

## **Which is worse, Israel's lies about Gaza or its western backers who repeat those lies?**

The Italians have a proverb which runs “**He that deceives me once, it's his fault; but if twice, it's my fault.**”

Today, we commonly summarize that Italian proverb as: “Fool me once, shame on you; fool me twice, shame on me.”

Since the horrific 7 October attack, the far-right Israeli government and its army of propagandists have **deceived and fooled Western politicians** and journalists not once or twice, but multiple times.

There are almost too many lies, distortions and falsehoods to keep track of.  
Forty babies beheaded by Hamas? **Never happened.**  
Babies baked in ovens or hung on clothes lines? **False.**  
A Bond-villain-style lair hidden under al-Shifa hospital? **Nope.**  
Palestinians caught on camera faking their injuries? **A complete fabrication.**  
The list of Hamas hostage-takers found on a wall in the al-Rantisi children's hospital? **Sorry, no, it was just the days of the week on a calendar in Arabic.**

**All lies which came straight out of the Devil's mouth.**

How about the atrocities that Israeli forces have been credibly accused of, that they then loudly denied, and then later ... were found to be responsible for?

- The flour massacre in February?
- The bombing of the refugee convoy last October?
- The white phosphorus attack in southern Lebanon, also in October?

**The Israelis keep telling lies and our political and media elites in the west keep getting fooled. Shame on them.**

Perhaps no Israeli lie, however, has been more damaging, more destructive, more deadly, than the claim that Unrwa – the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees, the main organization responsible for providing aid in Gaza – has been colluding with Hamas and, worse, that 12 Unrwa employees participated in the terror attack on 7 October. Why? **Because it was a lie so consequential that it helped lay the groundwork for a devastating, ongoing, man-made famine inside the Gaza Strip.**

In late January, after a relentless anti-Unrwa campaign by Israel and its proxies in the west which culminated in the unproven accusation that Unrwa employees were involved in the 7 October atrocities, 16 donor countries, including Unrwa's main financial sponsor, the **United States**, suspended around \$450m funding to the agency.

Those countries were warned that crippling Unrwa, the largest relief organization in Gaza, would risk “hastening famine”. They were warned that the Israel’s much-vaunted intelligence dossier on Unrwa contained only “flimsy unproven allegations”. **But they trusted Israel.**

Over the past three months, as Palestinian children have literally starved to death, many of those countries belatedly resumed funding to Unrwa – including the German government, which is the second-biggest source of funds for the agency.

Why? Last week, an independent review of Unrwa’s work, led by the former French foreign minister Catherine Colonna, concluded that the agency “remains pivotal in providing life-saving humanitarian aid and essential social services” and “as such, UNRWA is irreplaceable and indispensable to Palestinians’ human and economic development”.

Crucially, referring to the Israeli government’s explosive claim that Unrwa employees were involved in Hamas attacks, Colonna’s report said that **“Israel has yet to provide supporting evidence” for these claims.** It also pointed out how Unrwa actually “shares staff lists” every year with both Israel and the United States and revealed that “the Israeli Government has not informed UNRWA of any concerns relating to any UNRWA staff based on these staff lists since 2011”.

Since 2011. **So it was all a lie - from Israel. Again.**

Now, to be clear, as the Guardian’s Julian Borger reports, “there is a separate review under way into specific claims Unrwa employees took part in the 7 October attack” but “the last time there was a progress report ... **Israel was still withholding cooperation**” with that review, too. (Even in the unlikely case that this other review does conclude that a dozen employees took part, that’s 12 out of 13,000 UNRWA staff in Gaza – or around 0.01% of the total workforce!)

The United States, nevertheless, has refused to resume its support for Unrwa; in fact, Congress passed a law banning the funding of the agency till at least March 2025. Shame on them.

Consider the credulous politicians and pundits who lined up to echo and endorse Israel’s false narrative on Unrwa.

The Republican senator **Ted Cruz,** for instance, tweeted about Unrwa six times between January and March, claiming the agency “supports terrorism”, is “compromised by Hamas”, and had “at least 12 employees ... involved in the October 7th terrorist attack”.

**David Frum,** a former speech writer for George W Bush!!, said it was “long past time to abolish UNRWA”, and accused it of “providing material support to a terrorist organization”.

Unrwa, wrote the neoconservative columnist **Bret Stephens** in the New York Times, “appears to be infested with terrorists and their sympathizers” and “should be abolished”.

**They were all wrong; all spreading lies; all peddling Israeli propaganda.**

And, sadly, it wasn't just Republicans and right-wingers. There were also a number of House Democrats who blindly repeated the Netanyahu government's baseless claims about Unrwa.

For example, the Democratic congressman **Josh Gottheimer**, like Ted Cruz, issued half a dozen tweets attacking UNRWA between January and March, declaring that “the evidence is clear: UNRWA employees supported Hamas on Oct. 7.”

The Democratic congressman **Brad Sherman** said he applauded the Biden administration's decision to suspend funding to UNRWA and claimed the agency's staff had “been exposed as terrorists”.

The congressman **Ritchie Torres** tweeted that Unrwa had been “governing Gaza at the behest of Hamas”.

**None of these prominent Democrats have retracted these false claims** on their Twitter (X) accounts since the release of the independent review last week. Nor have they even mentioned the results of that review.

Worst of all, however, was the statement made by **Antony Blinken**, the Democratic secretary of state, on 29 January, when he admitted that the United States had not “had the ability to investigate [the allegations] ourselves” but then went on to call those unverified Israeli allegations “**highly, highly credible**”. Yet only a couple of weeks later, the US's own National Intelligence Council said it assessed with only “low confidence” that Unrwa staffers had participated in the 7 October attack. (The US intelligence community defines “low confidence” as “scant, questionable, or very fragmented” – **the exact opposite of “highly, highly credible**”.)

**Blinken has yet to apologize for, or even retract, his false claim.**

Ask yourself: what's worse? The Israeli government's lies, or the people in the west who keep believing and amplifying them? The Israeli government's unsubstantiated accusations against Unrwa or the western governments that then embraced them as fact and instantly cut off funding to the biggest aid agency in Gaza?

**Israel has been starving the people of Gaza. Shame on the fools who have helped them justify it.**

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