**US government agency to investigate UNRWA terror ties**

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The US Government Accountability Office (GAO) announced that it would begin its official investigation by the into the ties between UNRWA and terrorist organizations and incitement in official Palestinian Authority textbooks after President-elect Donald Trump takes office on January 20.

The GAO is the supreme audit institution of the US government and provides auditing, evaluation, and investigative services for Congress.

The investigation was requested by Senator James Risch (R-Idaho), the Chairman of the Senate Near East Subcommittee, following briefings on UNRWA's indiscretions to Congress by the C*enter for Near East Policy Research* over the past few years.

Sen. Risch requested that the GAO carry out the investigation of UNRWA in June, 2016. The GAO replied on July 21 that it had received the request from Sen, Risch, and that it would act upon it.

“This is a matter with which I am deeply concerned and I have asked GAO to investigate,” Risch told *The Daily Signal* news site last Jul.. “I anticipate that the investigation will take some time, however, so I will reserve my comments until after I receive and am able to assess GAO’s findings on the matter.”

The US provides approximately $400 million in finding to UNRWA each year, which amounts to one third of UNRWA's annual budget. The organization serves the Arab refugees of the 1948 War of Independence and their descendants, proving education, health care, employment, and other services. All other refugees in the world fall under the jurisdiction of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

Repeated investigations by the *Center for Near East Policy Research* have shown that the textbooks used in UNRWA schools preach hatred of the State of Israel and the Jewish people. Investigations have also found that members of the Hamas terrorist organization are employed by UNRWA in various capacities, including as teachers.

Senior US government officials had told Sen. Risch that the US had vetted and reviewed the textbooks used in UNRWA schools. However, *Center for Near East Policy Research*chairman David Bedein presented evidence to the senator in September that the USAID organization does not review the textbooks used in UNRWA schools; nor does the US vet UNRWA's teachers.

Few details of the GAO investigation are presently known. Chuck Young, the managing director of GAO Public Affairs, issued a statement this week saying "The first thing our teams will do is determine the scope of what we will cover and the methodology to be used."