

EN

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Answer given by Ms Šuica
on behalf of the European Commission
(24.4.2025)

The Commission learnt from the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) in early 2024 about the very serious allegations against 19 UNRWA staff members regarding their possible involvement in the 7 October 2023 terrorist attacks. The Commission was also informed by the United Nations in August 2024 that the Office of Internal Oversight Service OIOS had completed its investigation of the 19 staff members. The investigation found that in one case, no evidence was obtained to support the allegations. In nine other cases, the evidence was insufficient to support claims of involvement. In the remaining nine cases, the evidence obtained by OIOS, if authenticated and corroborated, might indicate that the staff members may have been involved, and their employment was terminated in the interest of UNRWA.

In response, the Commission has taken decisive action engaging with UNRWA's Commissioner General to tackle the serious issues at stake. Among others, the Agency has adopted an Action Plan to implement the recommendations of the Independent Review Group¹, and swiftly followed up on the UN OIOS report on the allegations against UNRWA's staff.

Among the measures agreed between the Commission and UNRWA, the Agency has reinforced its Internal Oversight Service and Ethics Department, increased the frequency of sharing staff information to a quarterly basis with host countries, including Israel, and continue to perform monthly screening of staff against EU and the UN Security Council Consolidated Sanctions List. These measures show the Agency's commitment to uphold the humanitarian principle of neutrality, to ensure rapid and adequate responses to such allegations, and to implement disciplinary sanctions on personnel who breach neutrality.

The Commission will continue to closely monitor the implementation of the Action Plan stemming by the Independent Review Group report and the EU system audit, to guarantee that the Agency works in full compliance with humanitarian principles, including neutrality.

¹ <https://www.unrwa.org/resources/reports/colonna-report-and-action-plan>