



ELDH European Association of Lawyers for Democracy & World Human Rights

WITH LAWYERS
IN 22 COUNTRIES

EJDM Europäische Vereinigung von Juristinnen & Juristen für Demokratie und Menschenrechte in der Welt

EJDH Asociación Europea de los Juristas por la Democracia y los Derechos Humanos en el Mundo

EJDH Association Européenne des Juristes pour la Démocratie & les Droits de l'Homme

EGDU Associazione Europea delle Giuriste e dei Giuristi per la Democrazia e i diritti dell'Uomo nel Mondo

Equality Privacy Social Rights
No Racism Peace No Torture No War
Self-Determination of Peoples Civil Rights Democracy
Human Rights Rights of Migrants

Bologna, Donostia, Düsseldorf, Vienna, 11 December 2023

ELDH demands that European states which have suspended funding for UNWRA restore that funding immediately.

The European Lawyers for Democracy and Human Rights (ELDH), with members in 22 European countries, condemns the decision by several European states to suspend funding for UNRWA (the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees).

This despicable action follows and appears to be designed to distract attention from the decision of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on 26 January 2024. The ICJ found it plausible that Israel's heinous acts detailed in the decision could amount to genocide. It issued six provisional measures, ordering Israel to take all measures within its power to prevent genocidal acts, including preventing and punishing incitement to genocide, ensuring aid and services reach Palestinians under siege in Gaza, and preserving evidence of crimes committed in Gaza.

Israel has made it clear that it has no intention of complying, and appears to be supported by, amongst others, the UK and USA.

On the very day of the ICJ decision, 26 January 2024, Israel alleged that four of the more than 12,000 UNWRA employees in Gaza took part in the attack on Israel on 7 October 2023, carried out by Hamas and others.

In response to these allegations, and even before conducting its due process investigation, UNRWA announced its decision to terminate these employees' contracts 'in the interest of the agency, showing a firm commitment to ensuring organisational neutrality, in line with UN principles and values, and rejecting incitement and all forms of violence.

ELDH agrees with experts who consider that even if allegations against individuals are proved, based on an impartial and independent investigation, UNRWA as a whole, providing vital services to Palestinian refugees in Gaza, must not be blamed and punished collectively.

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ELDH condemns in the strongest possible terms any efforts to delegitimise UNRWA as a whole.

ELDH supports the principled action of Norway, Spain, Ireland and Belgium which have announced they will not suspend funding, recognizing the vital role that UNRWA continues to play in the distribution of humanitarian aid to those in desperate need.

We call on all European states to follow this principled lead, especially the UK and Germany, which instead of responding to the ICJ decision, suspended funding for UNWRA.

Funding must be restored immediately.