They point to the UN organization’s links to terrorist groups such as Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad.

UNRWA has committed “serious breaches of trust”, the 22 MEPs wrote in an open letter to Commission President Ursula von der Leyen on October 20, 2025. Reconstruction must not repeat the mistakes of the past and must be carried out by partners “who build for peace, not hate”.

Signatories come from Germany, the Netherlands, Austria, France, Spain and Sweden, among others. Sweden and the USA have already discontinued their cooperation with UNRWA, they point out.

The letter refers to numerous UNRWA employees who have been involved in acts of terrorism. UNRWA also uses a unique refugee definition for Palestinians, which makes the status inheritable indefinitely and thus perpetuates the conflict, according to the criticism.

Hard data behind the criticism

The connections of terrorist groups such as Hamas are well documented, for example in the report by the Israel Defense Intelligence (IDI) of April 23, 2025which documents the systematic infiltration of UN organizations. The report emphasizes that UNRWA in Gaza, with over 12,000 local employees, operated a quasi-governmental structure in which Hamas has been able to expand its influence for years. The analysis is based on verified documents and digital data that have been analyzed since the beginning of the Gaza war.

According to IDI, UNRWA employees actively participated in the massacre on October 7. Telephone data, video footage and location signals from teachers, social workers and school principals in Israel were recorded, among other things. UNRWA buildings also play a prominent role in the Hamas military system, according to the report. Under facilities – especially under schools – tunnels, command centers and one of the most important server locations of Hamas intelligence have been discovered, 18 meters under the local UNRWA headquarters, with direct power supply from UNRWA.

Rocket launches in the immediate vicinity of UN facilities are also documented. On October 7 itself, numerous rockets were launched from school grounds or adjacent areas, according to the report. The IDI accuses UNRWA of not having reported a

single one of these cases to Israel, although this would be required under international humanitarian law.

EU parliamentarians demand: No UNRWA in the reconstruction of Gaza

European Parliament

To: Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission
CC: Kaja Kallas, High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy

Brussels 20 October 2025

Dear President von der Leyen,

We, the undersigned Members of the European Parliament, write to you at a moment of cautious optimism. The past week has brought long-awaited progress, with the release of all remaining living Israeli hostages and a renewed commitment by regional and international actors to pursue lasting calm. These steps have created a real opportunity to rebuild not only homes but also trust and coexistence.

Europe now has a crucial role to play in helping Gaza recover in a way that strengthens peace and rejects the forces of hate. This requires that our support be channelled through partners who share those values and who can guarantee full transparency and neutrality.

Credible reports from media, UN Watch and others have shown serious breaches of trust within UNRWA, including staff members connected to Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad. These revelations have led countries like Sweden and the United States to halt cooperation with the agency. In light of the serious findings, it is time for the European Commission to take the same responsible approach and ensure that EU funds go only to organizations that uphold the principles of peace, accountability, and human dignity.

The rebuilding of Gaza should not repeat the failures of the past. It must be carried out by credible organizations that invest in education, health, and opportunity for all -- partners that build for peace, not for hate.

We therefore urge the Commission to review its partnerships for reconstruction and to align Europe's aid with the values that define our Union: transparency, peace, and respect for human life.

Sincerely,

Alice Teodorescu Måwe (Sweden)
Alexandr Vondra (Czechia)
Andrey Kovatchev (Bulgaria)
Antonio López-Istúriz White (Spain)
Bert-Jan Ruissen (Netherlands)
Celine Imart (France)
François-Xavier Bellamy (France)
Geadis Geadi (Cyprus)
Georgiana Teodorescu (Romania)
Henrik Dahl (Denmark)
Lukas Mandl (Austria)
Milan Zver (Slovenia)
Miriam Lexmann (Slovakia)
Ondřej Kolář (Czechia)
Reinis Pozņaks (Latvia)
Sander Smit (Netherlands)
Sabine Verheyen (Germany)
Sebastian Tynkkynen (Finland)
Tiago Moreira de Sá (Portugal)
Tomáš Kubín (Czechia)
Volker Schnurrbusch (Germany)
Zala Tomasic (Slovenia)