

Congressman Rothman Acts to Keep U.S. Taxpayer Money Out of the Hands of Terrorists

Calls on U.N. for Transparency in Providing Funding for Humanitarian Relief

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(Washington, DC) — Today, Congressman Steve Rothman (D — Fair Lawn) reintroduced his United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees (UNRWA) resolution, calling on the United Nations to improve the transparency and accountability of UNRWA and ensure that it is not providing funding, employment or other support to terrorists. The United States is the single largest financial donor to UNRWA.

“This action continues my fight to bring greater transparency to UNRWA. U.S. anti-terror law explicitly prohibits U.S. taxpayer dollars from supporting terrorists. And while UNRWA continues to distribute humanitarian aid to the Palestinian Territories, we must guarantee that our money is not falling into the hands of those who engage in any act of terrorism and those who want to harm the United States or our allies,” said Rothman.

“That is why the U.N. must provide more transparency and accountability of UNRWA,” continued Rothman. “At this time there is very poor oversight of where our contributions are going, and this must be remedied immediately.”

UNRWA is charged with the mission of providing services, including education, health, relief and social services to over 4.3 million registered Palestinians in the Middle East. However, despite its size and \$400 million dollar budget, the agency does not permit outside, independent audits of its books. There is evidence that employees who support Hamas have been on UNRWA’s payroll, UNRWA teachers continue to circulate anti-Israel propaganda in their classroom and a large percentage of Hamas suicide bombers have been educated in UNRWA schools.

The U.S. contributed \$148 million to UNRWA in 2008. Since 1950, the U.S. has contributed more than \$3.4 billion to UNRWA, nearly 75 percent of the initial budget. The U.S. is the single largest monetary contributor to this U.N. organization.

“While UNRWA remains the primary delivery mechanism for humanitarian aid to the Palestinian Territories, there is absolutely no reason why the United Nations cannot take aggressive action to ensure that not one penny of U.S. dollars is being redistributed to terrorists,” said Rothman. “Unfortunately, at this time we have no such guarantee with UNRWA, given the lax oversight and faulty accountability mechanisms that are currently in place.”

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CONTACT: Carrie Giddins, 202-225-5061; 202-420-1524 (cell)

