

115TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 6451

To establish the policy of the United States with respect to contributions to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JULY 19, 2018

Mr. LAMBORN (for himself, Mr. WEBER of Texas, Mr. DESJARLAIS, Mr. PERRY, Mr. MCKINLEY, and Ms. TENNEY) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

A BILL

To establish the policy of the United States with respect to contributions to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “UNRWA Reform and
5 Refugee Support Act of 2018”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds the following:

1 (1) The United Nations Relief and Works
2 Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
3 (UNRWA) was founded in 1949 through United Na-
4 tions General Assembly Resolution 302 at the con-
5 clusion of the Arab-Israeli Conflict of 1948 to “al-
6 leviate the conditions of starvation and distress
7 among the Palestine refugees” from that conflict.

8 (2) According to UNRWA’s Consolidated Eligi-
9 bility and Registration Instructions (CERI), Pales-
10 tinian refugees are “persons whose normal place of
11 residence was Palestine during the period 1 June
12 1946 to 15 May 1948, and who lost both home and
13 means of livelihood as a result of the 1948 conflict”.

14 (3) Beginning in the 1950s, UNRWA changed
15 the eligibility requirements to be a Palestinian ref-
16 ugee from those displaced in 1948 that is incon-
17 sistent with the original definition of the agency.
18 This change significantly inflated the number of
19 purported refugees and subsequently the number of
20 individuals who are eligible to receive UNRWA bene-
21 fits. UNRWA classifies individuals eligible for bene-
22 fits as Palestinian refugees including, but not lim-
23 ited to, those “descendants of Palestine refugee
24 males, including legally adopted children”, several

1 generations removed from the conflict, who were
2 born decades after the conflict ended.

3 (4) This classification process is inconsistent
4 with how all other refugees in the world are classi-
5 fied, including the definition used by the United Na-
6 tions High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR) and
7 the laws concerning refugees in the United States.
8 Because of UNRWA's unique definition of a refugee,
9 the number of Palestinian refugees has grown expo-
10 nentially over the years, from approximately 600,000
11 in 1949 to 5,300,000 today. In contrast the number
12 of refugees from other conflicts has diminished dra-
13 matically through UNHCR.

14 (5) Instead of resettling Palestinian refugees
15 displaced as a result of the Arab-Israeli Conflict of
16 1948, UNRWA provides aid to those they define as
17 Palestinian refugees until there is a solution they
18 deem acceptable to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.
19 This policy does not help resettle the refugees from
20 1948 but instead maintains a refugee population in
21 perpetuity.

22 (6) The United States has been UNRWA's big-
23 gest donor since its inception, and contributes a dis-
24 proportionate amount on Palestinian refugees in
25 comparison to other refugees around the world. The

1 United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
2 has addressed the world’s estimated 65,000,000 dis-
3 placed persons with a staff of just over 10,000 and
4 a 2017 budget of \$7,700,000,000. UNRWA, which
5 claims it works on behalf of over 5,300,000 Pales-
6 tinian refugees, has a staff of over 30,000, with a
7 2016 budget of \$1,450,000,000.

8 (7) UNRWA has 1 relief worker per roughly
9 170 refugees, 40 times the allocation of relief work-
10 ers to non-Palestinian refugees by the United Na-
11 tions High Commissioner for Refugees.

12 (8) UNRWA facilities have been used to launch
13 terror attacks against Israel, and UNRWA employ-
14 ees have frequently faced credible charges of working
15 with terrorist groups such as Hamas, including the
16 following:

17 (A) On July 16, 2014, UNRWA reported
18 that it had found 20 missiles in one of its
19 schools in Gaza, likely placed there by Hamas,
20 and then returned them to the “relevant au-
21 thorities” in Gaza, territory controlled by
22 Hamas.

23 (B) UNRWA reported finding missiles in
24 their schools again on July 22, 2014, and July
25 29, 2014.

1 (C) On July 30, 2014, three Israeli De-
2 fense Force soldiers were killed in an explosion
3 at a booby-trapped UNRWA health clinic,
4 which was housing the opening to one of
5 Hammas' underground tunnels.

6 **SEC. 3. SENSE OF CONGRESS.**

7 It is the sense of Congress that—

8 (1) the United States should—

9 (A) support UNRWA solely to the extent
10 necessary to accomplish its original and in-
11 tended purpose to resettle refugees from the
12 Arab-Israeli Conflict of 1948;

13 (B) make contributions to UNRWA in pro-
14 portion to the number of refugees it assists that
15 meet the United States definition of a refugee;
16 and

17 (C) continue to assist other needy popu-
18 lations around the world through international
19 aid and development assistance, including Pal-
20 estinians in the West Bank, Gaza, Jordan, Leb-
21 anon, and Syria;

22 (2) the Secretary of State should determine and
23 accordingly provide to UNRWA a voluntary con-
24 tribution in an amount that bears the same propor-
25 tion to the total requested United States contribu-

tion as the proportion that refugees of the Arab-Israeli Conflict of 1948 who meet the requirements described in section 4(a) bear to the full population supported by UNRWA programs;

(3) amounts made available to the Secretary of State that are withheld from UNRWA in accordance with the determination described in paragraph (2) should instead be made available to the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development for providing assistance to other populations in need in the West Bank, Gaza, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria; and

(4) in accordance with the prohibition under section 301(c) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2221(c)), United States assistance should not be made available to any refugee who is receiving military training as a member of the Palestine Liberation Army or who is a part of any organization engaging in acts of terrorism.

SEC. 4. STATEMENTS OF POLICY WITH RESPECT TO CRITERIA FOR RECOGNITION OF REFUGEE STATUS.

(a) **CRITERIA FOR RECOGNITION OF UNRWA REFUGEE STATUS.**—It shall be the policy of the United States, with respect to recognizing the refugee status of

1 persons receiving assistance through UNRWA, that a Pal-
2 estinian refugee is a person, or the spouse or minor child
3 of a person—

4 (1) whose resided, between June 1946 and May
5 1948, in the region controlled by Britain between
6 1922 and 1948 known as Mandatory Palestine;

7 (2) who was personally displaced as a result of
8 the Arab-Israeli Conflict of 1948; and

9 (3) who has not accepted an offer of legal resi-
10 dency status, citizenship, or other permanent adjust-
11 ment in status in another country.

12 (b) CONSISTENCY WITH UNITED STATES ELIGI-
13 BILITY FOR REFUGEE STATUS.—In applying the criteria
14 described in subsection (a) with respect to refugees under
15 UNRWA, it shall be the policy of the United States, con-
16 sistent with the definition of a refugee in section 101(a)
17 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C.
18 1101(a)) and the requirements for eligibility for refugee
19 status under such Act, that—

20 (1) derivative refugee status may only be ex-
21 tended to the spouse or minor child of such a ref-
22 ugee; and

23 (2) an alien who was firmly resettled in any
24 country is not eligible to retain refugee status.

○