

# Israel-Gaza Crisis (/en/situation-in-occupied-palestine-and-israel)

## Allegations against UNRWA staff



| Secretary-General António Guterres during a press conference. ©UN Photo/Mark Garten

The Secretary-General (<https://www.un.org/sg/en>) is horrified by extremely serious allegations which implicate several UNRWA staff members in the terror attacks of 7 October in Israel. The UN is taking swift action.

The Secretary-General immediately activated an investigation by the UN's Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) (<https://oios.un.org/>).

Of the 12 people implicated, UNRWA immediately identified and terminated the contracts of ten, another two are confirmed dead. Any UN employee involved in acts of terror will be held accountable, including through criminal prosecution. The Secretariat is ready to cooperate with a competent authority able to prosecute the individuals in line with the Secretariat's normal procedures for such cooperation.

The Secretary-General appeals to the governments that have suspended their contributions to, at least, guarantee the continuity of UNRWA's operations. At least two million people in Gaza depend on critical aid from UNRWA. If funding does not resume, UNRWA will be forced to suspend its operations across the region including in Gaza as of end of February.

### Investigation by UN's Office of Internal Oversight Services

The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) conducts administrative investigations into allegations of misconduct in the workplace. This includes alleged breaches of UN staff regulations, rules and codes of conduct.

An OIOS investigation is designed to gather information in order to determine whether the alleged misconduct occurred. OIOS investigations are impartial, respect due process rights of those involved, are victim-centred, and collect both inculpatory and exculpatory information. Strict confidentiality requirements apply to OIOS investigations.

OIOS is not responsible for deciding what action will be taken once the investigation has concluded. OIOS will prepare an investigation report to the Secretary-General outlining the facts established during its investigation. OIOS investigation reports are strictly confidential and are not published. The report will contain a summary of findings and conclusions to the Secretary-General in determining what action to take, which may include recommending a referral to the relevant authorities for criminal sanction.

The Secretary-General expects the investigation will be completed as swiftly as possible.

## Independent review of UNRWA

UNRWA announced on 17 January, prior to these allegations, that it is commissioning a full independent review of the agency.

The Secretary-General, in consultation with [UNRWA Commissioner-General Philippe Lazzarini](https://www.unrwa.org/who-we-are/our-leadership/unrwa-commissioner-general) (<https://www.unrwa.org/who-we-are/our-leadership/unrwa-commissioner-general>), has appointed an independent Review Group to assess whether the Agency is doing everything within its power to ensure neutrality and to respond to allegations of serious breaches when they are made.

The review is to be led by Catherine Colonna, the former Minister of Foreign Affairs of France, who will work with three research organizations: the Raoul Wallenberg Institute in Sweden, the Chr. Michelsen Institute in Norway, and the Danish Institute for Human Rights.

The Review Group begins its work on 14 February 2024 and is expected to submit an interim report to the Secretary-General late March 2024, with a final report expected to be completed by late April 2024. The final report will be made public.

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