



# UNRWA

## Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASEESE

### Israeli Military Forcefully Occupies UNRWA School

In the morning of 24 August, Israeli military forces broke into UNRWA's girls' school in Askar Refugee camp in the West Bank and proceeded to use the school as a detention and interrogation center for hundreds of male residents of the camp between the ages of 16 and 40. The Agency strongly protests this flagrant violation of the United Nations Privileges and Immunities.

The occupation of Askar girls' school is not the first such abuse of UNRWA's humanitarian installations in the West Bank or in the Gaza Strip. No less than 10 schools were occupied during Defensive Shield operation. For Instance, Israeli soldiers occupied UNRWA's girls' school in Tulkarem camp on 9 March 2002 and on 3 April 2003 and used it as detention center for male residents of the camp. Also Israeli soldiers broke into UNRWA boys' school in Amari camp in the West Bank and used the school compound as a detention center. In all these cases, the Agency has also protested to the Israeli authorities, but without result, as the most recent violation reflects. In such cases there is no question of military necessity, as the Israeli forces could use other facilities or construct their own facilities. UNRWA facilities are seized and used as detention and interrogation facilities solely for the administrative convenience of the Israeli military forces.

UNRWA is constantly, in its dealings with the Israeli Government, emphasizing that the Israeli military must respect the right of the Agency to carry out its humanitarian operations without interference and restrictions, a right conferred on UNRWA by the 1946 UN Convention on Privileges and Immunities, and by the agreement reached between UNRWA and the Government of Israel in 1967

UNRWA's Director of Operations in the West Bank, Anders Fange said: "It is unacceptable that the Israeli Army persists in using UNRWA installations for rounding up and interrogating Palestinians despite our repeated calls on them to cease this practice. All the explanations given by the Israeli military as to why they use UNRWA installations for these purposes disregard the fact that they violate international legal norms".

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