

# Enhanced Due Diligence?

AN EXAMINATION OF CANADA'S PLEDGE TO STOP UNRWA TEACHERS  
FROM INCITING JIHADIST TERRORISM AND ANTISEMITISM



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# Enhanced Due Diligence?

## AN EXAMINATION OF CANADA'S PLEDGE TO STOP UNRWA TEACHERS FROM INCITING JIHADIST TERRORISM AND ANTISEMITISM

### Introduction

This report examines what Canada, in its new role as a major donor to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), should do to stop the organization from continuing to employ school teachers, principals and other staffers who support terrorism and antisemitism. Canada had promised to exercise “enhanced due diligence” on UNRWA, and assured that it had “robust control measures” in place.

The report exposes 60 Facebook pages operated by UNRWA schools, school teachers, principals, and other employees of UNRWA, which incite to terrorism or antisemitism. The report is divided by region, and includes UNRWA staffers in Lebanon, Jordan, Gaza and Syria. These cases of incitement are additional to the 30 revealed by UN Watch in 2015. More examples are found by UN Watch every day.

The promotion of racial hatred and violence by UNRWA staff constitutes a gross breach of their neutrality obligations as enshrined in the UN Charter and in UN and UNRWA Staff Rules and Regulations. Even more alarming than the Facebook posts themselves, however, is the fact that UNRWA hires and employs racist staff, and places the education of impressionable Palestinian youth in their hands. Canada would never tolerate the employment of racist teachers in its own schools.

In the wake of Canada's decision to fund UNRWA and its public commitment to hold the organization accountable for neutrality violations, the government of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau must turn its words into actions. At a minimum, Canada must demand the immediate dismissal of any UNRWA employee who publicly advocates terrorism or antisemitism.

### Methodology and Scope of Research

This report is based on information that has been displayed publicly on Facebook, obtained by searching for UNRWA-related key words. Because many Facebook users restrict their posts from the public, UN Watch was not able to examine most UNRWA staff profiles. Furthermore, because UNRWA does not provide a list of their staff, UN Watch researchers limited their review to Facebook users who specifically identified themselves as UNRWA employees, and to other Facebook pages publicly identified with UNRWA.

Accordingly, UN Watch cannot and does not represent that UNRWA neutrality breaches on social media are confined to the examples detailed in this report. The opposite is

true. In our assessment, the scope of neutrality breaches by UNRWA staff is significantly higher than that reflected in the 60 cases in this report. If one counts the additional UNRWA employees who publicly endorse or share the offending material, the report implicates hundreds of UNRWA employees. Moreover, the report does not cover UNRWA employees who incite racism or violence in the classroom, but who do not post this information to their Facebook profiles.

Were UNRWA itself to examine its employees, on and off Facebook, it can reasonably be estimated that thousands of UNRWA employees would be implicated. “UNRWA staff is replete with Hamas supporters,” notes Michael Bell, Canada’s former ambassador to Egypt, himself an advocate of funding the organization.<sup>1</sup>

## About UNRWA

UNRWA, established in December 1949 pursuant to UN General Assembly Resolution 302(IV),<sup>2</sup> is a UN agency devoted exclusively to the provision of services to Palestinians displaced as a result of Israel’s 1948 War of Independence *and their descendants*.<sup>3</sup> UNRWA’s main areas of operation include education, health care and social services.<sup>4</sup> It is funded almost entirely by donations, mostly from governments which, in 2015, supplied about 90% of its budget.<sup>5</sup> The organization is headed by Commissioner-General Pierre Krähenbühl, a former official of the International Red Cross, and Deputy Commissioner-General Sandra Mitchell, who has devoted her career to international humanitarian missions. Christopher Gunness is UNRWA’s controversial spokesperson.

Today, UNRWA assists approximately 5 million people designated as refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, the Gaza Strip and the West Bank.<sup>6</sup> According to UNRWA, the organization operates 692 schools with 493,000 students and 22,000 educational staff, out of approximately 30,000 total staff.<sup>7</sup> One of UNRWA’s main stated objectives is to

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<sup>1</sup> M. Bell, “Why Canada should restore funding for Palestinian relief agency,” *The Globe & Mail*, Feb. 17, 2016.

<sup>2</sup> UNRWA website, available at <https://www.unrwa.org/who-we-are>.

<sup>3</sup> UNRWA’s mandate is broader than that of the UN Refugee Agency which services all other refugees, defined as those fleeing armed conflict or persecution themselves and not including their descendants. See 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, Article I; and 1967 Additional Protocol Relating to Status of Refugees, Article I; see also UNHCR website, available at <http://www.unhcr.org/refugees.html>.

<sup>4</sup> UNRWA website, available at <https://www.unrwa.org/what-we-do>.

<sup>5</sup> Pledges to UNRWA (Cash and In-kind) for 2015 – Overall Donor Ranking in USD As 31 December 2015, available at [https://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/2015\\_donors\\_ranking\\_overall.pdf](https://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/2015_donors_ranking_overall.pdf); see also <https://www.unrwa.org/how-you-can-help/government-partners/funding-trends/key-facts-figures>.

<sup>6</sup> UNRWA website, available at <https://www.unrwa.org/who-we-are>; <https://www.unrwa.org/palestine-refugees>; <https://www.unrwa.org/careers/working-unrwa>.

<sup>7</sup> UNRWA website, available at <https://www.unrwa.org/what-we-do/education>. Another UNRWA

provide basic education to Palestinian youth, to enable them to obtain necessary skills and to impart key values such as dignity and tolerance.<sup>8</sup>

While UNRWA provides important services to the Palestinian population, it is viewed by some as an impediment to peace because it exacerbates the refugee problem, for example by treating the descendants of those displaced in 1948 as refugees. Questions have been raised about the neutrality of UNRWA facilities and staff.<sup>9</sup> UNRWA came under heavy criticism during the 2014 military conflict between Israel and Hamas when Hamas weapons were found in its schools in Gaza.<sup>10</sup> UNRWA's close connections with Hamas were highlighted this past February when two UNRWA employees were reportedly elected to Hamas's political bureau.<sup>11</sup> One of them, Suhail al-Hindi, an elementary school principal and chairman of the UNRWA staff union in Gaza, was ultimately suspended pending the results of an internal investigation.<sup>12</sup>

### **Canada Announces Funding to UNRWA**

In 2010, under former Prime Minister Stephen Harper, Canada halted its funding to UNRWA, based in part on the organization's ties to Hamas.<sup>13</sup> In November 2016, however, Prime Minister Trudeau's government announced its decision to reinstate funding to UNRWA with a \$25 million grant.<sup>14</sup> Documents obtained under Canada's Access to Information Act reveal that by the time the government announced its policy change, Ottawa had already transferred the new funds to UNRWA.<sup>15</sup> And during the

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webpage lists the number of students as 500,698. See <https://www.unrwa.org/where-we-work>.

<sup>8</sup> UNRWA website, available at <https://www.unrwa.org/what-we-do/education>.

<sup>9</sup>A. Joffe and A. Romirowsky, "The UN's Refugee Industry," *National Post*, Nov. 24, 2016; T. Bashan, "The Problem with UNRWA," *Jerusalem Post*, Sept. 4, 2014; D. Horovitz, "The trouble with UNRWA," *Times of Israel*, July 31, 2014; J. Rubin, "Is the U.N. making the Palestinian 'refugee' problem worse?" *Washington Post*, May 23, 2012.

<sup>10</sup> D. Horovitz, "The trouble with UNRWA," *Times of Israel*, July 31, 2014

<sup>11</sup> "Top UN staffer in Gaza said elected to Hamas leadership," *Times of Israel*, March 7, 2017.

<sup>12</sup> "UN suspends Gaza staffer amid allegations of Hamas ties," *Associated Press*, Feb. 26, 2017; "Dr. Suhail al-Hindi, Chairman of the UNRWA Staff Union in the Gaza Strip and Boys' Elementary School Principal, Is Elected to Hamas' New Gaza Political Bureau," *The Meir Amit Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center*, Feb. 23, 2017.

<sup>13</sup> A. Joffe and A. Romirowsky, "The UN's Refugee Industry," *National Post*, Nov. 24, 2016; A. Raj, "Trudeau Praised and Criticized For Splitting With Harper on Mideast," *Huffington Post Canada*, Nov. 18, 2016.

<sup>14</sup> "Minister Bibeau announces new funding to support the needs of vulnerable Palestinian refugees," *Global Affairs Canada*, Nov. 16, 2016.

<sup>15</sup> B. Lilley, "FOI docs reveal Liberals glossing over UN group's terror ties," *The Rebel*, March 22, 2017. See internal Canadian government emails on UNRWA here: [https://www.scribd.com/document/342748904/Global-Affairs-ATIP-UNRWA-Funding-Announcement-w-WATERMARK#from\\_embed](https://www.scribd.com/document/342748904/Global-Affairs-ATIP-UNRWA-Funding-Announcement-w-WATERMARK#from_embed)



week between the transfer and the public announcement, the government engaged in extensive internal strategizing through numerous drafts of Q&A's, backgrounders, fact sheets—at least some of which were shared with and commented on by UNRWA in advance—on how best to present the funding decision to the public despite the well-founded concerns about UNRWA staffers' ties to Hamas.<sup>16</sup>

A review of the internal government communications shows that the government glossed over specific allegations against UNRWA, claiming that they were unfounded or had been addressed, without explaining why or how.

For example, a detailed Canadian Q&A attached to a November 14, 2016 email states that “UNRWA has taken direct action” to address staff misuse of social media.<sup>17</sup> Yet the 60 cases of incitement to antisemitism and terrorism documented below indicate that UNRWA's response to the issue has been grossly deficient.

Another Canadian Q&A claims that allegations about UNRWA staff unions including Hamas members are “unsubstantiated” and that the staff union elections “have been monitored and reviewed.”<sup>18</sup> That claim is contradicted by the election of Suhail al-Hindi to the Hamas political bureau in February 2017. The final backgrounder published on the government's website avoids specifics, opting instead for a general statement that, “In Canada's view, UNRWA has demonstrated its commitment to addressing substantiated issues...”<sup>19</sup>

On November 16, 2016, International Development Minister Marie-Claude Bibeau presented the new policy in terms of enabling Palestinian women and children to receive health care and education. She said: “We want to see Palestinian refugee children in classrooms where they can learn universal values of tolerance and respect.”<sup>20</sup> Soon after the announcement, then foreign minister Stephane Dion made an official visit to Lebanon where he met with the Director of UNRWA Affairs in Lebanon, Hakam M. Shahawn, at the Burj Shemali refugee camp.<sup>21</sup> In his Facebook post on the

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<sup>16</sup> *Id.*

<sup>17</sup> Internal government emails at A048495\_8-000054.

<sup>18</sup> Internal government emails at A048495\_9-000055.

<sup>19</sup> “Backgrounder: Support for Vulnerable Palestinian Refugees,” *Global Affairs Canada*.

<sup>20</sup> “Minister Bibeau announces new funding to support the needs of vulnerable Palestinian refugees,” *Global Affairs Canada*, Nov. 16, 2016; “Liberals give \$25 million to controversial Palestinian aid agency,” *The Star*, Nov. 16, 2016.

<sup>21</sup> “Minister Dion announces significant support for peace, security and stability in Lebanon,” *Global Affairs Canada*, Dec. 5, 2016. Shortly before the announcement, Canada's Governor General David Johnston visited a UN facility in Jordan. See Itinerary - Governor General to Undertake Visits to Jordan, Israel and the West Bank, available at [http://www.canadainternational.gc.ca/west\\_bank\\_gaza-cisjordanie\\_bande\\_de\\_gaza/highlights-faits/2016/2016-10-25.aspx?lang=eng](http://www.canadainternational.gc.ca/west_bank_gaza-cisjordanie_bande_de_gaza/highlights-faits/2016/2016-10-25.aspx?lang=eng).

visit, Shahawn lauded Canada's interest in children's education programs and its decision to renew UNRWA funding.<sup>22</sup>

### **Incitement to Terrorism and Antisemitism is Pervasive at UNRWA Schools and Among UNRWA Staff on Social Media**

Universal values of tolerance and respect certainly do not include incitement to terrorism and antisemitism. Yet today this type of material is easily found on UNRWA school Facebook pages and in UNRWA staff Facebook profiles. Last year, UN Watch exposed 30 examples of such posts by UNRWA staff. This report contains 60 additional examples found on public Facebook pages associated with UNRWA. As noted above, UN Watch did not conduct a comprehensive review of UNRWA staff Facebook profiles because of privacy limitations and lack of resources. Were UNRWA to conduct such a review, many more cases would surface.

The instances of incitement in this report include UNRWA teachers, staffers and institutions celebrating the terrorist kidnapping of Israeli teenagers, cheering rockets being fired at Israeli civilian centers, endorsing various forms of violence including random knife and vehicular attacks against Israeli civilians, erasing Israel from the map, praising Hitler and posting his photo, and posting overtly antisemitic videos, caricatures, and statements.

In this report, we provide many examples of UNRWA schools hosting student events and activities proudly celebrating and endorsing terrorism targeting Israeli civilians. While we only know about events like these that are documented on Facebook, we suspect that there are many more such terrorist-supporting events hosted and promoted by UNRWA schools and staff which simply are not publicized. Below are some examples that we did find:

- The Facebook page of UNRWA's Manshiet Bani Hashim school applauds the wave of fires that struck Israel in November 2016, many of which were started by arson terrorists.<sup>23</sup> Other images on the school's page depict student artwork adorning the school which erases Israel from the map.<sup>24</sup> In February 2017, Abu

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<sup>22</sup>

<https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=10154163396628106&set=a.56086863105.70603.643898105&type=3&theater>.

<sup>23</sup>

<https://www.facebook.com/401528419976788/photos/a.458226544306975.1073741830.401528419976788/1001498316646459/?type=3&theater>;  
<https://www.facebook.com/401528419976788/photos/a.458226544306975.1073741830.401528419976788/1001498233313134/?type=3&permPage=1>.

<sup>24</sup>

<https://www.facebook.com/401528419976788/photos/a.458226544306975.1073741830.401528419976788/843431905786435/?type=3&permPage=1>;  
<https://www.facebook.com/401528419976788/photos/a.458226544306975.1073741830.401528419976788/968844929911798/?type=3&theater>.

Anas Ghoban, a teacher at this school posted an image to his Facebook profile glorifying terrorism.

- Several UNRWA schools display images erasing Israel from the map, often as murals decorating the school or in displays of student artwork.<sup>25</sup> This completely negates UNRWA's claim to be educating Palestinians for peace and coexistence with Israel.
- The UNRWA schools in Jordan Facebook page promotes an annual poetry contest in conjunction with UNRWA's Nazzal school in Amman. In 2011, one young participant who is photographed holding up a knife recited a poem glorifying suicide martyrdom.<sup>26</sup>
- UNRWA's al-Qastal school in Lebanon celebrated the October 2015 knife attacks against Israeli civilians by hosting a rally, with speeches by students and teachers.<sup>27</sup>

In addition to evidence of these terrorist-supporting events outrageously sponsored by UNRWA schools, our report provides examples of inciting material posted by individual UNRWA staff members. For example:

- Mahannad Najem, an UNRWA teacher in Syria, posted an image of a dog urinating on the flag of Israel.
- Subi al-Zaber, an UNRWA teacher based in Amman, Jordan, has as his current Facebook profile picture, an image erasing Israel from the map, along with words calling to "get out of our land...get out of everything."<sup>28</sup>

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<https://www.facebook.com/unrwa0schools/photos/a.109673592445671.18271.109667055779658/1262395913840094/?type=3&theater;>

<https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=10200706099708965&set=gm.184964415009287&type=3&permPage=1;>

<https://www.facebook.com/unrwa0schools/photos/a.109673592445671.18271.109667055779658/1077802802299407/?type=3&theater;>

<https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=1710552919175184&set=a.1397499313813881.1073741828.100006614773057&type=1&theater;>

<https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=1495667377392791&set=a.1380722978887232.1073741826.100008486291872&type=1&theater.>

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<https://www.facebook.com/unrwa0schools/photos/a.119682381444792.27812.109667055779658/119682531444777/?type=3&permPage=1;>

<https://www.facebook.com/unrwa0schools/photos/a.119682381444792.27812.109667055779658/119682541444776/?type=3&theater.>

<sup>27</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/madraset.unrwa/posts/1710553902508419.>

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<https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=375169755938797&set=a.375169749272131.1073741825.100003373275724&type=1&theater.>

- Mohamed Soliman, an English teacher at UNRWA in Syria, glorified the October 2015 terrorist knife attacks against Israeli civilians with an image turning all of Israel into a Palestinian knife, with the words “Your knife is Freedom.”<sup>29</sup> His profile also contains an image and quote of Hitler.<sup>30</sup>

These UNRWA posts are shocking in and of themselves and, of course, should be immediately removed. Yet improper use of social media is merely a symptom of a much deeper problem which must be remedied—the fact that UNRWA employs racist and terror-supporting staff to educate impressionable Palestinian children in the first place.

### **UNRWA Staff are Blatantly Violating UN Rules**

These Facebook posts constitute a gross violation of UN and UNRWA internal policies concerning staff neutrality and impartiality.

Article 101(3) of the UN Charter states that the “paramount consideration” in employing staff is “securing the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity.” The quality of “integrity” is central to the UN Staff Rules and Staff Regulations, which require staff members to “uphold the highest standards of . . . integrity.” This includes, but is not limited to, “probity, impartiality, fairness, honesty and truthfulness in all matters affecting their work and status.”<sup>31</sup> This value is again reflected in Regulation 1.2(f) requiring staff to remain neutral and impartial, especially with respect to public pronouncements.

Moreover, UNRWA’s own International Staff Regulations expressly incorporate this UN “neutrality rule” for its staff, stating in Regulation 1.4 that staff must “avoid any action and in particular any kind of public pronouncement which may adversely reflect on their status or integrity, independence or impartiality which are required by that status.” In other places neutrality is defined as not taking sides in hostilities or engaging in “controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature.”<sup>32</sup>

The incendiary Facebook posts by UNRWA personnel supporting, glorifying and legitimizing murderous anti-Israel terrorism and antisemitism is a gross violation of this duty of neutrality. These UN employees are openly taking sides in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and engaging in political, racial, religious or ideological controversies.

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<https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=1661521927428504&set=a.1385367061710660.1073741828.100007121383248&type=1&theater>.

<sup>30</sup>

<https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=1447548598825839&set=a.1385367061710660.1073741828.100007121383248&type=1&theater>.

<sup>31</sup> UN Staff Regulation 1.2(b).

<sup>32</sup> See, e.g., “OCHA on Message: Humanitarian Principles,” *UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs*, June 2012, available at [https://docs.unocha.org/sites/dms/Documents/OOM-humanitarianprinciples\\_eng\\_June12.pdf](https://docs.unocha.org/sites/dms/Documents/OOM-humanitarianprinciples_eng_June12.pdf).

## UNRWA May Also be in Violation of its Neutrality Obligations

As a UN humanitarian agency, UNRWA itself may also be in violation of these paramount principles of neutrality, particularly in light of the extensive evidence in our report that UNRWA facilities are used to host terrorist inciting events. Indeed, UNRWA committed to Canada to ensure neutrality and has made similar commitments to other donors.<sup>33</sup> Furthermore, on its website, UNRWA proclaims that “neutrality is critically important to United Nations humanitarian agencies.”<sup>34</sup> UNRWA further represents that “it has a legal framework for operations that requires neutrality of staff, third parties, facilities and beneficiaries” and notes donor conditions relating to neutrality.<sup>35</sup> This is followed by a list of UNRWA’s “processes and mechanisms” to ensure staff neutrality, including interviews, meetings, monitoring and investigations. But none of this directly addresses the problem of incitement to antisemitism or terrorism (whether online or in the classroom).<sup>36</sup>

Regrettably, when we exposed 30 similar cases of online incitement last year, the response of UNRWA spokesman Chris Gunness was to lash out at UN Watch, and to deny or downplay the problem. Only after months of sustained media attention did the UN spokesman in New York announce quietly that a few employees had been suspended.<sup>37</sup> The identities of the perpetrators, or the duration of their suspensions, were never disclosed.

In any event, whatever disciplinary action UNRWA took plainly was not effective—today’s UN Watch report shows that the conduct is continuing unabated throughout UNRWA’s facilities across the Middle East. That so many UNRWA employees continue to publicly display Facebook posts which celebrate radical Islamic terrorism and incite antisemitism demonstrates UNRWA is failing to take the issue seriously, and that its employees know that. Likewise, the senior UNRWA echelon’s daily political advocacy targeting Israel—an anomalous practice and breach of neutrality among humanitarian agencies worldwide—creates an overall atmosphere in the organization where teachers clearly feel comfortable erasing the Jewish state from the map.

In response to an earlier version of this report released in the United States in February 2017, UNRWA spokesman Chris Gunness issued a general statement that UNRWA takes allegations of neutrality violations seriously and “will take disciplinary action where

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<sup>33</sup> See, e.g., “Backgrounder: Support for Vulnerable Palestinian Refugees,” *Global Affairs Canada*; Framework of Cooperation Between the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and the United States of America for 2017, available at <https://www.state.gov/j/prm/releases/frameworknew/264507.htm>.

<sup>34</sup> UNRWA website at <https://www.unrwa.org/resources/about-unrwa/unrwa-and-neutrality>.

<sup>35</sup> UNRWA and Neutrality, available at <https://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/2011033075942.pdf>.

<sup>36</sup> *Id.*

<sup>37</sup> “UNRWA suspends employees after UN Watch exposed incitement to anti-Semitic violence,” *UN Watch*, Oct. 22, 2015.

appropriate,” but again refused to detail whether any disciplinary measures had been or would be taken and against whom.

While some of the UNRWA staff’s Facebook posts exposed by UN Watch have since been removed, this fails to address the core problem of UNRWA employing antisemitic and terrorist-supporting teachers in the first place, and hosting terrorist-supporting events at its facilities. We are not aware that UNRWA has dismissed any of the UNRWA staff featured in this report or that it has undertaken a comprehensive review of UNRWA staff social media profiles for inciting material. In fact, as indicated in Part II, it is clear that a number of the perpetrators identified by us in our February report are still employed by UNRWA and still post antisemitic content on his Facebook profile. (See *infra*, e.g., case L19, “Mohamad Fahed, UNRWA Teacher, Continues to Glorify Hamas and Incite Against Jews.”)

UNRWA’s responses show that it is doing the bare minimum to look good—to give the appearance of taking action—while ignoring the magnitude of the problem and its more serious underpinnings: the fact that UNRWA continues to hire and employ these individuals. UNRWA’s failure to take meaningful action on this issue, particularly after having been supplied with documented examples, at the very least renders it complicit in its staff members’ misconduct.

### **Canada Must Act to Ensure UNRWA’s Compliance with Neutrality**

In renewing funding to UNRWA, the Canadian government committed to apply “stringent due diligence and accountability measures” to UNRWA, including “ongoing oversight, regular site visits, a systematic screening process, and strong anti-terrorism provisions in funding agreements.”<sup>38</sup> The government further assured that it would hold UNRWA to its neutrality obligations by ensuring it provides the necessary social media training to UNRWA staff and that the government would “respond promptly if cases of inappropriate social media use occur.” Canada also represented that as “an engaged member of UNRWA’s Advisory Commission,” it would work with UNRWA to advance ongoing reforms and would be actively involved in oversight.

Therefore, at a minimum, Canada has a duty to ensure that UNRWA lives up to its obligations as a UN humanitarian organization, including its duty of neutrality, and that it implements its obligations for social media training and accountability for its staff.

We question whether Canada is doing enough in this regard. Following our release of the February 2017 version of this report, Canada’s Ramallah representative, Douglas Proudfoot tweeted “Discussing #neutrality with @UNRWA #WestBank Director Scott Anderson.” But we have not seen any concrete action taken by UNRWA to tackle the racism among its staff, and we continue to find examples of antisemitic and terrorist inciting material at UNRWA facilities and on UNRWA staff Facebook pages.

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<sup>38</sup> “Backgrounder: Support for Vulnerable Palestinian Refugees,” *Global Affairs Canada*.

## Duty to Uphold Canadian Values of Opposing Promotion of Racism and Hate

Beyond Canada's specific undertakings with respect to UNRWA, Canada is also a signatory to the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination and has strong domestic anti-discrimination and anti-incitement laws which have been used to keep racist teachers out of the classroom in Canada.

- Section 319 of the Criminal Code of Canada prohibits willfully inciting or promoting hatred in public against an identifiable group. In the *Keegstra* case, Canada's Supreme Court upheld a Section 319 conviction against a teacher for making antisemitic statements in the classroom. Keegstra had described Jews as "money loving," "power hungry" and "child killers," and claimed they were to blame for historical calamities.<sup>39</sup> UNRWA teachers who do the same or worse cannot be granted impunity.
- Section 5 of the Canadian Human Rights Act prohibits discrimination on the basis of religion or ancestry. In 1996, the Supreme Court of Canada relied on this provision to uphold the decision of a school board to fire a teacher who had made public antisemitic statements while off duty, finding that the resulting infringement on the teacher's freedom of expression was justifiable.<sup>40</sup> UNRWA teachers who do the same or worse, in the classroom or on Facebook, should also be fired.

More recent cases indicate that Canada continues to demand its teachers refrain from publicly expressing racist views. In 2007, the Canadian College of Teachers found a teacher linked to white supremacists and neo-Nazis who had made repeated racist statements outside of the classroom guilty of professional misconduct and revoked his teaching license.<sup>41</sup> In December 2014, a Winnipeg high school teacher was suspended for making derogatory comments on Facebook about aboriginal people.<sup>42</sup> In September 2015, an Ontario high school fired a teacher who had tweeted extensively against hijabs, prayer and Sharia law.<sup>43</sup>

Canada must demand that UNRWA adhere to the same standards for rejecting racism in the classroom that Canada applies to its own teachers. Similarly, other UNRWA donors categorically reject racism in the classroom. In October 2015, the UK government banned a teacher from the classroom for life over an antisemitic Facebook post.<sup>44</sup> In the

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<sup>39</sup> P. Bowal, "What Ever Happened to ... Jim Keegstra," *LawNow*, July 1, 2012.

<sup>40</sup> *Ross v. New Brunswick School District No. 15*, 1 S.C.R. 825 (1996)

<sup>41</sup> J. Mahoney, "Ex-teacher loses license over neo-Nazi ties," *The Globe and Mail*, Nov. 10, 2007.

<sup>42</sup> "Brad Badiuk, Winnipeg teacher suspended over Facebook comments, on unpaid leave," *CBC News*, Jan. 21, 2015.

<sup>43</sup> Ferreira, Victor, "Ontario high school teacher fired after 10-week investigation into series of anti-Islam tweets," *National Post*, Sept. 9, 2015.

<sup>44</sup> "Teacher misconduct panel outcome: Mr. Mahmudul Choudhury," *National College for Teaching & Leadership*, Oct. 16, 2015.

U.S. in November 2016, the Oberlin College Board of Trustees dismissed an assistant professor for anti-Semitic Facebook posts.<sup>45</sup> Palestinian students deserve the same rights that UNRWA's donors grant their own. Thus, beyond ensuring social media and neutrality training for all UNRWA staff, Canada must insist that UNRWA implement a zero-tolerance policy for public display of antisemitism or terrorist support by its staff—whether in the classroom or online.

***Recommendations and Call to Action for Prime Minister Justin Trudeau:***

In light of the foregoing, UN Watch urges Prime Minister Justin Trudeau to:

- (a) Demand that UNRWA adopt a zero-tolerance policy for employees who incite racism or murder—whether on or offline—by immediately terminating them, like Canada does with its own teachers, and to prominently post on its website these and other actions it is taking to root out this insidious conduct by UN staff;
- (b) Demand that UN Secretary-General António Guterres and UNRWA Commissioner-General Pierre Krähenbühl immediately condemn their employees' incitement to terrorism and antisemitism;
- (c) Demand that UNRWA conduct a thorough investigation of its facilities and put an immediate stop to all antisemitic or terrorist-inciting activities and images found there;
- (d) Demand that UNRWA undertake a comprehensive review of the social media profiles of all UNRWA staff for content that violates UN and UNRWA neutrality;
- (e) Work with UNRWA to implement effective monitoring and controls to ensure the neutrality of UNRWA facilities and staff and make public its activities in this regard;
- (f) Establish, in concert with other like-minded donor states, an independent, international commission of inquiry with the mandate to examine the nature and extent of incitement to antisemitism and terrorism among UNRWA teachers and other staff, and to recommend remedial action;
- (g) Demand that UNRWA be in full compliance with its neutrality obligations prior to releasing any further funds to UNRWA; and
- (h) Determine and disclose which of the people identified in 2015 and 2017 by UN Watch of having posted antisemitism and terrorist incitement on their Facebook profiles is still employed by UNRWA, and thereby potentially being funded by Canada.

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<sup>45</sup> V. Strauss, "Oberlin College dismisses professor who posted anti-Semitic messages on social media," *Washington Post*, Nov. 15, 2016.