



# Colonna Report and UNRWA's High Level Action Plan for implementation of the recommendations

August 2024

## Background

The [report](#) is based on a review led by former French Foreign Minister Mrs Catherine Colonna, commissioned by the UN Secretary-General, following allegations made by the Government of Israel in 2024 of the involvement by 19 UNRWA staff in the 7 October heinous attacks on Israel.

The review identified and assessed UNRWA's mechanisms and procedures to adhere to the principle of neutrality, in parallel to the UN's internal investigation into the allegations. This investigation was carried out by the UN's Office for International Oversight Services (OIOS), the highest investigative body in the United Nations, and was completed in August 2024. Its findings were out in an [UNRWA statement](#) on 5 August 2024.

## Colonna report findings

The Colonna report contains **several critical findings**. It constitutes an independent recognition of UNRWA's long standing commitment and efforts to uphold the principle of neutrality. It states in particular that:

- The Agency has established and updated a significant number of policies, mechanisms and procedures to ensure compliance with the obligation to uphold the principle of neutrality, to ensure rapid and adequate responses to allegations and to

determine and implement disciplinary sanctions on personnel found to breach the neutrality principles.

- UNRWA possesses a more developed approach to neutrality than other similar UN or NGO entities.
- It also confirms that between 2022 and 2024, the Agency has reviewed all external allegations of breaches of neutrality and opened investigations where it has found prima facie evidence of misconduct.

Importantly, the report also stressed the **shared responsibility of UNRWA** and Member States, particularly host countries and Israel (as an occupying power), to preserve the Agency's neutrality.

The report endorsed the Agency's **irreplaceable and indispensable role** for the human and economic development of Palestinians and the present humanitarian response in Gaza.

UNRWA's financial situation and the security context in which it operates were mentioned several times, including in relation to installation checks and training of staff, as challenges to UNRWA's efforts in the area of neutrality.



united nations relief and works agency  
for palestine refugees in the near east

[www.unrwa.org](http://www.unrwa.org)

# Colonna Report and UNRWA's High Level Action Plan for implementation of the recommendations

Finally, the report found that efforts to preserve the Agency's neutrality can be further strengthened and to this end, the Review Group made 50 recommendations addressed mainly to UNRWA, but also to the UNGA Advisory Commission on UNRWA, Host countries, Israel, UNESCO, OIOS, and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC). The recommendations cover eight areas related to engagement with donors, governance, management and internal oversight, neutrality of staff, neutrality of installations, education, staff unions and enhanced cooperation with UN Agencies. **The majority of the recommendations aim to further strengthen existing policies, procedures and mechanisms.**

## UNRWA's response

Within 24 hours of the report's publication, UNRWA published a preliminary response, welcoming the report's findings, and expressing the Agency's commitment to implement all recommendations.

By 13 May, UNRWA had developed the first iteration of its High-Level Action Plan for implementation of the Recommendations. This first iteration was shared with Member States, including host governments, for a first discussion at the Subcommittee of the UNGA Advisory Commission on UNRWA. Additional briefings have been organized since, and more consultations are scheduled in the coming weeks and months.

The Action Plan articulates specific measures under each of the 8 areas of the Colonna report, that can be implemented in the short (2024), medium (2025-2026) and longer term (2026-).

The Action Plan provides an initial estimate of the additional resources needed to implement such measures: many derive directly from the Colonna report, which identified significant resource constraints as a source of potential vulnerability.

Effective implementation of several of these recommendations will require either political or funding support, or both.

**The Action Plan is being updated**, with greater details on roles and responsibilities, engagement strategies as well as sequencing and full costing. A results framework and risk register are also being developed.

Based on this strategic planning work, **a new iteration of the Action Plan will be developed and shared before the next Adcom meeting in November 2024.**

In parallel, the Agency has started putting together an **Implementation Support Team** in the Executive Office. The team will work with all relevant offices and departments to ensure swift and effective implementation, identify bottlenecks and risks, and coordinate reporting. The team advisor/leader and the strategic planner have been identified and a **project proposal for securing the rest of the team (4 additional posts)** has been developed and is available upon request.



united nations relief and works agency  
for palestinian refugees in the near east

[www.unrwa.org](http://www.unrwa.org)

UNRWA is a United Nations agency established by the General Assembly in 1949 and is mandated to provide assistance and protection to registered Palestine refugees. Its mission is to help Palestine refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, West Bank and the Gaza Strip to achieve their full potential in human development, pending a just solution to their plight. UNRWA services encompass education, health care, relief and social services, camp infrastructure and improvement, microfinance and emergency assistance. UNRWA is funded almost entirely by voluntary contributions.