

Report reveals Israel tortured UNRWA employees to falsely admit links to Hamas

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Geneva, March 9 (RHC)-- The UN agency for Palestinian refugees says some of its employees were tortured by the occupying regime to falsely admit that the agency had ties with Hamas and its retaliatory

operation in October last year.

The assertion was made in a February report by the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) that detailed various cases of mistreatment in Israeli detention centers against Palestinians, including several working for the agency.

The document said several UNRWA Palestinian staffers had been detained by the Israeli occupation army in Gaza, and that the ill-treatment and abuse they said they had experienced included severe physical beatings, waterboarding and threats of harm to family members.

“Agency staff members have been subject to threats and coercion by the Israeli authorities while in detention, and pressured to make false statements against the Agency, including that the Agency has affiliations with Hamas and that UNRWA staff members took part in the 7 October 2023” attack, the report said.

In addition to the abuse confirmed by UNRWA staff members, Palestinian detainees more broadly described allegations of abuse, including beatings, humiliation, threats, dog attacks, sexual violence, and deaths of detainees denied medical treatment, the UNRWA report underlined.

Juliette Touma, the UNRWA communications director, said the agency planned to hand the information in the 11-page, unpublished report to agencies inside and outside the UN specialized in documenting human rights abuses during the Israeli war on Gaza. “When the war comes to an end there needs to be a series of inquiries to look into all violations of human rights,” Touma said.

Earlier this year, the Israeli regime claimed that 12 employees of the UNRWA were involved in the Hamas-led retaliatory attack on the occupied territories on October 7th. Tel Aviv also alleged that 10% of all UNRWA’s 12,000 workers have links to Hamas.

The regime’s allegations against UNRWA, which were not publicly backed by evidence, have prompted more than 10 donor countries, including the United States, Germany, the European Union, Canada, and Japan, to suspend financial support. The funding from these countries makes up the bulk of all funding received by the UN agency.

Israel launched the war on Gaza on October 7 after Hamas-led Palestinian resistance groups carried out a surprise operation against the occupying entity in response to its intensified violence against Palestinians.

Since the start of the genocidal war, the Tel Aviv regime has killed 30,878 Palestinians and injured 72,402 others.

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