



THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

19 May 2015

Dear Mr. Lauder,

I wish to thank you for your letter of 23 April 2015, in which you raised concerns about the role of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) during last summer's conflict between Palestinian armed groups and the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF).

First and foremost, let me reiterate my strong commitment to combat the scourge of anti-Semitism, which I have repeatedly and consistently condemned. I have frequently declared that the legitimate pursuit of justice and dignity for the Palestinians and peace in the Middle East must not, in any way, or anywhere, justify incitement or violence against Jews. Since taking office in 2007, I have gone out of my way to build stronger relations with Israel, which is a vital partner for peace and security in the Middle East.

As you may be aware, on 10 November 2014, I established an independent United Nations Headquarters Board of Inquiry to examine ten incidents affecting or involving United Nations personnel, premises and operations during the conflict last summer between Palestinian armed groups and the IDF, including three incidents in which weaponry was found on UNRWA premises. I have strongly condemned the placement by Palestinian armed groups of weaponry in UNRWA schools in Gaza, albeit empty buildings not being used as shelters.

As indicated in the summary of the Board's report issued on 27 April 2015, the Board did not find any evidence, including with respect to those three incidents, that UNRWA provided support of any kind to any Palestinian armed group in Gaza, nor, in particular, that it returned any of the weaponry that had been found on its premises to Hamas.

Mr. Ronald S. Lauder  
President  
World Jewish Congress  
New York

15-04178 / 15-03586

EXR/07/001

POL/09/005

FILED

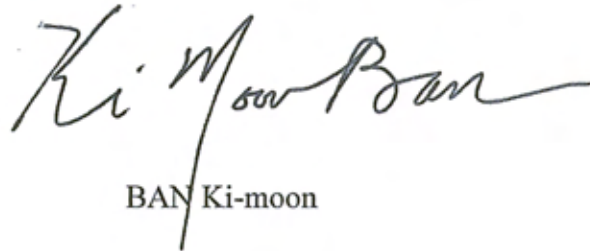
MAY 21 2015

SCH/09/001

UNRWA employs a range of measures to safeguard its premises, ensure their neutrality, and prevent their misuse, and has implemented those measures to the best of its abilities during the conflict at considerable risk to its staff. The Board of Inquiry nevertheless found that those measures need strengthening and made a number of recommendations for this purpose. I have established a group of senior managers to review these recommendations and advise me on the next steps to be taken.

I would like to take this opportunity to underline the positive cooperation between UNRWA and the Israeli authorities in the context of efforts to facilitate the Agency's operations in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip regarding the well-being, human development and protection of the Palestine refugees UNRWA assists.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Ban Ki-moon". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Ban" being more prominent and the last name "Ki-moon" following in a similar style. The signature is positioned above the printed name.

BAN Ki-moon



To: CDC (through ODSG),

Please find attached, for your approval and SG's signature, a letter addressed to the President of the World Jewish Congress, in response to his letter of 23 April, regarding UNRWA's role during the last Gaza conflict.

A handwritten signature in purple ink, appearing to be 'AR'.

Political Unit  
19 May 2015

Received in ODSG

20 May 2015

Seen by:

ER

15-04178



ACTION

AG

COPY

DSG/cdc

<b>ROUTING SLIP</b> <b>FICHE DE TRANSMISSION</b>		<input type="checkbox"/> Routine	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Immediate	<input type="checkbox"/> Most Immediate
		<input type="checkbox"/> Unclassified	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Confidential	<input type="checkbox"/> Strictly Confidential
TO/A: Mr. Jan Eliasson, Deputy-Secretary-General				
CC: Ms. Susana Malcorra, Chef de Cabinet				
FROM/DE: Jeffrey Feltman, USG, DPA				
Date: 15 May 2015	Ext:	Room No. – No de bureau:		
FOR ACTION		POUR SUITE A DONNER		
FOR YOUR ATTENTION		FOR VOTRE ATTENTION		
FOR INFORMATION		POUR INFORMATION		
FOR APPROVAL / SIGNATURE	XXX	POUR APPROBATION / SIGNATURE		
FOR COMMENTS		POUR OBSERVATIONS		
AS REQUESTED		SUITE A VOTRE DEMANDE		
RETURN		RETOURNER		

<b>DEPARTMENTS CONSULTED</b>	
EOSG <input type="checkbox"/> OIOS <input type="checkbox"/> OLA <input type="checkbox"/> ODA <input type="checkbox"/> DPKO <input type="checkbox"/> DFS <input type="checkbox"/> OCHA <input type="checkbox"/> DESA <input type="checkbox"/>	
DGACM <input type="checkbox"/> DPI <input type="checkbox"/> DSS <input type="checkbox"/> DM <input type="checkbox"/> UNDP <input type="checkbox"/> Other ____ UNRWA ____	

Rel Con Log:  
15-03586

**SUBJECT/MESSAGE:**

Please find attached for the Secretary-General's signature, a draft letter in response to a letter from the World Jewish Council on UNRWA's role during the last Gaza conflict.



EXR/07/001; P04/09/005

18 May 2015

Dear Mr. Lauder,

I wish to thank you for your letter of 23 April 2015, in which you raise concerns about the role of UNRWA during last summer's conflict between Palestinian armed groups and the Israeli Defence Forces. (IDF)

First and foremost, let me reiterate my strong commitment to combat the scourge of anti-Semitism, which have repeatedly and consistently condemned. The legitimate pursuit of justice and dignity for the Palestinians and peace in the Middle East must not, in anyway anywhere, justify incitement or violence against Jews. I have also sought strong relations with Israel, which is a vital partner for peace and security in the Middle East.

As you may be aware, on 10 November 2014, I established an independent United Nations Headquarters Board of Inquiry to examine ten incidents affecting or involving United Nations personnel, premises and operations during the conflict last summer between Palestinian armed groups and the Israel Defence Forces, including three incidents in which weaponry was found on UNRWA premises. I have strongly condemned the placement by Palestinian armed groups of weaponry in UNRWA schools in Gaza, albeit empty and not being used as shelters.

As indicated in the summary of the Board's report issued on 27 April, the Board did not find any evidence, including with respect to those three incidents, that UNRWA provided support of any kind to any Palestinian armed group in Gaza, in particular that it returned any of the weaponry that had been found on its premises to Hamas.

Mr. Ronald S. Lauder  
President  
World Jewish Congress  
New York

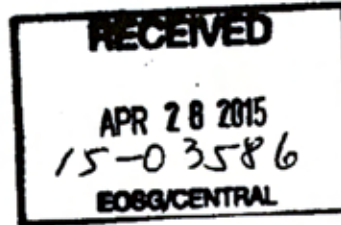
RECEIVED

MAY 18 2015

EOG/CENTRAL



Ronald S. Lauder  
President



April 23, 2015

H.E. Ban Ki-Moon  
Secretary General of the United Nations  
United Nations  
801 United Nations Plaza  
New York, NY 10017

ACTION UNRWA (email)  
COPY DSG/CdC  
Mr. Seppa (email)  
Mr. Feldman (email)  
AG  
EWJ  
ES

Dear Mr. Secretary General,

The World Jewish Congress remains committed to the important work of the United Nations, created to combat inequality and discrimination and to help facilitate peaceful coexistence between nations and peoples. As President of WJC, it is in that spirit that I am writing to express to you our grave concern at what we perceive as a strong and persistent anti-Israel bias at the United Nations, particularly as it relates to UNRWA in light of this past summer's armed hostilities between Hamas and the Israeli Defense Forces.

✓ Bias against Israel and Jews cannot be tolerated in an institution as prestigious as the United Nations, especially when this institution was founded as a moral alternative to World War II and the Holocaust. Anti-Semitism must be unequivocally condemned sending a powerful universal message that the hatred of Jews is unacceptable; the disproportionate vilification of Israel is unacceptable; and the demonization, abuse and violence against the Jewish people will not be tolerated.

We implore you use your leadership to fight these evils with insistence and resolve to help ensure that the UN lives up to its noble spirit and purposes.

✓ On behalf of the World Jewish Congress, American Section, please know that the following petition was signed by nearly 1,400 of our dedicated members from across the United States and around the world, who are deeply concerned about this critical issue.

Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon,

As you are aware, the UNRWA was established by the General Assembly in 1949 to aid Palestinian refugees residing in the Middle East.

However, during this past summer's armed hostilities between Hamas and the Israeli Defense Forces, the UNRWA seemingly provided substantial support to Hamas and failed to prevent the military use of its premises. Such conduct on the part of the UNRWA seriously undermines its ability and willingness to fulfill its humanitarian mandate.

EXR/07/001; POL/09/005;  
SC# 109/001

H.E. Ban Ki-Moon  
April 23, 2015  
Page2

*On at least two separate occasions, UNRWA revealed it located ammunition belonging to Hamas in its premises (schools and shelters). Once discovering the ammunition, UNRWA returned it to Hamas. On other occasions, Hamas chose to fire its rockets and missiles from locations close to UNRWA's premises, an act that can only be interpreted as an attempt to shield its military operation.*

*The fact is that after retrieving the ammunition, fully knowing such behavior by Hamas constitutes a breach of international humanitarian law and endangers the civilian population, it substantially assisted Hamas to continue and commit these violations.*

*Because the ability of the UNRWA to effectively operate in Gaza as a humanitarian agency, under the Hamas regime, has been called into question, I request an independent investigation of its operations, activities, allocation of financial resources, and the substantial assistance it allegedly provided to Hamas during the recent hostilities between the Israel Armed Forces and Hamas. In this way, we can ensure that the UNRWA, a UN agency financed by the international community, is meeting its mandate and UN standards.*

✓ I would welcome the opportunity to discuss this issue with you.

Sincerely yours,

  
Ronald S. Lauder