# Exclusive: Palestinian envoy hints U.S. postponed U.N. vote to fund Palestine Refugee Agency

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http://www.breitbart.com/jerusalem/2017/07/28/exclusive-u-n-funding-vote-controversial-palestinian-agency-postponed-solely-due-u-s-opposition-ambassador-suggests/

A controversial General Assembly vote to increase the U.N.’s, and consequently the U.S.’s, funding of a Palestinian refugee agency was postponed Friday, a move that an unhappy Palestinian ambassador suggested to Breitbart News was because of U.S. opposition.

The [resolution](http://undocs.org/A/71/L.79) up for a vote, first [reported](http://nypost.com/2017/07/27/the-palestinian-plot-to-end-run-trump-at-the-un/) by the New York Post’s Benny Avni, would increase the funding for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). The agency has proved controversial in part because Palestine is alone in having its own refugee body – all other refugees are covered by the U.N. Refugee Agency (UNHCR) – but also because of its alleged anti-Israel bias and [links](http://www.foxnews.com/world/2016/08/12/arrests-un-linked-agency-officials-for-hamas-ties-calls-us-funding-into-question.html) to Hamas.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has called for it to be disbanded, saying it only perpetuates the Israeli-Palestinian crisis by [stoking](http://www.jpost.com/Israel-News/Politics-And-Diplomacy/Netanyahu-puts-UNRWA-and-foreign-funded-NGOs-in-his-sights-496552)  anti-Israeli sentiment. U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Nikki Haley has not publicly agreed with Netanyahu’s position but has repeatedly taken strong stances against the anti-Israel bias at the U.N. as a whole.

A letter [signed](http://www.jpost.com/Israel-News/US-Senate-unanimously-signs-letter-asking-UN-to-address-anti-Israel-bias-489257) by all 100 U.S. Senators in April called on UNRWA to “pursue reforms or risk significant consequences.” The Times of Israel noted at that time that a third of UNRWA’s budget comes from the U.S. Fox News [reported](http://www.foxnews.com/world/2016/08/12/arrests-un-linked-agency-officials-for-hamas-ties-calls-us-funding-into-question.html) that the U.S. donates $600 million a year to the body.

But the resolution, recognizing what it calls the “extremely critical financial situation” of UNRWA, recommends “a gradual increase in the support to be provided to the Agency from the regular budget of the United Nations.”

This is controversial as it would not only give more money to UNRWA, but it would place an ever-increasing burden on the U.N.’s general budget, of which the U.S. is the greatest contributor. As the New York Post noted: “Eventually the entirety of America’s contribution to UNRWA will be decided by U.N. members rather than Congress.”

The move was one unlikely to be received well by Republican members of Congress.

“I have a deep concern with shifting UNRWA funding to the U.N.’s regular budget,” Sen. James Risch (R-ID) told Breitbart News. “Just because other countries fail to honor their voluntary contributions should not require the American taxpayer to fund yet another U.N. program with a track record of poor management and support for terrorism.”

The resolution, scheduled to be taken up by the U.N. General Assembly Friday morning, was postponed just hours before the vote was due to take place.

A grumpy Palestinian Ambassador Riyad Mansour told a handful of reporters that the vote had been postponed. Breitbart News asked why this was. “I’ll leave it your imagination why,” he responded, “especially since we have 147 co-sponsors not counting the Europeans, who are endorsing unanimously, so if you have that, you have close to 177 co-sponsors.”

When Breitbart News asked if the American delegation had been loud in opposing the measure, Mansour said: “You are on the right track.”

Mansour went on to repeat the claim that European countries, including the United Kingdom – America’s top ally at the U.N. – were “unanimously” in favor of the measure. The U.S. delegation did not respond to a request for comment from Breitbart News, while the U.K. delegation just noted that the resolution had been postponed and no new date had been set.

A U.N. diplomat said that Canada, America, and Israel were the only opponents to the resolution. It is unclear why exactly the vote was postponed, especially as America has no veto in the General Assembly, unlike in the Security Council where it could kill a measure with a veto.

It is possible that the U.N. is wary of upsetting America too much under the Trump administration, considering that the U.S. is the top funder to the U.N. and the Trump administration has happily floated deep cuts to its contributions to the body.

Mansour said that they were trying to “build consensus” and hoping to have an agreement soon.

U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Nikki Haley told a House committee last month that Trump’s budget proposal that eyed deep cuts to the U.N. contributions had [sent](http://www.breitbart.com/big-government/2017/06/28/haley-trumps-proposed-cuts-sent-shockwaves-u-n/) “shockwaves” through U.N. headquarters.

The resolution’s postponement hardly means that the measure is dead. With no veto and a broad range of support from General Assembly (GA) members, it is a soft victory for the U.S. and perhaps only postpones the inevitable.

However, the postponement could suggest that the GA is a lot more wary about upsetting the American delegation than it has under the Obama administration. Yet there is confidence from those backing the resolution. An Arab diplomat [told](http://nypost.com/2017/07/27/the-palestinian-plot-to-end-run-trump-at-the-un/) the New York Post before the postponement: “We’ll pass it.”

The question will be: What will the U.S. response be if and when the resolution does pass?