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## **UNRWA & WORLD CENTRAL KITCHEN IN GAZA (OCT 2023–FEB 2025): OPERATIONS, POLITICAL TARGETING, AND HUMANITARIAN CHALLENGES**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*This study provides a qualitative chronological overview of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and World Central Kitchen (WCK), focusing on their status, targeting, and current operations from October 7, 2023, to February 10, 2025, in Gaza, Palestine. It examines the historical context of Palestinian displacement following the Nakba in 1948, which led to the creation of UNRWA to address the humanitarian crisis that has been ongoing due to decades of foreign occupation, displacement, and ethnic cleansing. A qualitative review of primary reports by international organizations such as Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, and The United Nations, scholarly sources, and gray media reports on the funding and operational status of UNRWA and WCK before October 2023, emphasizing their reliance on voluntary government contributions, were explored. The study details the political and military targeting of both organizations since October 2023, including false allegations and deliberate attacks on aid workers in Gaza linked to human rights violations and war crimes such as systematic ethnic cleansing and genocide*

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*committed by Israeli occupation forces. Thematic analysis also links the recent defunding of UNWRA by the United States to the history and future of U.S. foreign policy on Palestine. The findings and conclusion of this study emphasize the urgent need for international support to address the humanitarian crisis in Gaza, fund humanitarian efforts, and for highly developed countries stemming from United States influence and policy to shift to recognize Palestinian sovereignty and self-determination in Gaza and greater Palestine.*

**Keywords:** *Gaza, Palestine, Genocide, UNRWA, World Central Kitchen, United Nations.*

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and World Central Kitchen (WCK) are two prominent humanitarian organizations that have played crucial roles in providing aid and support to vulnerable populations. This study provides an overview of their status and operations before October 7, 2023, the political targeting they faced since October 2023, and their current operating status and funding as of February 10, 2025.

The establishment of UNRWA in 1949 was a direct response to the displacement and dispossession of Palestinians following the establishment of colonial occupation dictated by the British Mandate and Balfour agreement to displace and ethnically cleanse Palestinians from regions within Palestine and to give

control to occupying forces. At the same time, the United Nations, only a year earlier, was, as Bennis (1997) states,

"the agency chosen by the U.S., the Soviet Union, Britain and their allies in 1947 to enact the partition of Palestine through General Assembly Resolution 181. It bestowed international legitimacy on the nascent, borderless and still-expanding state of Israel, while postulating an abstract Palestinian state and protected international status for Jerusalem, neither of which were ever allowed to come into existence" (p.47).

According to Haidar et al. (2024), the British Mandate "produced severe and long-lasting damage and negative effects for Palestine and the Palestinian people, which they are still suffering from today" (p.25). The Nakba led to the forced expulsion of approximately 750,000 Palestinians from their homes, creating a massive refugee crisis within the borders of Palestine and, beyond that, necessitated international intervention (UNRWA, 2024). According to Khalidi (2020), the Nakba was a "master plan for the conquest of Palestine" and involved the systematic expulsion of Palestinians from their homes (p.123). Flapan (2020) further supports this analysis, demonstrating that Israeli forces were responsible for driving Palestinians from their homes and preventing their return (Flapan, 2020). UNRWA was mandated to provide humanitarian assistance, protection, and education to registered Palestinian refugees in the West Bank, Gaza, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria. Over the years, the agency's role has expanded to include healthcare, relief and social services, education, and emergency assistance (UNRWA, 2024).

The Palestinian people in Palestine have endured decades of occupation, systemic oppression, and human rights violations. Since 1948, Palestinians have faced continuous displacement, loss of land, and restrictions on their freedom of movement. The Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, which began in 1967, has further exacerbated these issues, leading to widespread poverty, unemployment, and lack of access to essential services (UNRWA, 2024). The construction of the separation barrier, expansion of settlements, and frequent military incursions have all contributed to the ongoing occupation, resulting in the humanitarian crisis in the region (UNRWA, 2024).

The international community has repeatedly condemned the human rights violations and injustices faced by Palestinians. Reports by organizations such as Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International have documented instances of excessive use of force, arbitrary detention, and collective punishment by Israeli authorities (Human Rights Watch, 2024; Amnesty International, 2024). The blockade of Gaza, imposed by Israel since 2007, has severely restricted the movement of people and goods by land, sea, and air, leading to a dire humanitarian situation characterized by food and water shortages, lack of medical supplies, and spread poverty (UNRWA, 2024).

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and other international human rights treaties, such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), establish the fundamental rights and freedoms in which all individuals are protected by. The actions taken against Palestinians, including forced displacement, arbitrary detention,

and restrictions on movement, violate these international human rights standards (United Nations, 2025). The Fourth Geneva Convention also protects civilians in what is deemed "conflict zones," prohibiting collective punishment and ensuring access to humanitarian aid (International Committee of the Red Cross, 2024).

This study overviews the status and operations of UNRWA and WCK before October 2023, the political and military targeting they have faced since October 7, 2023, and their current operating status and funding as of February 10, 2025. It also highlights the deliberate targeting and war crimes committed against aid workers, as well as the human rights violations, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and genocide that have exacerbated the suffering of the Palestinian people in Gaza. This study also analyzes the challenges these organizations faced in delivering humanitarian aid, the ongoing need for international support and cooperation to address the humanitarian crisis in Gaza, and the root issue of international foreign policies, occupation, and Western colonialism, and calls for a resolution for an end of the occupation of Palestine with independence and self-determination.

## **2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

### **2.1 UNRWA: Status and Operations before October 7, 2023**

UNRWA has had a significant impact on the Palestinian refugee population. For example, the agency's education system has created an "educational advantage" for second-generation refugees over their peers in the Arab world, facilitating their employment in professional labor markets (Rosenfeld, 2010).

Additionally, UNRWA's health services have been crucial in providing primary healthcare to millions of refugees, with approximately 8.5 million consultations annually (Berg et al., 2022).

UNRWA's relief and social services have been vital in supporting "vulnerable populations," particularly in Gaza, Lebanon, and Syria (Takkenberg, 2009). As of 2024, UNRWA served approximately 5.9 million Palestinian refugees, offering education, healthcare, and food assistance services. The agency's operations were funded primarily through voluntary contributions from governments, accounting for 95% of its budget, with the remaining 5% coming from the UN's regular budget (UNRWA, 2024).

### ***2.1.1 Voluntary Contributions of Governments to Support UNRWA Before October 7, 2023***

UNRWA is funded almost entirely by voluntary contributions from governments, with a minimal subsidy from the regular budget of the United Nations used exclusively for administrative costs. In 2023, 42% of the agency's total pledges of \$1.46 billion came from European Union (EU) member states, who contributed \$606.8 million, including through the European Commission. The United States, Germany, the EU, and France were the largest governmental donors, contributing 56% of the agency's overall funding (Berg et al., 2022).

The top government donors for 2023 included:

- **United States:** \$365 million (25%) (Berg et al., 2022)
- **Germany:** \$177 million (12.1%) (Berg et al., 2022)

- **European Union:** \$168 million (11.5%) (Berg et al., 2022)
- **France:** \$69 million (4.7%) (Berg et al., 2022)
- **Sweden:** \$52 million (3.6%) (Berg et al., 2022)
- **Japan:** \$40 million (2.7%) (Berg et al., 2022)
- **Norway:** \$32 million (2.2%) (Berg et al., 2022)
- **Netherlands:** \$30 million (2.1%) (Berg et al., 2022)
- **Canada:** \$28 million (1.9%) (Berg et al., 2022)
- **United Kingdom:** \$26 million (1.8%) (Berg et al., 2022)

Scholars have highlighted the importance of these voluntary contributions in sustaining UNRWA's operations. According to Berg et al. (2022), the agency's reliance on voluntary contributions has led to financial instability, as fluctuations in donor funding can significantly impact its ability to deliver services. The lead donor before October 7, 2023, was the United States. Historically, their pivotal financing role has allowed the U.S. to continue influencing their political foreign policy and overall strategy in the Middle East, specifically Palestine. Bennis (1997) outlined the outlook of the United States, stating,

"Overall, U.S. concern in the Middle East, and especially regarding the Israel-Palestine conflict, is strategic, not humanitarian. Washington has an interest in insuring that some modicum of social stability exists, and is perfectly willing for UN agencies to take the lead in providing basic survival support

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networks (thus substantially lowering what the U.S. alone might otherwise have to pay for). What the U.S. is not willing to accept is UN involvement in the political and diplomatic decision-making of the Middle East" (p.50).

Likewise, a study by Takkenberg (2009) considers the challenges faced by UNRWA in securing adequate funding, particularly in the context of political pressures and donor fatigue. Takkenberg (2009) reasons that the international community needs to be responsible for supporting UNRWA because of its critical role in providing humanitarian assistance to Palestinian refugees.

Irfan (2023) highlights the contributions of various governments to UNRWA and the impact of these contributions on the agency's ability to operate effectively. The study stresses the importance of sustained financial support from donor countries to address the growing needs of Palestinian refugees (Irfan, 2023) among continuing and increasing occupational oppression. Likewise, a more predictable and sustainable funding model is needed to ensure the continuity of UNRWA's programs rather than reliance on voluntary donations (Berg et al., 2022).

## **2.2 World Central Kitchen: Status and Operations before October 7, 2023**

World Central Kitchen (WCK) was founded in 2010 by Chef José Andrés to provide fresh meals in response to crises. The organization quickly mobilized to deliver food aid in disaster and conflict zones, partnering with local organizations and leveraging local resources. WCK's operations included



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providing meals to vulnerable populations in various regions, including Gaza, where they worked with local partners to distribute food and other necessities (World Central Kitchen, 2024).

WCK has significantly impacted other international communities by providing over 25 million meals during the COVID-19 pandemic and serving over 3.7 million meals in Puerto Rico after Hurricane Maria (Porrás, 2024). WCK's focus on sourcing local ingredients has also strengthened regional economies and empowered farmers (Carolina Farm Trust, 2024). Additionally, WCK's innovative approaches, such as the WCK Direct platform, have improved access to food and nutrition for deemed vulnerable populations (Principal Foundation, 2024).

### **2.3 Vulnerability of Populations in Gaza Before and Through October 7, 2023**

The vulnerability of populations in Gaza is multifaceted and stems from a combination of colonialism, occupation, intentional instability, and lack of support for the Palestinian cause for fundamental human rights. The healthcare system in Gaza has collapsed due to these factors, leading to severe shortages of medical supplies, overcrowded healthcare facilities, and inadequate sanitation and hygiene conditions (Abuzerr et al., 2025). The blockade on Gaza by occupying forces has also led to widespread food insecurity, with many families unable to access sufficient and nutritious food, exacerbating malnutrition and related health issues. Just as the psychological impact of Western colonialism, occupation, and intentional instability has further contributed to challenges

facing Gaza's population and politics of dispossession (Sabbagh-Khoury, 2023), the vulnerability of the people in Gaza can be resolved ultimately through the end of the occupation of Palestinian land (Veronese & Kagee, 2024). The lack of access to mental health services and support has compounded these issues, leaving many individuals without the necessary resources to cope with their experiences (Abuzerr et al., 2025).

### ***2.3.1 Political Targeting and Military Aggression against UNRWA and WCK Since October 7, 2023***

Since October 2023, both UNRWA and WCK have faced significant political and military targeting aimed at furthering aggression and oppression against Palestinians. Allegations surfaced connecting some UNRWA employees with the events of October 7, 2023, leading to a prohibition on U.S. funding to UNRWA until March 2025 based on such allegations. However, investigations by the UN Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) found no evidence to support these allegations in most cases. No evidence to support the allegations was found in one case, and in nine other cases, the evidence was insufficient to support the staff member's involvement (UNRWA, 2024; UN News, 2024). The remaining nine cases had evidence that could indicate involvement, but this evidence was not independently authenticated (UN News, 2024).

From October 2023 to January 2025, UNWRA reported that 273 UNWRA team workers were killed in Gaza, with 205 UNWRA installations damaged (UNWRA, 2025). At the same UNWRA reported, as of January 30, 2025, Israel's "Knesset legislation against UNRWA started to go into effect. This includes implementing a no-contact policy between UNRWA

and the Israeli authorities" (UNWRA, 2025), leaving the operations of UNWRA to also be at high risk for continuation in the occupied territories within the West Bank.

Similarly, WCK faced political targeting after Israeli airstrikes targeted a three-car caravan of its workers in Gaza. On April 1, 2024, an Israeli air strike killed seven WCK aid workers. Among them were three British nationals, one Australian, one Polish national, one American-Canadian dual-citizen, and one Palestinian. While international outcry was immediate, it did not defer for change or remorse among the Israeli government or cease aggression and blocking of humanitarian aid. Israel alleged that some WCK employees had ties to terrorist organizations, leading to the firing of 62 workers and the temporary suspension of WCK's operations in Gaza. However, investigations by independent organizations found no credible evidence to support these allegations. The allegations were primarily based on unverified claims and lacked substantial proof (Human Rights Watch, 2024; Politico, 2024).

### ***2.3.2 Deliberate Targeting of Aid Workers, UN Protections, and War Crimes Since October 7, 2023***

Investigations by Human Rights Watch and other organizations have revealed that the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) deliberately targeted aid workers in Gaza to eliminate services provided to the population. These attacks were not isolated incidents but part of a broader pattern of targeting aid workers and facilities, even when their coordinates were provided to the Israeli authorities to ensure their protection (Human Rights Watch, 2024). The deliberate targeting of aid workers constitutes a war crime under international law, as defined by the International

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Criminal Court (ICC) and the United Nations Charter on human rights violations. According to the Geneva Convention, "attacks against medical personnel, units, and transports, hospitals, and shelters are prohibited" (International Committee of the Red Cross, 2024). Since October 2023, the UN has reported that 343 aid workers total, including UNRWA and WCK staff, including the seven WCK aid workers, have been killed in Gaza. (Human Rights Watch, 2024; Al Jazeera, 2024; Pool et al., 2024).

### **3. DISCUSSION**

#### **3.1 Human Rights Violations Effect on UNWRA in Gaza Since October 7, 2023**

Human rights violations occur when actions by state or non-state actors infringe upon the fundamental rights and freedoms guaranteed to individuals by international law. According to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), human rights violations can include acts such as torture, arbitrary detention, extrajudicial killings, and restrictions on freedom of movement, among others (OHCHR, 2021). The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and other international treaties, such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), establish the fundamental rights of protection (United Nations, 2025).

Since October 7, 2023, there have been numerous human rights violations in Gaza, which are in conjunction with UNWRA and UN agency services provided to people in Gaza. These include but are not limited to water shortages or no water, tent and

mobile home shortages, starvation through the denied delivery of food into Gaza, malnutrition of children, lack of medical supplies and medicine, attacks on hospitals and healthcare workers, bombings and destructions of schools and universities, targeting and killing of emergency medical personnel and ambulances, and targeting and killing of journalists. These violations have been deliberate and used as weapons against Palestinians.

### ***3.1.1 Food and Water Shortages***

More than 1.8 million Palestinians in Gaza are experiencing extreme levels of food insecurity, with 70% of crop fields destroyed and livelihoods decimated during the ongoing Israeli military offensive. The risk of famine persists across the whole Gaza Strip (UNRWA, 2024; OHCHR, 2024). Water shortages have also been severe, with many families unable to access sufficient and clean water, exacerbating health issues (Reuters, 2025).

### ***3.1.2 Shelter Shortages***

The lack of adequate shelter has left nearly two million displaced Palestinians living in substandard tents or makeshift shelters. Weather and winter storms, which flooded many tents and shelters and forced displacement, worsened the situation, exposing families to harsh weather conditions (UNRWA, 2024).

### ***3.1.3 Starvation and Malnutrition of Children***

Children in Gaza have been dying from starvation-related complications since the Israeli government began using starvation as a weapon of war by not allowing aid such as food

and medicine to be delivered to Gaza. Malnutrition rates among children have skyrocketed, with over 50% of children under five suffering from acute malnutrition (UNICEF, 2024). Even before October 2023, UNICEF reported "more than 800,000 children in Gaza – three-quarters of its entire child population – were identified as needing mental health and psychosocial support" (UNICEF, 2023) due to the ongoing and frequent Israeli military bombardment and continuous blockade since 2007 (Al Jazeera, 2022).

#### ***3.1.4 Lack of Medical Supplies and Medicine***

The blockade and ongoing genocide have severely restricted the entry of medical supplies and medicine into Gaza. Hospitals and clinics struggle to provide essential healthcare services, and many patients cannot receive the needed treatment. The World Health Organization (WHO) has reported that over 70% of essential medicines are out of stock in Gaza (WHO, 2024; Pool et al., 2024), with little to no aid entering between the first and second ceasefire pause in November 2023 and January 2025.

#### ***3.1.5 Targeting Hospitals and Healthcare Workers***

The targeting of hospitals and healthcare workers has been a significant aspect of the human rights violations in Gaza. According to the International Committee of the Red Cross, "attacks against medical personnel, units, and transports, hospitals, and shelters are prohibited" (International Committee of the Red Cross, 2024). However, since October 2023, there have been numerous reports and evidence of drone strikes, bombings, and hospital raids targeting healthcare facilities and workers where workers have been killed, tortured, abused, and

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taken to unknown locations and detention centers by the IDF. The UN reported in 2024, 128 healthcare workers were killed, and at least 57 hospitals were damaged or destroyed (WHO, 2024; Pool et al., 2024). These targeted attacks have severely hindered the ability to provide medical care to those in need, exacerbating the humanitarian crisis.

### **3.1.6 Educide**

Since October 7, 2023, education in Gaza has been directly targeted, leading to what can be termed "educide" or "scholasticide." Educide refers to the systematic destruction of a country or region's educational institutions and the targeted killing of educators aimed at dismantling the education system of a particular population (Alousi, 2022; Iriqat et al., 2025). Since October 7, 2023, Gaza, particularly the development of the children and youth, has been faced with long-term detrimental effects on the development and prosperity through education to grow academically. All universities in Gaza have been destroyed by targeted airstrikes from the IDF, leaving thousands of students without access to higher education. This deliberate targeting of educational institutions is a violation of international humanitarian law and constitutes a war crime (Human Rights Watch, 2024; Al Jazeera, 2024). Many educators and professors have been killed in these attacks, further crippling the educational system. The loss of these individuals is a significant blow to the academic community and the prospects of students in Gaza (Pool et al., 2024).

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### **3.1.7 UN Schools as Shelters**

UN schools, used since October 7, 2023, as shelters for displaced families, have also been targeted by IDF airstrikes. These attacks have resulted in the deaths of many civilians, including children, and have destroyed the safe havens meant to protect them. Targeting schools used as shelters is a war crime under international law (UNRWA, 2024; ICC, 2025). According to UNESCO (2021), "attacks on education can have profound and long-lasting effects on students' well-being and future opportunities."

### **3.1.8 Lack of Education for Children and Students**

The destruction of schools and universities has left children and students without access to education. Many children have been out of school for months, and university students have been unable to continue their studies. The disruption of education has long-term consequences for the development and future opportunities of the youth in Gaza (UNICEF, 2024; Human Rights Watch, 2024). According to Save the Children (2022), "the denial of education to children in conflict zones perpetuates cycles of poverty and violence, undermining efforts to achieve lasting peace and development."

### **3.1.9 Targeting Journalists in Gaza and Censorship**

The targeting of journalists in Gaza since October 7, 2023, has also constituted a significant violation of international law, with the UN (2024) citing, "Journalists are entitled to protection as civilians under international humanitarian law. Targeted attacks and killings of journalists are war crimes" (United Nations, 2024). Journalists have been deliberately targeted by the IDF



and killed while marked as press or media personnel. According to the Geneva Convention, "journalists engaged in dangerous professional missions in areas of armed conflict shall be considered as civilians" and must be protected (International Committee of the Red Cross, 2024). However, between October 2023 and January 2025, at least 217 journalists were killed in Gaza, many of whom were targeted by drone strikes and bombings (Al-Jazeera, 2025).

From October 7, 2023, to February 10, 2025, censorship was used to suppress information, and many journalists faced threats and intimidation. Homes of journalists and their families have been targeted by IDF air and drone strikes, where family members have been killed and property destroyed. According to Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, "Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers" (United Nations, 2025).

Scholars have noted censorship in conflict zones is a tool used to control the narrative and suppress dissent. Wolfsfeld (2023) states, "One of the most important indicators of an antagonist's ability to manage the political environment surrounding any conflict is the extent to which they can control the flow of information and images" (p.112). The narrative between October 7, 2023, and February 10, 2025, has been a dichotomy of mainstream media narratives countered by social media and access to first-hand accounts of human rights violations, ethnic cleansing, and genocide, resulting in censorship efforts where "recent technological changes" have been deemed "as a threat"

(Wolfsfeld, 2023, p.112). Wolfsfeld (2023) further explains the threat of new media, stating, "The most obvious, powerful change in this area has been the revolutionary rise in the number of ordinary Palestinians and human-rights groups using camera phones to record and upload abuses by Israeli security forces" (p.112). Numerous social media companies, specifically American tech and media companies, censored user content and the spread of content to maintain control of the desired narrative even before October 7, 2023, to maintain the desired narrative of Palestine, aligning with U.S. interests and foreign policy.

### **3.2 Current Operating Status and Funding of UNRWA and WCK as of January 2025**

As of January 2025, UNRWA continues to operate under challenging conditions. The agency's mandate continues until June 2026 but faces significant funding shortfalls and operational constraints due to political pressures and security concerns. Despite these challenges, UNRWA remains committed to providing essential services to Palestinian refugees, including education, healthcare, and food assistance (UNRWA, 2025).

The current donor support and funding for UNRWA as of January 2025 include:

- **United States:** \$0 (Funding halted) (UNRWA, 2025)
- **Germany:** \$177 million (12.1%) (UNRWA, 2025)
- **European Union:** \$168 million (11.5%) (UNRWA, 2025)
- **France:** \$69 million (4.7%) (UNRWA, 2025)

- **Sweden:** \$52 million (3.6%) (UNRWA, 2025)
- **Japan:** \$40 million (2.7%) (UNRWA, 2025)
- **Norway:** \$32 million (2.2%) (UNRWA, 2025)
- **Netherlands:** \$30 million (2.1%) (UNRWA, 2025)
- **Canada:** \$28 million (1.9%) (UNRWA, 2025)
- **United Kingdom:** \$26 million (1.8%) (UNRWA, 2025)

World Central Kitchen has resumed its operations in Gaza with heightened security measures and a reduced workforce. The organization continues to provide meals to those in need, working closely with local partners to ensure the safety and effectiveness of its aid delivery. WCK's funding remains stable, supported by donations from individuals, corporations, and governments (World Central Kitchen, 2025). Further investigations by independent organizations found no credible evidence to support the allegations of terrorist ties among WCK employees. These allegations were primarily based on unverified claims and lacked substantial proof. Reports from Human Rights Watch and Politico indicate that solid evidence did not support the accusations, and the actions taken against the workers were disproportionate and unjustified (Human Rights Watch, 2024; Politico, 2024).

### ***3.2.1 U.S. Policy on Palestine and Current Defunding of UNWRA as of February 10, 2025***

The most significant aspect of current circumstances is the complete halting of funding from the United States. The United States has a long history and track record in the UN in blocking

any voice to Palestine within the UN General Assembly or even among negotiations or access to meetings within the United Nations to being able to negotiate terms regarding their self-determination.

The veto of the United States to block every resolution since October 7, 2023, which was introduced to provide access to basic humanitarian needs or a permanent ceasefire agreement, is only a continuation of a historic policy since 1948 in the United States. Bennis (1997) highlights the stance of the United States, stating,

"While European or Non-Aligned or United Nations initiatives may attempt, and occasionally even succeed in recapturing a diplomatic role for the international community in Palestine at certain particular junctures, those initiatives are unlikely to reverse Washington's strategic domination of that political process" (p.75).

This policy was also apparent during the UN Security Council resolution votes between October 7, 2023, and January 2025. The introduction of Four UN Security Council resolutions aimed to pass a permanent ceasefire, return Israeli hostages, and allow humanitarian aid to enter Gaza. Below is a summary of the resolutions, the country that introduced the resolution, the voting results, and the key points of the resolution:

- i. **Resolution S/2023/773** (October 18, 2023):
  - **Introduced by:** Brazil
  - **Voting Results:** 12 in favor, one against (United States), two abstentions (United Kingdom, France)

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- **Key Points:** This resolution called for humanitarian pauses to deliver lifesaving aid to millions in Gaza. It urged all parties to comply with international law, including international humanitarian law and human rights law and called for the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages. The resolution stated: "The Security Council... condemns all violence and hostilities against civilians and acts of terrorism" (UN Security Council, 2023a).
- ii. **Resolution S/2023/792** (October 25, 2023):
- **Introduced by:** China and Russia
  - **Voting Results:** 10 in favor, three against (United States, United Kingdom, France), two abstentions (Japan, UAE)
  - **Key Points:** This resolution addressed the humanitarian situation in Gaza and called for a ceasefire. It condemned the terrorist attacks and emphasized the need for a resolution that acknowledges Israel's right to self-defense. The resolution highlighted: "The Security Council... condemns the terrorist attacks by Hamas and other terrorist groups" (UN Security Council, 2023b).
- iii. **Resolution S/2023/970** (December 8, 2023):
- **Introduced by:** Brazil
  - **Voting Results:** 13 in favor, one against (United States), one abstention (United Kingdom)

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- **Key Points:** This resolution sought to establish a humanitarian ceasefire in Gaza. It expressed grave concern over the catastrophic humanitarian situation in Gaza and the suffering of the Palestinian civilian population. It demanded an immediate humanitarian ceasefire and reiterated the demand for all parties to comply with international law, including international humanitarian law. The resolution noted: "The Security Council... expresses grave concern over the catastrophic humanitarian situation in Gaza" (UN Security Council, 2023c).
- iv. **Resolution S/2024/173** (February 20, 2024):
- **Introduced by:** Brazil
  - **Voting Results:** 13 in favor, one against (United States), one abstention (United Kingdom)
  - **Key Points:** This resolution called for an immediate ceasefire and protection for civilians in Gaza. It reaffirmed the obligations of all parties regarding the provision of humanitarian assistance and demanded that they allow and facilitate the delivery of humanitarian aid. It expressed grave concern over the dire humanitarian situation in Gaza and emphasized the need for accountability for all violations of international law. The resolution stated: "The Security Council... reaffirms the obligations of all parties regarding the provision of humanitarian assistance" (UN Security Council, 2024).

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The outcomes of the UN Security Council resolutions further cemented the historic strategic protection of the U.S. policy and placement of controlling the Middle East, specifically Palestine, through the expansion and protection of the ongoing occupation by exercising its veto power.

Likewise, as of January 2025, despite the international outrage among populations, world leaders have been limited in any lateral action to provide humanitarian aid to Gaza due to the threat of defunding of the United States either directly or indirectly since the defunding of UNWRA and other UN agencies. The political tone of the United States to announce the stop of financial support for UNWRA took place in an executive order by The White House (2025) stating,

"UNRWA has reportedly been infiltrated by members of groups long designated by the Secretary of State (Secretary) as foreign terrorist organizations, and UNRWA employees were involved in the October 7, 2023, Hamas attack on Israel. UNHRC has protected human rights abusers by allowing them to use the organization to shield themselves from scrutiny, while UNESCO has demonstrated failure to reform itself, has continually demonstrated anti-Israel sentiment over the past decade, and has failed to address concerns over mounting arrears" (para. 4).

This current U.S. policy, through its backing of Israeli policies, defunding UNWRA, vetoing UN Security Council resolutions that would provide humanitarian relief, as well as promoting forced displacement and U.S. control over Gaza, only demonstrates that the United States has no intention to provide relief or address the humanitarian crisis, nor its roots, in Gaza and greater Palestine.

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### **3.3 ICC Rulings and Genocide in Gaza Since October 7, 2023**

Since October 7, 2023, the political narrative of the United States has also moved to discredit the International Criminal Court (ICC) after the initial court results on January 24, 2024, of systematic genocide, ruling, "The Court concludes that it is plausible that Israel's actions in the Gaza Strip could amount to genocide and issues provisional measures, ordering Israel to take all measures to prevent any acts contrary to the 1948 Genocide Convention" (ICJ, 2024).

In response, on February 6, 2025, The White House (2025) issued an executive order to impose sanctions on the ICC, citing,

"The ICC's recent actions against Israel and the United States set a dangerous precedent, directly endangering current and former United States personnel, including active service members of the Armed Forces, by exposing them to harassment, abuse, and possible arrest. This malign conduct in turn threatens to infringe upon the sovereignty of the United States and undermines the critical national security and foreign policy work of the United States Government and our allies, including Israel" (The White House, 2025).

This executive order also denies and allows the U.S. to "impose tangible and significant consequences on those responsible for the ICC's transgressions" while expecting its allies to "oppose any ICC actions against the United States, Israel, or any other ally of the United States that has not consented to ICC jurisdiction" (The White House, 2025). This executive order



provides a stance where U.S. strategy, support for the UN, and regard for international law have shifted from its past negotiations and figure of global justice and diplomacy towards a new phase of international pressure expressed through independent governance.

At the same time, in January 2025, The Palestinian Ministry of Health (2025) cited that 48,284 people had been killed by the IDF and occupying forces between October 7, 2023, and January 2025. In a study conducted by Jamaluddine et al. (2024) analyzing the death toll of Palestinians in Gaza from October 7, 2023, to June 30, 2024, a higher estimate of Palestinians killed is reported, stating, "We estimated 64,260 deaths (95% CI 55 298–78 525) due to traumatic injury during the study period, suggesting the Palestinian MoH under-reported mortality by 41%" (p.469).

Khatib et al. (2024), however, have adjusted figures provided by the Palestinian Ministry of Health based on population data of Gaza from 2022 and concluded that "it is not implausible to estimate that up to 186,000 or even more deaths could be attributable to the current conflict in Gaza" (p.237) also alluding to unconfirmed or unrecovered bodies under the rubble, as there has yet to be any access or method to removing bodies from the demolished infrastructure and homes across Gaza.

Likewise, in February 2025, The White House suggested, per new U.S. foreign policy, displacing "1.7 million" Palestinians in Gaza to other neighboring countries and abroad to empty Gaza. Figures reported by UNWRA in February 2025 stated, "1.9 million internally displaced people are living in UNWRA installations" or "around 90 percent of the population..with

some displaced more than 10 times" (UNRWA, 2025). Not only does the White House policy reiterate and reflect the policy of the immediate occupying forces and IDF strategy, it also reveals a new total population of Gaza. Before October 7, 2023, Gaza had a total population of 2.3 million people (Dardona et al., 2024), while in February 2025, according to the White House, a figure of "1.7 million" was stated as the total remaining population of Gaza to be forcibly displaced, inferring a death toll number closer to 400,000 or more Palestinians that have been killed through intentional genocide in Gaza by occupying forces between October 7, 2023, and January of 2025. Najim (2024) brings light to the term "Gazacide," stating, "Israel has always sought the completion of its settler-colonial project," arguing that the "current genocide seeks immediate results of dispossession and annexation" (p.1).

What becomes more apparent is that the international support and actions taken by higher developed countries in the UN are a display of U.S. Policy alignment with what Pappé (2017) describes as both Gaza and the West Bank being historically referred to as the 'unfinished business' that Zionism regrets not completing in 1948 (Pappé, 2017), furthering this sentiment through the elimination of dire financial funding of UNWRA by the United States.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

UNRWA and World Central Kitchen have faced significant challenges and political targeting since October 7, 2023. Despite these obstacles, both organizations strive to provide vital humanitarian aid to vulnerable populations in Gaza. However, the assistance needed in Gaza remains critically

insufficient, with severe restrictions on the entry of humanitarian supplies and a lack of recognized funding and intentions to protect, provide, and distribute aid in Gaza. The blockade and ongoing occupying IDF military operations have prevented essential assistance from reaching those in need, exacerbating the humanitarian crisis (UNRWA, 2024; OHCHR, 2024). Likewise, the United States is a key player in the economic, political, and strategic abilities of such organizations, to which the U.S. policy on Palestine is directly influential and affects the humanitarian situation in Gaza and Palestine. Bennis (1997) supports this notion, stating in 1997,

"in an era in which considerations of international law are rising to higher places on global agendas, the continuing conflict between United Nations efforts to implement global consensus views on the question of Palestine, and the strategically unchallenged power of the United States to undermine and derail those efforts, remains at the heart of understanding the UN's role in the Middle East today" (p.75).

The international community must recognize the dire situation in Gaza and take meaningful action to ensure that humanitarian aid can reach those in need while using new approaches to be able to work around the stagnant United States, especially in the matter of funding. The deliberate targeting of aid workers, educational institutions, healthcare workers, hospitals, essential services, journalists, and primarily civilians, including "70% of whom are children and women" (Boukari, 2024, p.1), by the Israeli government and Israeli Military forces since October 2023 are violations of international law and human rights, which global leaders must recognize to implement actual humanitarian change, however, "there is little evidence of

significant changes in the international community's willingness to intervene in the conflict (Wolfsfeld, 2023, p.116).

First, the international community, including the United States, must acknowledge that human rights violations, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and plausible genocide have occurred by occupying forces according to rulings of the International Criminal Court, standing UN resolutions, and understandings that are internationally recognized and accepted as international standards of governance and must hold those responsible accountable.

Second, global governments, specifically the higher developed countries and those in the UN Security Council, must recognize that fundamental human rights are being eliminated from the Palestinian people, primarily through the genocide and ethnic cleansing of Palestinians in Gaza since October 7, 2023, and of greater Palestine continuously since 1948, and must act to fund and deliver the needed aid and protections to the people of Gaza to prevent further devastation through such agencies as UNWRA.

Finally, the global community headed by the influence of the United States and higher developed countries as standing donors of UNRWA can continue to contribute to alleviating the deliberate targeting, suffering, displacement, ethnic cleansing, and genocide to end the foreign occupation and humanitarian crisis of Palestinians by recognizing a sovereign Palestine and Palestinian self-determination.

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