹⁵

Second, the OIG raised concerns with the limited scope and focus of the OIOS investigation.¹⁶ Specifically, the OIG notes that the OIOS investigation “did not review whether the UNRWA staff members were current or former members of Hamas.”¹⁷ The memorandum further states that OIOS could have expanded the scope of review, “but they chose not to do so.”¹⁸

Finally, the OIG memorandum appears to question the methodology behind OIOS’s review of UNRWA staff email archives.¹⁹ The OIG notes that the OIOS report did not share key word searches used as part of the review of email archives, nor was there any “indication from the information provided in the report that OIOS conducted any sort of review of information available outside of the email archives.”²⁰ These alleged defects raise serious concerns as to the quality of the OIOS investigation.

As a result of their own independent investigation into UNRWA, the USAID OIG referred seventeen of the nineteen individuals from the OIOS report to the State Department for debarment.²¹ Based on the USAID OIG’s findings, the State Department has debarred just one of the nineteen individuals identified in the OIOS report—Hafez Mousa Mohammed Mousa.²² According to the USAID OIG, the Trump-State Department is continuing to pursue debarments of the other sixteen named subjects based on USAID OIG’s ongoing investigation.²³ Further reporting indicates that the USAID OIG has expanded their investigation to “at least 1,500 suspected [Hamas] militants with

⁹ Attachment 1.

¹⁰ *Id.*

¹¹ *Id.*

¹² *Id.*

¹³ *Id.*

¹⁴ Adam Kredo, *Exclusive: UN Is Actively Obstructing US Probe Into Links Between Its Gaza Relief Groups and Hamas, as Americans Warn UN To Divorce 'Cancerous UNRWA'* (July 30, 2026), WASHINGTON FREE BEACON, <https://freebeacon.com/israel/exclusive-un-is-actively-obstructing-us-probe-into-links-between-its-gaza-relief-groups-and-hamas-as-americans-warn-un-to-divorce-cancerous-unrwa/>. (OIOS Report Page 4)

¹⁵ Attachment 1.

¹⁶ Attachment 1.

¹⁷ *Id.*

¹⁸ *Id.*

¹⁹ *Id.*

²⁰ *Id.*

²¹ Adam Kredo, *Exclusive: UN Is Actively Obstructing US Probe Into Links Between Its Gaza Relief Groups and Hamas, as Americans Warn UN To Divorce 'Cancerous UNRWA'* (July 30, 2026), WASHINGTON FREE BEACON, <https://freebeacon.com/israel/exclusive-un-is-actively-obstructing-us-probe-into-links-between-its-gaza-relief-groups-and-hamas-as-americans-warn-un-to-divorce-cancerous-unrwa/>.

²² *Id.*

²³ *Id.*

²³ Notes and emails on file with Committee Staff; Adam Kredo, *Exclusive: UN Is Actively Obstructing US Probe Into Links Between Its Gaza Relief Groups and Hamas, as Americans Warn UN To Divorce 'Cancerous UNRWA'* (July 30, 2026), WASHINGTON FREE BEACON, <https://freebeacon.com/israel/exclusive-un-is-actively-obstructing-us-probe-into-links-between-its-gaza-relief-groups-and-hamas-as-americans-warn-un-to-divorce-cancerous-unrwa/>.

UNRWA ties.”²⁴ To date, the USAID OIG has reportedly referred more than 100 UNRWA employees to the State Department for debarment.²⁵

I am also concerned about the UN’s reported lack of cooperation with the USAID OIG’s investigation into U.S. taxpayer-funded aid programming in Gaza, as well as vetting failures by the UN to ensure taxpayer dollars do not fall into the hands of Hamas or other terrorist organizations.²⁶ On March 31, 2026, the USAID OIG published a report titled, “Continuing Oversight of U.S.-Funded Aid Programming in Gaza (Part 1: United Nations),” which summarizes their investigation titled “Operation Stop the Carousel,” which seeks to “prevent the recirculation of individuals affiliated with terrorist groups across aid organizations receiving U.S. funding in Gaza, including the United Nations (UN) and nongovernment organizations (NGOs).”²⁷ The March 2026 report noted a “lack of adequate vetting mechanisms” due to the fact that “USAID policies exempted UN organizations from the vetting process that the Agency required of NGOs and contractors. As a result, the U.S. government has relied on the UN to vet its own staff responsible for performing U.S. taxpayer-funded activities and programs on the ground.”²⁸ The USAID OIG found that the vetting systems and mechanisms the UN uses for their employees have “vulnerabilities that limit the assurance that terrorist-affiliated staff have not been onboarded.”²⁹ According to the OIG, concerns about these vulnerabilities remain because “awards to the UN and other public international organizations do not require prior vetting of personnel through a U.S. government system.”³⁰

Further, the report also outlines a lack of responsiveness by the UN in response to the USAID OIG’s oversight requests.³¹ The American taxpayers support the UN with billions of dollars annually, and it is expected that the UN will comply with U.S. Government oversight requests. So that Congress may better understand the use of, and protections in place for, the humanitarian aid provided by American taxpayers, please respond to the following questions no later than September 10, 2026:

1. What steps has the State Department taken to ensure that employees of the UN and its agencies who have received U.S. taxpayer dollars are properly vetted? Provide all records.³²

²⁴ Adam Kredo, *EXCLUSIVE: US Probe of Embattled UN Gaza Relief Agency Expands to 1,500 Staffers Suspected of Hamas Ties: UNRWA Could Soon Be Labeled a 'Foreign Terrorist Organization'* (May 28, 2026), THE WASHINGTON FREE BEACON, <https://freebeacon.com/national-security/exclusive-us-probe-of-embattled-un-gaza-relief-agency-expands-to-1500-staffers-suspected-of-hamas-ties-unrwa-could-soon-be-labeled-a-foreign-terrorist-organization/>.

²⁵ Josh Christenson, *More than 100 UNRWA staff helped Hamas carry out Oct. 7 attack: federal watchdog* (June 8, 2026), NY POST, <https://nypost.com/2026/06/08/us-news/more-than-100-unrwa-staff-helped-hamas-carry-out-oct-7-attack-federal-watchdog/>.

²⁶ Office of Inspector General, U.S. Agency for International Development, *Memorandum* (May 13, 2025), <https://oig.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/2025-08/Additional%20Observations%20on%20Challenges%20to%20Oversight%20and%20Accountability%20Over%20Foreign%20Assistance%20as%20a%20Whole.pdf> (“The issues featured in this memorandum include: 1. Resistance from UN agencies and foreign-based NGOs to sharing information about potential misconduct with OIG...”).

²⁷ Adam Kredo, *Exclusive: UN Is Actively Obstructing US Probe Into Links Between Its Gaza Relief Groups and Hamas, as Americans Warn UN To Divorce 'Cancerous UNRWA'* (July 30, 2026), WASHINGTON FREE BEACON, <https://freebeacon.com/israel/exclusive-un-is-actively-obstructing-us-probe-into-links-between-its-gaza-relief-groups-and-hamas-as-americans-warn-un-to-divorce-cancerous-unrwa/>.

²⁸ *Id.*

²⁹ *Id.*

³⁰ *Id.*

³¹ *Id.* (According to the USAID OIG Report, “The [USAID OIG] did not receive the requested information from The World Food Programme (WFP) or United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) both of whom received U.S. government funding in Gaza; Four UN agencies provided partial responses: the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and the World Health Organization (WHO); None of the responding UN recipients provided the requested information pertaining to their personnel.”).

³² “Records” include any written, recorded, or graphic material of any kind, including letters, memoranda, reports, notes, electronic data (emails, email attachments, and any other electronically created or stored information), calendar entries, inter-office communications, meeting minutes, phone/voice mail or recordings/records of verbal communications, and drafts (whether they resulted in final documents).

2. What is the status of the debarment investigations for the one hundred-plus UNRWA staff, including the remaining sixteen individuals named in the OIOS report, whom USAID OIG recommended for debarment? Provide all records.
3. How many employees who work for the UN and its agencies has the State Department identified as being affiliated with or a member of Hamas? Provide all records, including the name of the employee and which organization or agency they are employed by.
4. Will the State Department refuse funding to UN organizations that fail to properly vet employees? If not, why not?

Your cooperation and prompt attention to this matter would be appreciated. If you have any questions, please contact Tucker Akin with my Committee staff at (202) 224-5225.

Sincerely,



Charles E. Grassley
Chairman
Committee on the Judiciary



OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

U.S. Agency for International Development

MEMORANDUM

DATE: December 15, 2025

TO: Ambassador Jeff Bartos, U.S. Representative for U.N. Management and Reform

FROM: Adam Kaplan, Associate Deputy Inspector General (A), and Sean Bottary, Assistant Inspector General for Investigations (A)

SUBJECT: Identified Deficiencies in the United Nations (UN) Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) Investigation Report on Misconduct by Staff Members at the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA)

Summary

The USAID Office of Inspector General (OIG), a law enforcement agency separate and distinct from USAID, is statutorily mandated to provide independent oversight of agencies performing foreign assistance programs. We do not set policy or award funds, but our independent oversight work is designed to inform those who do. Oversight of aid to Gaza has been [top priority](#) since the influx of humanitarian assistance following Hamas' October 7, 2023, terrorist attacks in Israel.

In August 2024, OIOS completed its investigation into UNRWA following allegations that several staff members of UNRWA took part in the October 7 attacks. OIOS investigators made findings in relation to 19 UNRWA staff alleged to have been involved in the attacks. The report found that in nine cases, the evidence obtained by OIOS was insufficient to support the staff members' involvement, and in one case, no evidence was obtained by OIOS to support the allegations of the staff member's involvement. In the nine other cases, OIOS determined that the evidence indicated that the staff members may have been involved in the attacks.

USAID OIG requested to review an unredacted version of the investigation. OIOS initially refused to provide an unredacted report in October 2024, allowing us access to only the redacted report, which was useless for our investigative purposes. USAID OIG was subsequently able to obtain independent information that furthered our [ongoing investigation](#) into UNRWA staff associated with Hamas through other sources, methods, and diplomatic channels. This fall, we were able to obtain a copy of the unredacted report from OIOS. Having reviewed the unredacted report, we offer here a brief review of some of the report's major



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deficiencies, validating our decision to conduct our own independent investigation. We additionally offer one related observation on the risk of terminated UNRWA staff with suspected ties to the October 7 attacks circulating to other U.S.-funded aid organizations.

Independent Authentication of Materials

One of the primary concerns OIOS raised in their report is that they were “unable to independently authenticate” the evidence presented by the Israeli government. This is a problematic statement for two primary reasons. First, the physical material presented by the Israeli government would be considered “collected enemy materials,” given that they were obtained from Hamas, a designated foreign terrorist organization in the United States and other countries. It is thus unreasonable to believe that anyone could independently authenticate the materials. Second, OIOS presented no evidence to suggest that the materials were not authentic. Rather, they rely on the argument that they were only provided with copies, while the originals remained under the custody of Israeli officials. USAID OIG has found no evidence to suggest that the authenticity of the materials collected by the Israeli government should be questioned. OIOS maintains that their inability to independently corroborate or authenticate is a concern with the UN’s “clear and convincing standard” for misconduct.

Limited Scope and Focus

The OIOS investigation was limited to "claims of the possible involvement of the...UNRWA staff members in the armed attacks of 7 October 2023 in Southern Israel." The investigation did not review whether the UNRWA staff members were current or former members of Hamas. Rather, the report clearly stated that OIOS "has not drawn conclusions regarding their alleged membership of the military wing of Hamas or other militant groups." Notably, during the OIOS investigation, UNRWA issued a directive change on Outside and Political Activities (dated June 10, 2024), which prohibited staff from "participating in the activities of or being a member of any militant or armed group or entity." This could have given OIOS the latitude to expand their scope, but they chose not to do so. USAID OIG considered both as part of its independent investigation.

Investigative Details- Information Technology

As part of their investigation, OIOS stated they reviewed "information and communications technology" data. According to the report, they found “no significant activity or items of



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interest in the various email archives” of the subjects of the report. However, OIOS does not provide any details regarding the methodology behind their review. For example, they do not share what key words were used as part of their search of UNRWA staff email archives. Additionally, there is no indication from the information provided in the report that OIOS conducted any sort of review of information available outside of the email archives or what was provided to OIOS by the State of Israel.

Additional Observation

USAID OIG notes with concern the way certain UNRWA employees involved in the report were terminated from their employment. In January 2024, the State of Israel provided Philippe Lazzarini, Commissioner-General of UNRWA, a list of 12 UNRWA employees suspected of taking part in the October 7, 2023, attacks. UNRWA confirmed their employment and terminated those individuals "to protect the Agency's ability to deliver humanitarian assistance." The characterization of their termination allows these individuals to seek further employment with other NGOs or UN organizations who may potentially receive U.S. taxpayer funding for foreign assistance in Gaza. Absent robust vetting protocols, the likelihood for recirculation of these individuals into the aid sector is very high. For this reason, in November USAID OIG launched [Operation Stop the Carousel](#), a proactive investigation designed to prevent the circulation of terrorists across international aid organizations receiving U.S. funding in Gaza, including UN and non-government organizations. This Operation will greatly expand OIG's existing investigation into Hamas-linked staff affiliated with UNRWA, which has already referred 17 individuals believed to have supported and/or participated in the October 7, 2023, terrorist attacks for suspension/debarment consideration by the Department of State. The goal of this investigation will be to prompt administrative action to prevent the recirculation and rehiring of Hamas members throughout the aid sector.