

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-002294/24
to the Commission
Jorge Martín Frías (PFE)
(29 October 2024)**

Subject: EU funds spent by UNRWA on terrorist-linked activities

For many years, the EU has been financing the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). Since 2010, the EU has donated a total of USD 2.15 billion.

On 11 April 2024, Parliament adopted a resolution calling for the funds allocated to UNRWA to be frozen in the face of evidence that UNRWA facilities had been a refuge for Hamas' terrorists, and had been used by them to plan attacks and store the weapons used to carry out the attacks on and murders of Israeli citizens on 7 October 2023. At least 12 employees from UNRWA were involved in these attacks.

In October 2024, investigations following the death of Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar showed that one of his bodyguards was a teacher in UNRWA.

Evidence about the link between Hamas and UNRWA is public knowledge but nevertheless, the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (VP/HR), Mr Borrell, has continued to approve several payments, totalling EUR 82 million, to UNRWA throughout 2024.

How is it possible that the Commission, by request of VP/HR Mr Borrell, has continued to approve the transfer of millions of euros, which cannot be traced, to UNRWA after such striking evidence of its implication in terrorist activities?

Submitted: 29.10.2024

**Answer given by Ms Šuica on behalf of the European Commission
(19 February 2025)**

Given the essential role of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), which provides crucial support to the civilian population in Gaza and the wider region, as confirmed by the European Council in December 2024 ⁽¹⁾, the EU expressed grave concern about the serious allegations made on 24 January 2024 on the possible involvement of some UNRWA staff in the unprecedented 7 October 2023 attacks, which the EU condemned in the strongest possible terms.

The Commission has been in constant contact with UNRWA at the highest levels. As a result, UNRWA committed, notably in the context of the signature of the EU-UNRWA contribution agreement to implement the actions requested in the 29 January 2024 Commission statement ⁽²⁾: (i) to allow an audit to be conducted by EU-appointed independent external experts; (ii) to strengthen its Department of Internal Investigations; and (iii) to carry out a review of all UNRWA staff to confirm that they did not participate in the attacks.

Following the fulfilment by UNRWA of all the conditions agreed for the 2024 EU funding, the Commission disbursed in three tranches a total of EUR 82 million, and an additional top-up of EUR 10 million in December 2024 ⁽³⁾.

This came in addition to the EUR 48.5 million of EU humanitarian funding in 2024. The Commission is committed to continuing its support for the Agency, and closely monitors the implementation of the action plan developed by UNRWA in response to the recommendations of the Independent Review Group ⁽⁴⁾ and further decisive action by the UN to ensure neutrality, accountability and to strengthen control and oversight over the operations of the Agency.

The Commission will also continue monitoring the implementation of the recommendations resulting from the EU audit.

⁽¹⁾ <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/jhlehaj/euco-conclusions-19122024-en.pdf>

⁽²⁾ https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/news/european-commission-statement-unrwa-2024-01-29_en

⁽³⁾ https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/news/commission-disburses-additional-eu10-million-payment-unrwa-2024-12-20_en

⁽⁴⁾ <https://www.unrwa.org/resources/reports/colonna-report-and-unrwa%E2%80%99s-high-level-action-plan-implementation-recommendations>