

A Bill

Pertaining to U.S. Support for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) and the Definition of a Refugee Under American Law

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE

This Act may be cited as the “The UNRWA Recipients Act.”

SECTION 2. FINDINGS

- 1) The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) was founded in 1949 at the conclusion of Israel’s War of Independence with the best of intentions, to take care of refugees on all sides of the conflict.
- 2) Beginning in the 1950’s, however, UNRWA began changing and enlarging its definition of a “refugee,” in a way that is inconsistent with the usual definitions of a refugee that enlarged and greatly inflated the number of purported “refugees.”
- 3) UNRWA’s definition of a “Palestine refugee” now includes individuals several generations removed from the conflict, who were born decades after the conflict ended. It also includes individuals who have citizenship in other countries, primarily but not limited to the Kingdom of Jordan, as well as individuals who live in the West Bank and Gaza, the internationally recognized home of the Palestinian people.
- 4) This definition of a refugee is markedly different and inconsistent with virtually all other definitions of a refugee, including the definition used by the United Nations High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR), and the laws concerning refugees in the United States.
- 5) Because of this unique definition of a refugee, the number of refugees has grown exponentially over the years, from about 600,000 in 1949 to 5.3 million purported “Palestine refugees” today.
- 6) The primary reason for this evolving definition is political in nature. Indeed, UNRWA’s definition is not aimed at any legitimate need to care for refugees, but at preserving a purported “right of return” to Israel for individuals, many of whom have never been to Israel, let alone ever resided there.
- 7) This claim of a “right of return” for all purported refugees, as opposed to actual refugees from the 1948-49 war, is intentionally aimed at the destruction of Israel as a

Jewish state, explicitly contrary to the purpose the United Nations when it first recognized Israel in 1947 and contrary to the goal of peace in the region.

- 8) The “right of return,” for individuals who are not legitimate refugees runs contrary to the goal of peace in the region, as well as the United States national security interests, and instead seeks to undermine the Jewish state of Israel.
- 9) UNRWA’s educational curriculum, and indeed almost all UNRWA activities, aim not at resettling refugees but at perpetuating this conflict by preserving an expanded “right of return” claim.
- 10) UNRWA employees have frequently faced credible charges of working with terrorist groups such as Hamas, and it is clear that UNRWA officials have, at the very least, turned a blind eye to terrorist acts aimed at innocent Israelis.

SECTION 3. THE AMERICAN ROLE

- 1) Despite these facts, American taxpayers have been UNRWA’s biggest donor since its inception and at present.
- 2) UNRWA has provided, and still provides, some useful services for needy Palestinians.
- 3) The United States has compassion for innocent Palestinians trapped in by the poor choices of their leaders; but it cannot and does not support UNRWA’s expansive definition of a refugee that seeks to undermine the Jewish state of Israel.
- 4) This act is not intended to preclude or limit Palestinian beneficiaries of UNRWA services from continuing to receive those services, nor is this act intended to reduce the United States financial contribution to UNRWA.

SECTION 4. ACCURATELY LABELING UNRWA RECIPIENTS

- 1) It is the policy of the United States, in accord with UNRWA’s original definition, that a Palestine refugee is defined as: “Persons whose normal place of residence was Palestine during the period 1 June 1946 to 15 May 1948, and who lost both home and means of livelihood as a result of the 1948-49 conflict, and who is not firmly resettled in another country.”
- 2) United States policy toward UNRWA shall be consistent with the United States definition of a refugee. This includes the following provisions of the Immigration and Nationality Act.
 - a) 8 U.S.C. §1158(b)(2)(A)(vi) (2006), Section 208(b)(2)(A)(vi), (which provides that an alien who was firmly resettled in another country prior to arriving in the

United States is not eligible to apply for asylum or refugee status in the United States);

- b) 8 U.S.C. 1101(a), INA 101(a), section 42, (which provides that, to be eligible for U.S. refugee status, an individual must be either a "person who is outside any country of such person's nationality or...is unable or unwilling to avail himself or herself of the protection of that country because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution");
 - c) 8 U.S.C. 1157 Sec. 207.(C)(2), and 8 U.S.C. 1101(a), INA 101(b)(1), (which allow an unmarried minor child of an alien qualified for refugee status, to receive derivative refugee status, but do not permit derivative refugee status to be extended to a grandchild of an alien qualified to receive refugee status.)
- 3) For the purposes of United States law, Palestinians not meeting the United States definition of a refugee that are still receiving UNRWA aid shall be classified as “other Palestinians in need” rather than “Palestine refugees.”
 - 4) Those “other Palestinians in need” who are adults and wish to receive assistance from the United States must formally acknowledge on the record that they are not “Palestine refugees.”
 - 5) All funds expended by the Treasury on behalf of UNRWA shall be consistent with this definition and these rules.

SECTION 5. ENACTMENT

This act shall go into effect immediately upon passage.