

(English version)

**Priority question for written answer P-000354/25
to the Commission
Kristoffer Storm (ECR)
(27 January 2025)**

Subject: Continued EU financial support to the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

In the light of reports that Israeli hostages were hidden in UN shelters and that Hamas terrorists took advantage of UN camps, can the Commission answer the following questions:

1. Does the Commission know whether hostages were held in UN shelters, and does this raise concerns about potential misuse of the EU's financial support to the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) in this case?
2. If evidence confirms that hostages were held in UN shelters, will the Commission halt its financial support to UNRWA?

Submitted: 27.1.2025

**Answer given by Ms Šuica on behalf of the European Commission
(22 April 2025)**

The Commission does not have any evidence related to the Israeli hostages being held in Gaza in the United Nations Relief and Work Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East's (UNRWA) premises and encourages those who have information on this allegation to formally notify UNRWA.

The Commission notes that UNRWA was forced to vacate all its installations in the northern part of the Gaza Strip and had no control over them for months.

In accordance with international humanitarian law, it is fundamental that the principle of neutrality — including as regards UNRWA's installations — is upheld by all parties of the conflict.

The Commission takes neutrality issues very seriously. The Commission has been working in the last months with UNRWA to enhance the neutrality processes and controls systems of the Agency.

The Commission has been monitoring, in parallel, the implementation of the action plan presented by UNRWA on the recommendations of the United Nations Independent Review Group report ⁽¹⁾, as well as the recommendations stemming from the EU system audit.

The Commission will continue to closely monitor the implementation of these actions to guarantee that the Agency works in full compliance with the principles of international humanitarian law, including neutrality.

The EU remains committed to supporting UNRWA, providing both financial and political support, to enable UNRWA to fulfil its mandate.

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