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Labour Member of Parliament for East Ham

HE Mrs Tzipi Hotovely
Ambassador of Israel
Embassy of Israel
2 Palace Green
London W8 4QB

Our Ref: ST120539

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Dear Ambassador Hotovely,

A number of constituents have contacted me today after reading reports that Israel has yet to provide supporting evidence of its claims that employees of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) were members of terrorist organisations.

An independent review, led by the former French foreign minister Catherine Colonna, found that UNRWA had regularly supplied Israel with lists of its employees for vetting. It noted that the Israeli government had not informed UNRWA of any concerns relating to any of the organisation's staff since 2011.

You will recall that allegations of the involvement of UNWRA staff in the 7 October attacks led to many donors – including the UK Government – to withdraw funding to the agency. This has proved problematic for many Palestinians in Gaza as it was the main channel of humanitarian support in the region.

Alongside the Colonna report, a more detailed assessment was sent to the UN by the three Nordic research bodies – the Swedish-based Raoul Wallenberg Institute of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law, the Norwegian Chr Michelsen Institute, and the Danish Institute for Human Rights. Their report concluded that “...Israeli authorities have to date not provided any supporting evidence nor responded to letters from UNWRA in March, and again in April, requesting the names and supporting evidence that would enable UNWRA to open an investigation.”

Why is Israel unwilling to share its information about UNWRA's alleged links to Hamas and other terrorist organisations?

Thank you for your help.

Yours sincerely,

SIR STEPHEN TIMMS MP

Cc: Constituents