**Foreign Ministry against UNRWA: ‘We’ll keep telling the truth’**

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Israel Hayom

May 17, 2019

<https://www.israelhayom.com/2019/05/17/foreign-ministry-against-unrwa-well-keep-telling-the-truth/>

Even as the winds of war seem to have temporarily subsided in Gaza, Israel’s Foreign Ministry and the U.N. Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees continue to butt heads over the agency’s conduct during the most recent round of violence between Israel and Palestinian terrorist groups in Gaza.

Tensions began when UNRWA’s Commissioner General Matthias Schmale on May 4, intimated on Twitter that Israeli airstrikes were hindering UNRWA sponsored events to “celebrate children and their sports and fun activities.”

“Surrealistic #Gaza day: went to 2 marvelous @UNRWA events to celebrate children & their sports and fun activities & then to honor sanitation laborers followed by good working lunch with colleagues; in parallel sounds of bombs all day & we seem yet again close to war. Madness!” Schmale tweeted.

Foreign Ministry Spokesman Emmanuel Nahshon, angry at Schmale’s one-sided depiction of events, responded to Schmale on Twitter: “The terrorists shooting the rockets are all probably @UNRWA graduates. You must be really proud of them.”

In response, Schmale emphasized he was against the firing of rockets at Israel.

“I unequivocally don’t support shooting rockets. And your unsubstantiated & defamatory claim is unworthy of a government spokesman. The children I meet in our schools all the time are no terrorists; they are peace-loving kids hungry to learn & to live a dignified life!”

The tit-for-tat didn’t end there, however, as several days ago UNRWA’s Director of Legal Affairs Rachel Evers sent a letter to Alon Bar, the deputy director general for the U.N. and International Organizations at the Foreign Ministry, demanding that Nahshon retract his tweet.

“Through his tweet, Mr. Nahshon denigrates the young boys and girls attending UNRWA activities, who Mr. Schmale was honoring that day. They are first and foremost children, who, like all children everywhere, are looking for a safe, hopeful and dignified future, which UNRWA endeavors to support through sporting and other activities.”

“I must also strongly protest the baseless and dangerous allegation that UNRWA is in any way involved in any terrorist activities or support thereof through its education services. … I respectfully request Mr. Nahshon’s tweet is formally retracted without delay,” Evers wrote.

The Foreign Ministry rejected the request – fully backing the veteran spokesman.

Yinam Cohen, the director of the ministry’s U.N. Political Affairs Department, told Evers in a response letter that Schmale had disseminated lies on behalf of the Palestinians.

For example, Cohen wrote, Schmale has “equated Israel to apartheid,” has implied “the IDF purposefully targets children,” and “even retweeted a message, which he later erased, insinuating that Israel is committing genocide against Palestinians.”

Cohen continued: “The issue in hand is Mr. Schmale’s lack of neutrality. As a UNRWA official, publishing such statements publicly using social media, exposes him to much-warranted criticism and he must be held accountable for his public remarks.”

Nahshon said in response: “As spokesman for the Foreign Ministry, I will continue telling the truth on behalf of the State of Israel. When UNRWA officials celebrate while Israeli citizens are in bomb shelters – we must not remain silent. No complaint will deter us from the voicing the simple truth: UNRWA is part of the problem, not part of the solution. UNRWA perpetuates the Palestinians’ status as refugees, and by doing so undermines any possibility of reaching a resolution.”