

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0818/09
by Paul van Buitenen (Verts/ALE)
to the Commission

Subject: UNRWA anti-terrorism policies

The Washington Institute for Near East Policy has published the report 'Fixing UNRWA: repairing the UN's troubled system of aid to the Palestinian refugees' written by James Lindsay who served as a senior legal advisor of UNRWA where he oversaw all of UNRWA's legal activities.

One of the conclusions of the author, based both on his research and experience, is that UNRWA does not take adequate measures to ensure whether its employees or the people they serve are (affiliated with) terrorists.

Among other things he states that:

- UNRWA rarely terminates a contract in case of suspected terrorist involvement because 'clear and convincing' evidence is 'almost never available to UNRWA';
- although applicants are required to reveal any previous arrests, charges and convictions, 'applicants in the West Bank and Gaza are not checked for accuracy with the Palestinian Authority (PA) or Israel';
- UNRWA does not conduct security investigations of its contractors and the 'after-the-fact comparison' with the UN list which contains entities and individuals associated with Al-Qaida and Taliban has not produced a match;
- 'UNRWA makes no attempt to weed out individuals who support extremist positions' from its staff;
- there are no formal procedures for deregistering or denying services to refugees whether or not they are involved in terrorist (or any other criminal) activities.

Considering the fact that former UNRWA director Peter Hansen has, while he was in office, stated that it was very probable that Hamas members were part of the UNRWA staff and that UNRWA makes no attempt to find out if they are and considering the fact that EU funds make up about 50% of the UNRWA budget:

- What consequences do these statements have for the ongoing EU funding of UNRWA?
- Is the Commission prepared to demand an official investigation into these matters?