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## UN officials must uphold their mission, not defend Israeli killing

As mass arrests continue within '48 Palestine', the people of Gaza mourn their dead and tend their wounded, and the residents of Sheikh Jarrah's position remains tenuous, Arab Organisation for Human Rights in the UK (AOHR UK) calls critical attention to the comments of a senior figure with one of the UN's Palestine-specific agencies, UNRWA.

Matthias Schmale is the Director of Operations for UNRWA – the UN's 'Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees' – in the Gaza Strip. In an interview last Sunday (23rd), Schmale was asked whether agreed with the occupying army's claim that its attacks were "very precise", to which the UNRWA director replied, "I'm not a military expert but I would not dispute that. I also have the impression that there is a huge sophistication in the way the Israeli military struck over the last 11 days".

Given the huge loss of civilian life in the Gaza Strip due to Israeli aggression over the last weeks – 243 people dead, including at least 66 children – and the massive destruction to both civilians' homes and civil infrastructure, the notion that such aggression was either "precise" or "sophisticated" is both inaccurate and offensive, AOHR UK declares.

It is all the more offensive, given UNRWA's mission, "to help Palestine refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip to achieve their full potential in human development pending a just solution to their plight."

Israel's wanton destruction of schools, medical facilities, and mass killing, are clearly detrimental to this mission – and hence the AOHR UK decries not only Schmale's remarks themselves but also his and UNRWA's dereliction of their duties.



AOHR UK must add finally that we welcome Schmale's [apology](#), following Palestinian and global outcry. Any future instances of UN officials parroting the Israeli aggressor's self-justifications must be swiftly identified, criticised, and retracted.

Arab Organisation for Human Rights in the UK (AOHR UK)