



Israel's Approval of the Law Banning UNRWA: A Declaration of Total War on the United Nations and Palestinian Refugees

Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine's Foreign Affairs Department: Either respect the charter or get expelled from the United Nations.

Ladies and gentlemen in political parties and parliaments worldwide,

Dear friends in international community, media, human rights, and trade union frameworks,

To all free individuals and those with a living conscience in our world,

In a dangerous precedent, the Israeli parliament (on November 28) passed a law banning the activities of one of the United Nations agencies in Israel, namely the "United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees" (UNRWA), which employs around 30,000 staff members. The parliament had previously voted in July 2024 to classify UNRWA as a "terrorist organization."

Days before the new law's vote, the UN Security Council, the United Nations, and dozens of countries and international institutions—including some allied with Israel—called for the project to be withdrawn and not approved due to its legal violations and humanitarian consequences that would affect millions of Palestinian refugees in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, who depend on UNRWA for health, education, and social relief services. Despite this, Israel insisted on its position and proceeded with the law, disregarding global opinions and the humanitarian fallout.

What does banning UNRWA's activities in Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza mean? Since its establishment in 1949 by the UN General Assembly under resolution 302, UNRWA has operated freely in the West Bank and Gaza to provide education, health, and relief services to refugees. After Israel's occupation of all Palestinian territories in 1967, an agreement was signed with UNRWA to regulate its work and grant it freedom of movement and necessary exemptions. However, this agreement has effectively been annulled by the law's approval, depriving UNRWA of many rights and privileges that would prevent it from operating, including:

- The cancellation of all privileges and immunities granted to international diplomatic missions, including the cessation of tax and customs exemptions, lifting protections for UNRWA staff, facilities, and vehicles, severing communications with it, and barring it from any activity in areas Israel considers "sovereign."
- The classification of the Shuafat refugee camp in Jerusalem as illegal, housing over 100,000 Palestinian refugees, which will adversely affect the camp's legal status and gradually facilitate collaboration with armed settler gangs to displace its residents in preparation for dismantling it.

- UNRWA facilities in the West Bank will be targeted by the occupation army based on Israeli laws purportedly for combating terrorism, allowing settlers, who have previously besieged UNRWA offices and called for their burning, to invade them.

Beyond the legal descriptions of Israel's step, which not only violates the conditions for Israel's admission to the United Nations but also contradicts the UN Charter, which mandates respect as a fundamental principle and a condition for membership—particularly in Articles 2 and 105 that state: "All members shall provide every assistance to the United Nations in any action it takes in accordance with this Charter" (Article 2), and "The organization shall enjoy in the territory of each member such privileges and immunities as are necessary for the fulfillment of its purposes..." (Article 105). This means facilitating UNRWA's work and granting it the privileges and exemptions is a fundamental requirement outlined in the Charter, not a decision of the occupying state to revoke at will.

The Israeli law is akin to a declaration of true war against the United Nations and its various institutions, following the Israeli foreign minister's declaration of the UN Secretary-General as "persona non grata," among other UN officials. It presents the international community with a genuine challenge regarding its reputation and credibility, as UNRWA is one of the organizations under the UN, both in terms of its foundation and its regular program renewals. Thus, defending Palestinian refugees in this case is also a defense of the international organization's reputation.

Despite the considerable risks posed to refugees and the services provided to them by UNRWA, the law's impact on the right of return will remain limited, especially if the UN and Arab countries show the will to confront it and nullify it. The right of return derives its strength not only from the existence of UNRWA—important though that is—but primarily from the natural and historical right of refugees to their land. This right, as affirmed by numerous international resolutions, and I say by courts and international legal scholars, does not expire with the passage of time, no matter how many years go by, especially as millions of refugees still carry its banner. Secondly, it is a right supported by UN resolution 194 and dozens of other international resolutions that do not grant a right to refugees but rather affirm an existing, established right that predates resolution 194.

Since UNRWA constitutes one of the foundations upon which the right of return is established—including resolution 194, the existence of camps, and the legal definition of a refugee—these elements will remain even after the law is enacted. What the law proposes is the opening of a new battle added to the series of struggles waged by the Palestinian people and freedom-loving individuals worldwide. Because while Israel may impose the law's implementation through its military and occupying force in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, it cannot do so in areas where refugees reside outside Palestine, numbering over six million.

The world's silence over Israel's crimes and the pressure on international courts and judicial frameworks have led Israel to feel protected under the American veto and support from Western and allied countries, facilitating its persistent violations of the UN Charter and human rights. This has encouraged it to continually challenge the international community and reject its resolutions, including tearing the Charter apart at the United Nations platform by the Israeli representative last May.

The approval of the law reflects a disregard for what remains of the international system, and it would not have occurred with such arrogance were it not for the unlimited support Israel receives from the United States in particular, and the silence or even complicity of Western countries in allowing Israel to evade accountability for decades for its breaches of international resolutions and its continued criminal acts and genocide against the Palestinian people.

Moreover, Israel's insistence on continuing its comprehensive war against the United Nations, represented by UNRWA and other international organizations and institutions, necessitates more than condemnation and denunciation. The time has come for the United Nations to take swift responsibility in enacting measures to expel Israel and isolate it from the UN.

On behalf of the "foreign Affairs Department of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine," as we present this overview of the Israeli law declaring war on the UN and UNRWA, we are confident that this serious development will be on your agenda in your future movements opposing the genocidal war perpetrated by Israel against the Palestinian and Lebanese peoples, and in favor of supportive stances from your governments, aimed at isolating Israel and forcing it to respect the international community and its supportive positions for the Palestinian people and their national rights, rejecting the fascism represented by Israel with direct support from the United States and some Western countries that continue to practice political hypocrisy in their public rejection of Israel's actions while providing it with unlimited support for its policies of killing, terrorism, and rebellion against the international system and its political, legal, human rights, and humanitarian foundations.

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